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**Journal
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Thursday 18 November 2010

Jeudi 18 novembre 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 18 novembre 2010

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TICKET SPECULATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE TRAFIC DES BILLETS DE SPECTACLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 15, 2010, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act to amend the Ticket Speculation Act / Projet de loi 172, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le trafic des billets de spectacle.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 17, 2010, I am now required to put the question:

On October 21, 2010, Mr. Bentley moved second reading of Bill 172, An Act to amend the Ticket Speculation Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

WATER OPPORTUNITIES AND WATER CONSERVATION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES TECHNOLOGIES DE L'EAU ET LA CONSERVATION DE L'EAU

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 17, 2010, on the motion for third reading of Bill 72, An Act to enact the Water Opportunities Act, 2010 and to amend other Acts in respect of water conservation and other matters / Projet de loi 72, Loi édictant la Loi de 2010 sur le développement des technologies de l'eau et modifiant

d'autres lois en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'eau et d'autres questions.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: First of all, I would like to defer the lead of our critic as he is on a committee at present. Do we have unanimous consent to stand down the lead?

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, first of all, for that and giving me an opportunity to participate in this debate. It's quite apropos that at this particular time we're having this debate, for a few reasons: one, just because of the content of the bill—and I'll get into that in a little bit—but just generally, when it comes to rules around how we monitor our water, how we treat our water, and how we make sure that the water that comes out of the tap when you need it is safe.

As we know, we went through a pretty horrific time here in Ontario some years ago with what happened in Walkerton. I'm not going to go into detail on that, except to say that we recognize that that was a tragedy where people died as a result of drinking water, and there was a response by the Ontario Legislature in order to deal with that. We have ended up creating some of the toughest, some of the best rules when it comes to making sure that drinking water for individuals, as put through the municipal water systems, is the safest it can be. We are probably second to none in Canada and, I would argue, probably rank fairly well worldwide when it comes to the safety of the water in Ontario as a result of that tragic experience and what was learned from it.

I want to take the opportunity to speak about how we haven't really ensured that drinking water for Ontarians is safe. It's interesting, the Ontario government and this Legislature says we need to make sure that the water is safe for everybody in Ontario except those people who live in First Nations communities. Why do we do that? Why do we as Ontarians not ensure that the federal government, which is responsible for the infrastructure on reserves, ensures that the drinking water on-reserve is safe? It seems to me that if we're saying to municipalities, "You have to ensure that water is safe for your citizens and your municipality," certainly to God we can figure out a way to make sure that the federal government, the absentee landlord of reserves, does something when it comes to making sure that the water on-reserve is safe.

Let me just give you a couple of examples of what's going on today. I won't even talk about the Kashechewan water crisis till later. Imagine my surprise: I went to Attawapiskat last Wednesday, I believe, for a number of meetings with band council and others, and one of the

issues that they raised with me is their water plant. I was a bit surprised because we just built a water plant in Attawapiskat some five, six, seven years ago. So it's a brand new plant. The province of Ontario participated in that process, by the way, but by and large, the lion's share of the money came from the federal government. The federal government, as you know, under Health Canada, is supposed to be responsible for the monitoring of the water that comes out of those taps. Well, imagine my surprise when I find out there has not been one inspector who has gone into the water plant in Attawapiskat in the last year.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Not one?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Not one. Why? Because that particular individual who used to do the job for Health Canada took retirement. The federal government can't seem to find somebody to ensure that the water in Attawapiskat is safe and that there's proper monitoring done of what comes out of the taps.

My point is simply this: Are not First Nations citizens in this province citizens of Ontario? I think we'll all agree the answer is yes. If we agree that they're citizens of the province of Ontario as well as being Canadians, then we certainly have a responsibility to ensure that our First Nations brothers and sisters on reserves across this province are able to have the same type of standard when it comes to drinking water in their taps as they do in taps outside the reserves in Ontario. So I, in this debate, want to take the opportunity to say to the government of Ontario: We have an absentee landlord. They're called Stephen Harper and the federal government, and before that it was Jean Chrétien and the federal government.

0910

The federal government, we know, is a complete disaster when it comes to dealing with First Nations and the infrastructure in those communities. You only have to go visit reserves across this province to see to what degree the federal government refuses, continues to refuse and always will refuse to do what's right by First Nations communities. We're talking about families with 20, 25 people per house. We're talking about houses that are old, substandard and, in many cases, full of mildew and mould of various types. We have situations where there's not a hockey arena, there's not a recreational facility for the kids to be able to exercise and do what other kids do around the province. We're talking about schools that are substandard—in some cases, schools that don't even exist because the federal government has been delinquent in its responsibility to ensure that kids have schools as we our children do across this province. I am prepared to say there's hardly anything that the federal government does on-reserve that works. It's all a failure.

So here lies the question: If the federal government, as I contend, is completely irresponsible and unwilling to take its responsibility when it comes to the lives of those people who live on-reserve, then who should? And I'm not suggesting for one second that we say to the federal government, "We will take over your fiduciary responsibility." Absolutely not. I wouldn't let those suckers off

the hook for two seconds. But my point is, we need to start applying some standards on reserves by way of law. I know it's going to be kind of problematic because the Constitution gives the federal government responsibility for aboriginal issues, but we need to find a way to pressure the federal government and, if necessary, shame them into doing what is natural for all other citizens in the province of Ontario.

First Nations kids should be able to go to the tap in their home, go to the tap in their school, open the tap and drink the water out of any tap in that community and know that they're not going to get sick, as any other child or adult in this province of Ontario is able to do now when it comes to municipal water systems. Why is it that we allow the federal government off the hook for not ensuring that water is made safe?

Every child, every individual should have the right to housing. You go into First Nations communities across this province and the housing situation is deplorable. It is substandard, it is overcrowded, and certainly, something needs to be done to resolve it. I was in Attawapiskat again on Wednesday of last week and the temporary housing measure—this is INAC, the department of Indian affairs, that oh-so-great ministry federally that's responsible for native issues. They said, "Oh, we have a solution to the sewer backup system in Attawapiskat. We're going to make a deal with De Beers Canada and we're going to move the temporary construction trailers that the construction workers lived in on-reserve so we can make that a temporary shelter when we have to evacuate people."

Well, first of all, they're admitting that they're going to have to evacuate people because of substandard infrastructure. Can you believe that? Can you imagine the government of Ontario saying, "We're going to create, in the city of Timmins or Toronto or Thunder Bay or Cornwall, temporary accommodations, because we know every year we're going to have to evacuate citizens because our infrastructure has failed"? Can you imagine that? But anyways, that's what the federal government did through INAC, that oh-so-great ministry that takes care of First Nations issues.

They installed these trailers. To De Beers' credit, they gave them to the community, and that was good on their part. But here's the problem: You have now 90 rooms, about 10 feet by 10 feet square, in which 90 families live, and it's not a temporary accommodation; it's a permanent accommodation. So imagine that. Imagine you, your wife and your two babies, three babies are having to live in a 10 by 10 room. That's where you live.

Why should anybody live in that kind of situation? Not only do they have to live in that, but there are four toilets. You know those toilet bowls? I'm not talking about bathrooms; I'm talking toilet bowls. There are four of them for 90 families. There are four showers for 90 families. There are four stoves for 90 families. People are having to line up at the bathroom by shift, having to cook by shift and figure out when they're going to bathe. Would we allow that in Toronto?

Let's say we had a situation where we had an evacuation of some type in a city or town somewhere in Ontario. We would make sure that people were able to have some adequate type of temporary accommodation. But then we would be in there trying to fix it, saying, "Let's fix whatever the problem is so these people don't have to be continually evacuated." If we don't accept it for any other citizen in the province of Ontario, then why are we accepting it for First Nations individuals?

I know that some people are going to say, "Bisson is a one-trick pony. Whenever he gets a chance, he comes into the House and talks about these native affairs issues, these aboriginal issues. Maybe he's talking about that too much." I talk about it because nobody else does. I'm tired of going onto reserves in my riding and in Howard's riding and in other people's ridings where I continually see the same thing. Yes, there's progress being made. But, oh, my God, they're little baby steps, because it's all about incrementalism with the federal government.

I have no use for the federal government. I am so peeved with those guys when it comes to their lack of response or their lack of responsibility and doing nothing for citizens such as we see in First Nations. They're so busy talking about absolutely nothing on the Hill that has to do with anybody else that they can't find a solution for some of our first citizens in this province and in this country.

So, yeah, I raise these issues. I wish I didn't have to. I wish that communities on reserves across Ontario and Canada were flourishing, as many of our communities are, and people had hope, and people had safe drinking water and places to live and good schools for their kids and paved roads and sidewalks—you know, those kinds of things. But it's not the case. So, yeah, when this type of debate arises in the House and when, in this case, we're talking about safe drinking water under Bill 72, I'm going to raise it, because I believe Ontario has to be the solution. I didn't say part of it; the solution.

I say to my honourable friend the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and to the Premier, that I understand their argument when they stand here and say, "We can't take over what the federal government doesn't do." I hear you. I'm not asking Ontario to all of a sudden say, "You feds stand aside. We're taking over. We're coming with our chequebook." That's not what I'm asking for. What I'm saying is that we become the solution, because what is clear is that the federal government is not going to do it. How can we, as legislators, and the government of Ontario stand aside and watch an absentee landlord in those reserves across this country?

I say to the Premier and to the cabinet and to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs that I want us to be the solution. I want us to hold the federal government accountable for safe drinking water standards on reserves. I'm not saying we have to pay for it. I'm saying we need to figure out how we force the federal government to do what is naturally done in every other community across this province. If my neighbour digs a well, there are standards by which we drill the well, extract water from

the well and, if it's any kind communal water system, make sure it is safe for people to drink, but we do nothing about entire communities because they happen to be reserves? I think we need to be the solution.

I think the provincial government has got to think about what is our plan when it comes to making sure the federal government does take its responsibilities, and yes, if necessary, us ponying up some dollars as well, because we are benefiting from much of what is happening now within First Nations territory. We know the De Beers diamond mine. We know that Detour Lake is about to start, a 60,000-tonne-a-day gold operation. Can you imagine how big 60,000 tonnes a day is? The OPG water development, \$2.7 billion; the money that's going to generate for the province of Ontario through Hydro. The Ring of Fire is being talked about and touted as a great thing. Well, we are going to benefit from those territories, and I think we need to be part of the solution and, yes, we need to help with infrastructure as well.

What is clear is that the federal government is not going to do anything so long as we continue the policy of Ontario and federal government, which has been, "You don't say anything about what I'm doing, and I won't say anything about what you're doing when it comes to First Nations."

Policing, a shared responsibility—the federal government pays 51%; we pay 49%—but they're under the Police Services Act. That was a provincial act the last time I checked. We have situations across First Nations where there aren't adequate stations for the police to work out of, and there isn't adequate jails to house people when they're being picked up for whatever it might be, overnight or for a couple of days, due to an altercation of some type with the law or they're being held until they're transferred to a court or jail or they're being picked up for impaired—whatever it might be.

0920

We know the effect of that. There was a fire in Kashechewan where two men died in jail. Why? Because the jail didn't meet minimum standards when it comes to safety. What was used to lock the jail cells was a chain with a padlock, so there was no easy way of opening the door in case of an emergency. The officer ran in to where the men were being held and was trying to pick the lock with the key, but because of the smoke and the intensity of the fire, he wasn't able to get the key in the lock. Imagine what that person lives with every day, knowing he wasn't able to put the key in the lock to let the men out of the jail and they died. Imagine what that officer feels today. There was no fire detection system. There was no smoke detection system. There wasn't even a fire alarm, for heaven's sake. Two men died in the fire as a result of not having adequate standards.

Everywhere else in Ontario there is a standard when it comes to how we operate our jails. Can you imagine if the OPP or the local police in Sarnia or London or Kirkland Lake had to work in the conditions that NAPS, Nishnawbe-Aski Police, have to work in and what the citizens would have to deal with if they ever came in

contact with those jailhouses? There would be an uproar. My God, the government of Ontario and the Solicitor General—there's no way we would allow that to happen. Why do we allow it to happen in First Nations?

I'll tell you why. The federal government doesn't give a hoot. They don't see First Nations as equal citizens across this country. They see them as: "We made a deal with you guys. Go away. Hide on your reserves. We're not interested. We'll let INAC deal with you." INAC: Boy, I've got things to say about them, but that's a whole other issue. I can't say most of them, because it would be totally unparliamentary.

Here we are again: a question of standards, with inadequate standards in most of our jails and most of our police stations across the area.

The case of this contractor's trailer in Attawapiskat: I raised in the House last when I came back that those trailers—this is all going to be in writing, and we're going to put both the federal and provincial governments on notice if that hasn't been done already. There is no fire detection system other than a camera that a security guard watches. In other words, if a fire were to start inside one of the rooms, we'd have no way of knowing until the fire came out, and by then it's too late. There is no fire suppression system—sprinklers or whatever it might be—and there's no fire alarm. You've got 90 families, and if a fire starts in one of the rooms in one of those units and somebody finds out and runs and tries to pull the fire alarm, there's none. It doesn't work.

Why do we allow that to happen? I really ask myself, "Is it because we don't care?" I know that members in the House are all honourable members, and they care. I do know that. I look at my friend Mr. Levac, whom I've worked with on a number of aboriginal issues, and whom I consider a friend and an ally on those issues. The issue is that we can't continually let the federal government off the hook. In the case of police stations, they're under the Police Services Act and 49% paid for by us.

Take a look at infrastructure, when it comes to water, when it comes to housing, when it comes to roads—any infrastructure. It doesn't exist in First Nations communities. People need to understand that there are very few reserves across Ontario where proper infrastructure exists. There are a few, but not a heck of a lot of them. In the vast majority—90% of them—it's a pretty dismal situation. Why do we allow that to happen?

I say to the government, "Yeah, the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act, I get it." I have no problem with the concept of what you're doing in the bill; however, there are problems with what you've done in the bill. I'll let Mr. Tabuns, our critic, speak to that in more detail.

I wanted to take this opportunity to say that we, as a province, must ensure we take responsibility for the citizens of Ontario no matter where they live, and that includes First Nations. The day we start doing our jobs, as legislators and the government of Ontario, in ensuring there are standards that are applied on reserves when it comes to safe drinking water, when it comes to proper

infrastructure, when it comes to schools that are adequate for the needs of our children—once we start to do those things as a province, it will force the federal government to take on its responsibility and also sort of cipher out what we have to do, as the Ontario Legislature, in order to ensure that the citizens who live on reserves across this province are able to take similar things for granted that we do in our communities when it comes to essential things such as safe drinking water.

I thank the members for allowing me the time to put those items on the record, and I look forward to their comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: I was listening intently to my colleague and friend from Timmins–James Bay, and I want to tell him right off the bat that he struck a chord with me. He struck a chord with me in his speech inasmuch as the missing-in-action federal government, the difficulties we've had in my riding in ensuring that that's happening. But I will give him some good news, and that is that with the Chrétien government and then with the Harper government, we finally did get some water relief. There's a plant being built, but it has been a long time coming.

The other part to that is that I tend to agree with the sentiment he's trying to raise, and that is that we've got to find a way to navigate this political quagmire. We've got to find a way to navigate the pressure that needs to be put on the federal government, because if we could do that relief valve he's talking about, I'm absolutely convinced we can actually get into the claims. We can actually get those things resolved, and inside of the partnership that he's talking about.

I'm optimistic. I honestly believe that there are enough people outside of the federal government at this time who are starting to come together. Municipalities are making agreements, such as what has been happening in my riding. The people themselves are beginning to be educated about the condition that they're living in. This is southern Ontario, one of the richest places in the world, and we have the circumstances that you're describing? It's not acceptable.

For myself, I believe dearly in what you're talking about. I agree with your philosophy. I agree with your sentiment that says, "It's our neighbour. Somebody is there who's in distress. We should be helping." We've got to help ourselves find a way to navigate that quagmire.

I'm going to ask my government to try to work that way and respect, at the same time, not letting the feds off the hook. I want to be strong about my emphasis, and I know you are too. So I agree with my colleague, and I thank him for his comments today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Timmins–James Bay, I think, should be highly praised for his careful attention to the First Nations' plight, as he described.

We've heard that a number of times over the past several years, about the unsafe drinking water on-reserve. To think that they have a new plant and are unable to manage it properly isn't a good thing. I don't know why they have to actually go to a federal ministry. I think they should take some of that and have an on-site person, a qualified First Nations person trained in the proper kind of monitoring and measuring, because it is their water.

In fact, if you look at this bill and the comments that he was making, I would hope to have the chance this morning to speak on it because I think the government, although this is their second bill on water, still doesn't quite get it. In fact, I think if you stay tuned, some members on this side have said that they characterize this entire Bill 72 as smart meters for water. Now, you might wonder what that means. In fact, I think what they're trying to do under water quality is monitoring it. It's also another sort of suspicious move, if you will, of downloading another responsibility. Mr. Speaker, you would like this: While sounding like doing the right thing, they are actually downloading it to the municipal level. I'll be reporting to the House this morning on an important bill issued to the joint works committee at Durham region by Mr. Cliff Curtis, the commissioner of works, as well as Mr. Clapp, the commissioner of finance. It clearly makes the point that this is downloading.

So I look forward to that, and I thank the member for his remarks and hard work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I understand where the member from Timmins–James Bay is coming from when he speaks about the small communities. Some of the communities that I visited with him back when I was on the finance and economic affairs committee were Attawapiskat and Moosonee, and it really took me back to the days as a consulting engineer, where we were dealing with small municipalities. The technology is often too complex. We take the city technology and we put it in the small communities and it doesn't work.

The federal government has that responsibility. They should be doing something about it. I feel so great that if I'm in Toronto and take a drink of water out of the tap, it is good-tasting water, it's safe water, and it gets us away from all that plastic that we don't want to use.

0930

The city of Ottawa spent tens of millions of dollars upgrading their plants, and our water bills have gone way up, but so they should. The municipalities have to do their best, but they have to have the revenues to properly run their systems, and the small systems are very expensive to run on a per capita basis when you have 1,000 or 2,000 users.

That's one of the things that this government is doing to make sure small municipalities have high-quality infrastructure. We have a program for the small—I believe it's 2,500 connections, so approximately a population of 5,000; I'd have to check that. The Ontario small

waterworks assistance program, OSWAP, is over \$50 million. That's a new program that's just going out now.

We are doing a lot. Part of An Act to enact the Water Opportunities Act, 2010, is taking the expertise Canadians have and exporting that to other countries and giving work to our engineers and to our contractors. We have the expertise, and this bill is going to help us pool that together.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I don't think the member for Timmins–James Bay has to make any apologies whatsoever about his advocacy for native people, aboriginal peoples, especially in northern Ontario. Many of us in this chamber, certainly those of us in the NDP caucus, have had the opportunity to travel with the member for Timmins–James Bay to some of those communities, and we've witnessed what are real atrocities. It's an honour to have the member here in the chamber reminding this government of its delinquency, that is to say the government's delinquency, in addressing the needs of those Ontarians. You travel to some of those communities and you're not even sure you're in Canada anymore. Certainly the people living in those communities don't feel that there's any connection with Queen's Park, or Ottawa, for that matter.

I, for one, as a southerner who has been fortunate enough to be witness to those atrocities, find it appalling that this government repeatedly would simply shrug off the concerns of the member for Timmins–James Bay and our colleague the member for Kenora–Rainy River as well—would shrug them off and somehow say, "Well, it's not our problem. It's a matter for the federal government." The responsibility of the province extends beyond North Bay. It somehow strikes me as tragic that here at Queen's Park there's far too often a perception that the province of Ontario begins and ends at the intersection of Yonge and Bloor. Well, it doesn't. It encompasses a whole lot more than that, and it's about time that this government stepped up to the plate and accepted responsibility. I suppose an apology would be in order but, more importantly, some action on behalf of those communities that Mr. Bisson speaks of, and the people who struggle daily to live in them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Timmins–James Bay has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to thank members for their comments, and I just want to respond to one particular part, where the member for Oshawa—or Durham, I guess it is—says, "Why don't the communities themselves do the water testing?" They'd love to. Where is the federal government with the money to help do the training so that they can qualify the people to run the water plants? That's the problem. And where is the federal government in designing water plants that are able to function and have the capacity for the water needed in those communities, knowing that those are communities with very quickly increasing populations?

In Constance Lake right now, another reserve in my riding just north of Hearst, everybody is now on bottled water, and they're having to bring water trucks in from nearby water sources to pump water into the water system in order to provide water for that community. So if there is a fire, there's no ability to fight that fire, because they wouldn't have enough water to run the fire truck. But the federal government is still haggling about what the solution is to resolve the water issue in Constance Lake. They're trying to minimize their financial exposure to the solution by proposing something that the community already knows is not going to meet the needs and is not going to be able to provide the quantity and quality of water that that community needs now and into tomorrow.

That's the problem, and that's why I'm saying—and my colleague Mr. Kormos, the member from Welland-Thorold, is right—that we need, as a province, to take our responsibility and we need to say to the federal government, “There are standards when it comes to drinking water in the province and you're going to bloody well follow them.” If they don't like it, we need to find a way to force them to do it. If we have to drag them kicking and screaming and we've got to shame them, we've got to do whatever we've got to do, we just go and do it, because it is what this Legislature should be doing. The provincial government says they want a new relationship with First Nations; this is the way to prove it. Start that new relationship by becoming allies of First Nations and making sure that at the end of the day we do what's right by them.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: This is a bill that I sort of paraphrased at the beginning by saying it's smart meters for water usage. That's basically where we're headed. Now, what leads me to this suspicion is—I just have to link the point I'm trying to make and the argument we're making on this side. First of all, I'm disappointed—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: There is a discussion going on that's overriding my comments.

I read an article in the paper this morning that I think says a lot about the government's approach to measuring human activity. The article is by Joe Warmington of the Toronto Sun. It says, “It's interesting how the word coping was not mentioned in campaign literature when the Liberals were running in the last election.” I'm quoting from an article here. “But it is on the record for the next one.” So they're setting the table here in the last few days, and this afternoon we'll hear it. “Meanwhile, Premier Dalton McGuinty's phantom talk of a temporary 10% reduction in hydro costs Wednesday reminds one of having to thank a guy because he stops hammering you in the head.”

The consumer is getting the pain and the Premier is going to give them relief. It leaves so many questions unanswered, and we're hearing comments in our ridings about being hammered in the pocketbook and, as Mr. Warmington says, on the head. Here's what is really

going on here. We're not sure if the 10% will be on the total bill, as is the HST, or it'll be on the electrons only, because if you look at the bill, it is made up primarily of other supportive charges, many of which they can't explain in the House. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has asked questions on that.

Going back to the bill, this bill is the second bill on the topic of water. I'm even more surprised—in third reading, I listened yesterday very carefully to our member from Haldimand-Norfolk, our critic for the environment and those topics—very well informed, a very cohesive discussion and argument. This morning, the government members sitting in the House—how few there are—are refusing to talk on the bill. I find that suspicious as well. As we move along here about the backtracking over the last few months, actually—mostly since we came back in September—the government seems to have one direction, and that means reverse.

Now this bill—this is the second, as I said—introduced in May 2010, here's how important it was. The hearings were held in October, when the municipal election was on, and it's my understanding that there was not one elected person at the municipal level—and water is a municipal responsibility; the regulations are provincial, arguably—but there were no presentations or persons from elected office that appeared. There were submissions, and I want to commend Durham region for one of the more complete and comprehensive submissions. It isn't a topic that I would politicize. I mean by that that around the world, the topic or question being asked is, “Is water a human right?” That's the question globally. We look at Third World countries and the lack of clean drinking water is really a primary cause of many of the ailments, including what's going on in Haiti. So let's not treat this topic lightly. It is really important.

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The report issued on June 15 by the Durham region commissioner of public works, Mr. Curtis, and the commissioner of finance, Mr. Clapp, requested the government to have proactive consultations with the following agencies—I'm hoping and putting on the record that they've done that—“to develop a common template for reporting on municipal sustainability and conservation plans: the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Water Environment Association of Ontario ... Water Works Association, the Municipal Engineers Association, Ontario Public Works Association, Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario and the Municipal Finance Officers' Association” and that the report, J-33, “be forwarded to the Ministers of the Environment, Energy and Infrastructure, Economic Development and Trade” as well—and that's the report that I'm referring to; it's report 2010-J-33.

You have to look at this in the context of what is actually going on on a broader scale. There's two things—and this is why it troubles me. I'll get to the point in the few minutes I've been allowed this morning. I have a major issue, which I have spoken to Minister Wilkinson about, in my riding of Durham, and it's on Lakeridge

Road, which is sort of the boundary road between Uxbridge and Scugog township. On that site, there's a quarry that's being questionably rehabilitated by a numbered company, and the numbered company is Earthworx.

There's a public hearing that's going to be held, I believe, next week on that, and I think there will be ministry officials there. I've spoken to the minister several times on this, about the neighbours suggesting that they're dumping materials that are contaminated. In fact, the municipality of Scugog—Port Perry and that area—Mayor Marilyn Pearce has requested Golder Associates to do testing on the soils that are being dumped there.

But here's the issue: That is on the greenbelt, the Oak Ridges moraine, which is one of their cornerstones of environmental quality. In fact, when I asked the first time, I was told that clean fill permitting of dumping is allowed at the municipal level; contaminated fill is allowed and regulated provincially. But the real issue here is, who's testing the soil to see if it's clean or not?

The municipality contracted Golder Associates to do the testing on the soil, and it was found that there was contamination in the soil. I reported, along with the municipality, to the ministry—in fact, right up to the deputy minister. I was so tired of getting baloney for answers and no attention that we had to go right through to the deputy minister. This is the aquifer—and that's the point: The aquifer is right near the bottom on the Oak Ridges moraine, feeding the wells and the supply of water to many, many areas.

To date, I'm unsatisfied with any action taken. There was an order issued on October 25, an order of enforcement and to have a qualified person to inspect these loads. When the loads of material from site recovery—it could be a brownfield site, it could be just levelling the site for some other use. Who's monitoring that activity? Who's manifesting those loads that leave the site in downtown Toronto to the site in Uxbridge, Port Perry? How do we know what's actually in the material? Who's responsible? Who's responsible for the cleanup? Who's responsible for the water? The same thing: When they say Oak Ridges moraine—what they've done with the greenbelt is they've downloaded the responsibility for those sensitive areas with very, very little money to enforce, monitor etc. I find that as one more example.

This bill does basically the same thing. No one—our leader, Tim Hudak, made it very clear to us that we recognize the importance of safe, clean drinking water and support all of the Walkerton recommendations by the O'Connor report, so let's not try to imply that someone in this House, of any side, has some opposition to safe, clean drinking water.

Now, let's put it in context. If you look back to September and October 2006, this very government had a bill, Bill 43, the Clean Water Act. Ms. Broten was the minister at that time, but she had to leave cabinet because of the Taj Ma-garage. But this one was An Act to protect existing and future sources of drinking water to make complementary and other amendments to other acts. That one, I can recall, was really closing in on having higher standards for private wells.

Now, on those private wells, I'm the person who puts the well in and spends the \$20,000 for the well, or other people who have a private well. The suggestion out there was that they were going to start charging you for the water that you take out of the aquifer through that well. Well, they denied that, but I want that on the record as, "stay tuned." Remember, I started by saying that this whole thing is rather suspicious, because we call it the smart meters for wells, and this is just a strategic step along the way—responsibly so—to downloading it to the consumer, to the private citizen who is already strangled on every single thing they do.

It's called the HST, for one thing, which restricts every single expenditure or service. Whether it's physiotherapy or getting your income tax done, it's all going to be taxed. On every single activity or service, you're being taxed, and this—

Mr. Jeff Leal: A point of order, Mr. Speaker: I always enjoy the very well-informed remarks from the member from Durham, but we may be veering slightly off topic—certainly at your guidance, Mr. Speaker, as we continue the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I appreciate the point, but every once in a while he does refer to the bill and he certainly talks about water, so I'll let the honourable member from Durham continue.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Speaker. I will try to connect the dots here. Some people, perhaps, aren't listening intently enough to realize that I see a suspicious recurring—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Theme.

Mr. John O'Toole: —theme of command and control. That's really what I'm worried about. It's Father Knows Best, but it turns out that he really doesn't.

In fact, if you look, all of the things you've backed—the eco tax. We would support a proper reduction, a source reduction of environmentally sensitive material. What they were doing was quite the opposite: They were just collecting tax on it, on the plastics and things that couldn't be recycled. It was absurd, but it was a great tax grab because every dozen eggs you bought with that plastic on it, you would have to pay tax on it. Rather than dealing with trying to reduce and eliminate the source itself, they have the most perverse approach: They think, "Tax it."

Here's what energy is doing: The smart meter is actually a cash register for the government. The smart meter says that you're going to pay more whenever it's the logical time to do the function, which is washing your clothes or cooking your food. All those times, the rate is double; it's actually double. If you look at the charts, the normal rate is about five cents and the high peak rate is about 10 cents, nine-point-something. They're encouraging you, the Premier says in a gleeful tone, to do your laundry on the weekends. This is micromanagement, and I see it in water. I see the same thing in water. I see the same thing—

Hon. Carol Mitchell: When was the last time you did laundry?

Mr. John O'Toole: Well, I would say—
Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: Now, see, I've touched a nerve because the Liberals—you see, I am a parent of five children. In fact, I was a single parent of five children for a while. So don't—look, just stay to your own script. If you have a script, you can get up and speak; otherwise, listen up.

I will try to give you the information that I've received from Durham region, which says that you already have a lot of tools. You have the Lake Simcoe Protection Act and the Oak Ridges moraine act, the conservation act—requirements for municipalities to show leadership in water conservation.

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This goes on to say, "Part II of the proposed act would establish the Water Technology Acceleration Project (WaterTAP) as a non-crown corporation to 'grow globally competitive companies, and provide high-value jobs in Ontario's water and waste water sector.'" The Ministry of Research and Innovation fact sheet says this. The government has allocated \$5 million annually over three years to hire some—eventually, the municipality is going to have to pay for this.

They are going to be required to submit sustainability plans to the ministry—circumvents the autonomy of council. It says, "Although staff recognize the merit in requiring an asset management plan as part of the sustainability plan for water and sewer systems, there are numerous concerns with the sustainability plan requirement as follows...."

What they're requiring them to do is hire consultants to do various capital appreciation and monitoring of systems and then return this to the ministry. What's missing is any funding to do this. When you raise the requirements without the right support mechanisms in place, you're raising taxes locally. If you think it's that important, put your money where your mouth is. I would say that's what's missing in this bill. It's what's missing in the electricity bill.

When I look at electricity, the Green Energy Act sounds great, the same as this sounds great. Look at the detail. You can see it on your bill. The consumer is paying through the nose. Right now, they are paying for solar power—Mr. Speaker, you know this yourself in your area—80.2 cents a kilowatt hour. What are you paying for it in your home? It's five or six cents. Where is that other 60 or 70 cents coming from? It's coming from you from another pocket. They're taking credit for making electricity twice as expensive.

They often refer to countries like Denmark—this is important—as a country with a balanced sustainability energy plan. We should look at the best practices, for sure. Let's look at the other side of it. The cost of energy in Denmark is 34 cents per kilowatt hour.

Okay, let's take your bill. There have been 500 questions asked on it here in the House; Ms. Horwath has asked a lot, along with our leader, Tim Hudak. What it is today is 10 cents a kilowatt hour, plus all those other

charges, and plus the HST on top of everything—it's about eight cents a kilowatt hour. It's between five and 10, so we'll say eight cents a kilowatt hour. Four times eight is 32, so if your bill is \$100, it's now going to be \$400. It's that simple. Do the math.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: It's not that simple.

Mr. John O'Toole: Tell the people the truth. Use the green language framework, and then tell them the truth about what it's actually going to cost you.

Give consumers choice: "If you want Bullfrog Power that's 18 cents, sign here." That's what you should tell them. Do this in the time of the economy when we have high unemployment, poor investments—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: The Minister of Agriculture is talking about deregulation. I'd like them to explain on this bill, Bill 72, how much money they're transferring to the municipalities to pick up these increased standards and regulations, monitoring and capital monitoring reports. You tell me if this isn't downloading by stealth. What I'm pointing is—well, it's a smart meter. Now you have the meter on the water meter—and it clearly says that it's got to be full-cost recovery. So if I say to the waterworks employees, qualified people, that they've got to do these new functions—monitoring, testing, testing for more materials, report to the ministry, hire new staff, with the computer system to do it—that's going to be on your water bill, just like today it's on your electricity bill. I think this is absolute deception.

I can honestly say to myself, everybody wants clean water and safe, reliable, affordable electricity. These are essential commodities for persons at all income means. It's a universal discussion around the world in terms of safe, clean—but what they're doing is they're downloading it. They're actually commercializing some of the activities, which will drive up the prices.

I can say that when I look through the Durham region report, and the question of autonomy at the lower tiers as well, it's sort of like the greenbelt—I'm going back to the issue at Lakeridge there, where the aquifer is threatened by contaminated material potentially being deposited right over the aquifer, and the province hasn't given them five cents to monitor it, to test the materials, and some kind of standing. So I blew the whistle last week. I went right to Beggs, the deputy. I said, "Look, you know now that people think it's contaminated"—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. John O'Toole: Can I have unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, for more time?

Interjections: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I heard a no. Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I, for one, applaud the member from Durham for his analysis of this bill. It's a sop to those Ontarians who are enthusiastic about environmental issues, but it's nothing more than a sop. It's shallow, it's hollow.

One of the problems that the member for Durham understands and that certainly impacts on the communities that I'm proud to represent is that you can't talk about encouraging clean water technologies without providing communities like the ones where I come from that have been bankrupted by this government's job destruction policy, without financing that infrastructure in those communities.

Understand, where I come from, places like Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold, even St. Catharines have lost huge chunks of industry over the course of the last four, five and six years, and thousands and thousands of jobs. It's not just the job loss; it's the loss of industrial tax assessment. We don't have factories anymore; we've got brownfields. The largest single employer in Welland is Canadian Tire Acceptance, a call centre, when it used to be Atlas Steel and Union Carbide and Page-Hersey and Welland Tubes and half a dozen forges.

You don't just lose the jobs, you lose the tax assessment. That means that in cities like Welland, Port Colborne, Thorold and St. Catharines, you can't invest in the infrastructure. That means that water pipes rust and corrode underground. That means that sewer pipes crumble. That means that you threaten the quality of the water as it's being delivered to people's homes, and that means that in places like Niagara region you lose thousands and thousands and thousands of litres of water every year through leakage in the system. So unless this government is prepared to invest in communities themselves and end the download that impacted communities seven, eight and nine years ago, it's blowing hot air.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Certainly it's a pleasure to make a few comments on what could be described as a very wide-ranging discussion from the member from Durham—with somewhat convoluted arguments at times, I would like to suggest.

I want to pick up on a couple of his points. He certainly is known to make his views known to the Minister of the Environment, John Wilkinson, on a number of occasions, and I hope he will acknowledge that the minister acted very speedily when made aware of the situation in Scugog that he referred to.

Another letter from the member from Durham to the minister was extremely useful in terms of information about Monoxygen, that uses an ozone water purification system. This is exactly the kind of company this bill will help, bringing good jobs to Durham and across Ontario, so the minister was really pleased to get that information from this member. That is, of course, why we are so disappointed that in fact the member voted against this bill during second reading.

Knowing that the Conservative Party is concerned, obviously, about business interests in particular, I'd like to mention to the member that earlier this morning, in fact at a breakfast meeting at RBC, which has taken a particular interest in the water industry, there was a group of some 80 to 100 business individuals to discuss the

report recently sponsored by Industry Canada, Water and the Future of the Canadian Economy. The audience this morning, which involved so many business leaders, has looked at our bill. It incorporates the elements that they were hoping to see that we would bring forward. In particular, WaterTAP, the Water Technology Acceleration Project, is being applauded widely.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'd like to thank the member for Durham for his knowing remarks. They may have wandered a bit, but it's a broad subject.

When the member brought in the suggestion that the electricity costs of this province, which are now being metered or will soon be metered on so-called smart meters—smart in the fact that they are taking a lot of money out of consumers' pockets, and maybe not so smart on the part of the government, thinking that Ontario citizens would not catch on to this little game and see their hydro bills going through the roof.

The member started his comments by suggesting that this bill is the thin edge of the wedge to start a smart meter for water. Why not have a smart meter for water? After all, it's working in the hydro business, taking a lot of money out of the consumers' pockets that they can spend on their pet projects of windmills and solar energy—solar energy, as the member pointed out, that they're paying 81 cents a kilowatt hour for and selling for eight or nine cents a kilowatt hour. Obviously, they've never run a lemonade stand in the morning in the summertime, because anybody who had run a lemonade stand would understand that you can't buy something for 80 cents and sell it for nine cents and expect that there wouldn't be an increase in costs somewhere along the line.

The member for Durham has pointed this out, and the government would be wise to take very careful consideration of what the member pointed out for them. It hasn't worked in electricity and it won't work in water. I can assure the members that not only will the people in urban Ontario and suburbia be upset about having their water meters affect their water bills, but the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Further questions and comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I think one of the main directions that the Water Opportunities Act, 2010, focuses on is water conservation and innovative technologies, and these are extremely important.

A person I know who's been in the water business a long time, Al Perks from R.V. Anderson in Ottawa, one of the longest-running engineering firms in Ontario—Al has been the manager of the Ottawa office for 25 years now. One of the things he tells me about water systems is that they have to be flexible for all sizes of communities.

Charging the right price for water is difficult in small communities, but this is one of the directions we want to go in, and to suggest that smart meters aren't important for electricity—I can't see anything that is going to ad-

vance conservation as much as knowing how you use that utility. When you think of it, you pay maybe—my own bill—I had my home retrofitted with a new furnace and air sealing etc., and I'm paying about \$80 or \$90 a month currently. I think, for cable, I'm paying about \$70 or \$80. So when you think of what you're getting, it's just amazing that we should not appreciate that smart meters are where the whole world is going. We have to conserve our energy.

With water, we have to look at trying to get systems that focus on what individual communities need, and that's what Al Perks has mentioned: You can't take the major city designs and put those out into the country. You have to be good. With the small communities, the First Nations communities, we have to do a lot of work in making sure conservation and innovative technologies are at the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. The honourable member for Durham has two minutes for his response.

Mr. John O'Toole: I thank the members from Welland, Oak Ridges–Markham, Halton as well as Ottawa–Orléans.

I'm glad that people are paying attention to this very important topic. I suspect that I want to go back to a couple of things.

The member from Oak Ridges–Markham: I have a lot of respect for her. She's a former medical officer of health. She's right: There is a lot of attention being paid to water, and this is not the right kind of attention. This is all about collecting money. If you look at the report I refer to, J-33, I'm going to say quickly that it implements a 100% user-pay system with full metering. That's what it does. That's a smart meter reference I made.

Number two, it says it creates large water service areas and requires amalgamation of systems. It also adds costs to all the efforts. This is in the report. You can look it up. Its target and performance measures will be indicated by the minister. That's problematic. And it says it devolves the autonomy of the regions that actually do the job today.

I think the other part of this was said by the member from Oak Ridges–Markham. I think that the importance of safe, clean water is not the whole story. The issue we're seeing in the paper today about smart meters for electricity is affordability, accessibility. They only think of one thing, and this is downloading to the municipalities and increasing the cost of water for every single Ontario citizen. If you've seen it with smart meters and electricity, you're about to see it in water.

This government has lost complete control or any reasonable plan of implementing essential consumption in Ontario. When you think of it, people wanting physiotherapy today are going to have to pay tax on it; children who want to register in programs are going to pay tax on them; and adults wanting to take tai chi, or whatever it is, will pay tax on it. This is all about tax-and-spend government, and Premier McGuinty has simply lost his way.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker. I'm going to get shortchanged a little bit this morning because I am allowed a modest 20 minutes. I resent that, but it's all the standing orders provide. You're going to shut it down at quarter after, so that means I've got only 10 or 11 minutes. That's okay. I'll come back next time the bill is called, and I'll finish up my time then.

The real fundamental issue here is the lack of funding for municipalities to undertake water conservation measures—end of story. As I told you a few minutes ago, I come from smaller-town Ontario, not the smallest town but a smaller town. Well, Wainfleet is a small town. I come from old, historic communities, that historically were industrial communities—Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold, St. Catharines—and that have been gutted of their industry. That's what I told you a few minutes ago in the brief two minutes allowed during comments and questions.

Take a look at Welland. Atlas Steels: At one time, thousands of workers worked at Atlas Steels. My father was an Atlas Steels worker. As a kid, you'd see this army of green-garbed workers with their black lunch buckets walking down Cameron Avenue, Alliance Avenue, Major Street, to Atlas Steels. It was a steel mill, a stainless steel mill. It's now an empty grassy acreage that is a brownfield. Just as an aside, in smaller-town Ontario, the value of property isn't sufficiently high to justify the private sector in remediating it—as compared to, let's say, Toronto or Winnipeg—which means that it's very difficult to develop on these properties. That's Atlas Steels. Union Carbide: Again, the government here at Queen's Park—these were the canaries in the coal mines, because they were the precursors to the huge hemorrhaging of industrial jobs in Ontario. But it was the beginning, and you saw the inertia develop.

Atlas Steels, specialty stainless steel, the only manufacturer of its type in Canada, used to provide the drill rod for Sudbury Inco, for drilling. Now I'm told that Sudbury Inco buys that rod from Europe or other international sources because it's not available domestically. Union Carbide, gone; Page-Hersey, downsized now; Lakeside Welland Tubes gone—half a dozen forges gone.

And, as I say, it's not just the job loss; it's the tax loss. When you lose these industries, it doesn't mean you need fewer police officers. It doesn't mean that you need less water or sewerage. It doesn't mean that you need fewer firefighters. It doesn't mean that you need less paving on the road. What it does mean is that the cost of doing that is transferred over to residential property owners and, indirectly, even apartment dwellers, or the work that's required to be done simply doesn't get done. In particular, I'm going to talk about Wainfleet and the struggle that they have.

1010

But I also want to mention—because it's perhaps timely—that just the other night, I was reading a newly published book called *The Coke Machine: The Dirty*

Truth Behind the World's Favorite Soft Drink. The author is Michael Blanding. Amongst the other revelations in there—some I was already familiar with, for instance, Coca-Cola's endorsement, participation and support of paramilitaries in places like Colombia, which murder trade unionists. I was in Colombia a few years ago doing a tour with trade unionists and met families of trade unionists who had been slaughtered by paramilitaries at the behest of Coca-Cola. There's a lawsuit right now in the Florida courts with respect to that.

But one of the interesting things was about Coke's venture into the bottled water industry. Their brand name is Dasani. Dasani bottled water is tap water, literally, that goes through a little bit of voodoo water filtration that Coca-Cola claims—nothing particularly fancy. When I read it, I have to remind myself what suckers we are to be buying tap water in plastic bottles and paying more for it than we pay for fine wine, champagne, milk or orange juice. It's incredible. It's a mug's game. And there are some jurisdictions in the States—especially because Coca-Cola is big into buying off school boards. They'll give a particular school X thousands of dollars a year to have the exclusive rights to Coke in that school. Coca-Cola, like other soft drinks of its type, is called liquid sugar by the critics of them. There are jurisdictions in the States that have effectively banned Coca-Cola from their schools.

I know there was an effort here at Queen's Park by a very honourable member to attack the bottled water syndrome, but he, of course, was betrayed by his own colleagues. It was the most unpleasant sight. I was sitting here while that happened. I found it most unsavoury. It happened to be Liberal colleagues, so I suppose it wasn't unexpected. They turned on one of their own in a very embarrassing way. I supported the member. I supported his particular initiative, even though I felt there were some concerns in it, but I supported it because I wanted it to go to committee because I think he raised a very important issue.

Then we've got people like, God bless him, Sid Ryan, when he was still head of CUPE, travelling to municipalities and encouraging people not to use bottled water but to drink tap water because, for Pete's sake, it's a heck of a lot cheaper and, in most cases, it's far superior in terms of quality.

Some of the other stuff in this book, *The Coke Machine*, besides the Dasani water scam, was their experiences in, amongst other places, India, where they were building bottling plants, drilling down into the water table and consuming enough water that they were drying up farmers' wells—literally. They were marketing themselves as benefits to the local community—economic development. They're literally draining the water table and farmers are going out of business because they can't grow crops, because you need irrigation. They used up fresh water supplies. They “also produced solid waste that it distributed to local farmers as fertilizer. When the fields treated by this fertilizer began to lie fallow, and when farm animals that drank water polluted by this waste

began to die, Indian scientists discovered that Coke's solid waste contained four times the tolerable limit of cadmium, which can cause prostate and kidney cancer.”

So the next time you see one of those—they've got all the kids on the hillside, and what's the song they sing? It's nice to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony?—think of the fact that Coke has been poisoning people throughout the world, killing people with its deadly product and slaughtering trade unionists by paramilitaries armed with guns and chainsaws. By the way, it's one of the favourite tactics used by paramilitaries in Colombia when they go after a progressive or a trade unionist. As I say, I encourage people to take a look at that book. I suspect it's probably in the Queen's Park library.

The other bit of reading today is Joe Warmington's column in the *Toronto Sun*. Warmington is a particularly compelling columnist—very capable, very competent, very readable and very clever. He truly is eclectic. When I talk about this bill as being a “sop,” I think Joe Warmington addresses what this government is doing with legislation like this. He's commenting in today's column on Premier McGuinty's comment that “We have to make sure families can cope.” So Warmington uses coping as a jumping-off point.

“So you'll help us cope?” he writes.

“How generous, Mr. Premier. Must have found some of that missing eHealth billion?”

“The truth is he”—McGuinty—“doesn't have a clue about how ... Ontario taxpayers,” already \$19 billion in debt, “are coping.”

“But he will find out next year.” He's referring, of course, to the 2011 election.

He writes further, “McGuinty smirks like he's joking around on an episode of the Rick Mercer show. But there is no laugh track in Ontario these days.”

“Meanwhile, do you think he does his laundry at 3 a.m. as he suggested Ontarians do to save money? Does he have any idea of what a disgrace it is asking people to do that in a province where people cradle every second they are not working, or in traffic, so they can cherish that little time with their families?”

“It's amazing because all of this comes from the mouth of a guy”—that's McGuinty—“who flies routinely to China on a carbon-emitting jet to negotiate away more of our jobs. If he knew anything about Ontario, he'd know what a vacant factory looks like. He should meet the people earning minimum wage, working at two jobs and using their credit cards to survive in a province he has made too expensive to cope in.”

Now, Joe Warmington doesn't identify himself as a lefty by any stretch of the imagination, but he sounds downright red when he writes about the plight of working people in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, when he writes about the plight of families, when they do have wage earners, who have to work at two and three jobs and have to max out credit cards to pay daily bills and keep their heads above water.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Excuse me.

Mr. Peter Kormos: You're excused, Mr. Ramal. It's no problem. It was a delight.

Here we've got a bill that merely sets aspirational levels. What does that mean? Are there concrete goals? Are there specific requirements in this legislation? Of course not. These are aspirational levels.

I fear and regret that we've reached that time where the Speaker's going to adjourn the House to 10:30 so that we can start question period. I'll be back, Speaker, and I'll finish this up when I am.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It being 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we will have question period.

The House recessed from 1018 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I would like to welcome to the Ontario Legislature today Dr. Swarn Lata of Scarborough. Actually, she's the mother of my communications director. She has held various positions on the boards of non-profit organizations and also has a doctor's degree in music as well. We want to welcome her to the Legislature.

Mr. Norm Miller: I would like to welcome Huntsville and district of Muskoka councillor Fran Coleman to the Legislature. She's in the members' west gallery.

As well, Scott Rowe: Scott is the grandson of the Honourable William Earl Rowe, who was Lieutenant Governor of Ontario from 1963 until 1968.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm delighted to welcome, in the members' gallery, members of Trans Health and the Rainbow Health Network. I welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Reza Moridi: I am delighted to welcome the Dr. Fergal Nolan, president of the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada, sitting in the west gallery.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to take this opportunity to welcome to the Legislature the great kids of Gateway Public School in Flemingdon Park and their teachers, Mr. Wayne Belick and Mr. Peter Wiens. Welcome, and have a wonderful day.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would like to welcome two very infrequent guests to the Legislature. Stewart Kiff and Chris Watson are here with us today.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'd like to acknowledge the presence of Ashley McKnight, Mary Campbell and Emily Schacht, who are all master's of social work students at Wilfrid Laurier University. They're here today to attend an event with the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition. Welcome.

Sophia Aggelonitis: I'm very proud to introduce to the House today Leah Morris and Rick Morris, who are here from Hamilton Mountain. Leah is the Ontario recipient of the Council of the Federation Literacy Award.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: In the east members' gallery, I'd like to introduce my constituent Lena Kalaycian. She's

completing her master's degree in public administration at the University of Ottawa.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I'd like to welcome two dedicated teachers from my constituency in Mississauga: John Solarski and Mat Solarski.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'm very excited to introduce to the House today a singer-songwriter and very talented musician, Ron Nigrini; his lovely wife, Maryanna Nigrini; their daughter Melissa; and their son-in-law Jose Iguiniz Romero, who are here from Commanda, Ontario, and are big supporters of the Commanda Community Centre.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I'd like everyone to welcome a friend of mine: the executive director of Community Living Essex County and an outstanding public servant, Nancy Wallace-Gero.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton and page Emily Hryb, to welcome Emily's mother, Jennifer Hryb, to Queen's Park today. Welcome.

On behalf of the member from Brant, I'd like to welcome Ralph Spoltore and José Marques to the east members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Premier. Experts agree that Premier McGuinty is the worst fiscal performer in Canada. Scotiabank says Premier McGuinty is taking Ontario families down a path to where we have fallen behind the rest of Canada. Statistics Canada shows that 41,000 Ontario families have lost private sector jobs since Premier McGuinty's HST took effect. Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters say hundreds of thousands of Ontario families lost manufacturing jobs before the economic downturn. It's because you make energy social policy instead of economic policy. Don't Ontario families deserve better?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Obviously, I welcome the question, but I take issue with the negative, pessimistic and dark perspective brought by my honourable colleague. But I do share the bright, optimistic perspective from the MPP for Leeds-Grenville, who said, "Building future jobs in the renewable energy field is clearly the way to go."

The fact of the matter is, there's a tremendous amount of support within the official opposition for our energy policy. The fact of the matter is, we are creating jobs throughout the province, including in many of their ridings, and they are more than willing, of course, to attend those opening events and to help us celebrate those new jobs that we're bringing to their ridings.

Whether you're talking about the MPP for Sarnia-Lambton, the MPP for Haldimand-Norfolk or the MPP for Leeds-Grenville, they understand how important it is

to find ways to support our policy to create clean energy for Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Premier: It's not only the experts at Scotiabank who say Premier McGuinty is dragging Ontario families down the wrong path. Experts at the Bank of Canada say the same thing. Toronto Dominion Bank warns that the size of your deficits relative to the size of the economy makes Ontario worse off than it was when the NDP were the government. The C.D. Howe Institute warns that your spending and debt leave no wiggle room if factors like interest rates change. Yet Premier McGuinty spends \$2.1 million more than he collects in revenue every hour of every day. He just shrugs when his wage freeze plan has gone badly off the rails. Why don't you believe that Ontario families deserve better?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We know that in fact there are many within the official opposition who support our clean energy plan and particularly the clean jobs that are coming with that.

I also suspect that there are some within the official opposition who support the \$3.4 billion that we invested in the auto sector. I know that the leader called it corporate welfare, but we disagree with that approach. In fact, there are 400,000 jobs across the province that are connected with the auto sector.

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Here's what Export Development Canada said just yesterday: "There were many who considered Ontario exports a writeoff a few months ago, but the auto sector has experienced a remarkable about-face, and exports of industrial goods are also in the double-digit growth zone. Ontario auto production has strengthened enough to spur significant new investments in the sector."

The fact of the matter is that the auto sector has turned around, and we are proud to be there for them and with them in the darkest hour.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Premier: Economists agree that Premier McGuinty is Canada's worst economic manager. Dr. Livio Di Matteo points out that, while you try to confuse families into thinking the financial crisis is to blame, "The fact remains that Ontario's performance is the worst of all 10 provinces," and Ontario's economy has declined every year you've been in office.

Dr. Michael Veall of McMaster points out that despite Ontario families paying more because of the HST, your record deficits will leave our children with a net debt of \$20,000 per person. No wonder the Fraser Institute ranks Premier McGuinty as Canada's worst Premier in comparison to all others.

When will Premier McGuinty understand that Ontario families want change?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that my honourable colleague and his colleagues in the official opposition would like to have Ontarians believe that somehow the global economic recession developed inside our govern-

ment, but I just don't think Ontarians buy that. They know that we were hit and hit hard, particularly because we are the centre of manufacturing in Ontario. They know that we have done everything we could; we're stimulating the economy to the tune of \$28 billion. They see the new roads, bridges, hospitals, courthouses and schools in their own communities. They understand that that has created some 300,000 jobs at a very difficult time.

I know that my friends opposite like to pretend that there's nothing that needed doing. The fact of the matter is that in the face of recession we've made investments. That has entailed a significant deficit, and we'll continue to work with Ontarians to find a way out of that. But in their hour of need, we're there for Ontarians by stimulating their economy.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Peter Shurman: Back to the Premier: Ontario families agree with the experts. They watch helplessly while Premier McGuinty spends \$2.1 million more every hour of every day than he collects in revenue and adds more and more to the debt he will leave our children. That's not how they run the family budget; why is it how you run the provincial budget?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm having to restrain her, Speaker.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: You're teasing me, Premier. Why are you teasing me?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I appreciate the question from my colleague opposite. There was a specific opportunity that we gave the official opposition to show their true colours when it comes to managing government expenses. We said that we wanted to cut the price of generic drugs in half. We wanted to save Ontario taxpayers half a billion dollars that would go to the bottom line. We gave them the opportunity to support our government and, more importantly, to support Ontario families and taxpayers. There are more than a million Ontarians who pay for their generic drugs out of pocket; they don't have a plan of any kind.

When push came to shove, they decided they were not going to stand with Ontario families, they were not going to stand with Ontario taxpayers; they decided to stand with big money. So once again, there's a revelation—an occasional revelation but an important revelation—as to where their real priorities lie.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: What the Premier doesn't understand is that Ontario families need a chance to catch up, but what Premier McGuinty and his team sincerely believe is that Ontario families have some infinite ability to pay for all of his expensive experiments, which is why he did not stop Disney cast members from training LHINs on quality service; Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga from converting a garage to an emergency room; ultrasounds for dogs in Peterborough hospital; \$7,800 for a hospital consultant's vacation in Japan; Christmas luncheons and bonuses for health consultants; and dinner and drinks for hospital consultants.

What makes you think Ontario families should have to pay for all the cheats you simply will not stop?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think what's important today—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think it's important to note that yesterday, we sat with members opposite in the estimates committee. We had an opportunity to talk about the Ontario economy. What was so informative for all of us was that the members of the official opposition actually agreed that the Minister of Economic Development and Trade is doing a tremendous job in selling Ontario to the world. They said openly, "We agree." When we showed examples at committee yesterday of the kind of innovation that the Ontario government, partners with our Ontario companies, creates and takes to the world, this particular member, my official critic, said, "We agree."

I think that should speak loudly to the people of Ontario, who want good jobs so that they can afford to live in the lifestyle that they choose. But that member opposite needs to be—

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: Yesterday, the minister did agree that she is the grande dame of the theatre. I want to tell you that.

Ontario families need a chance to catch up, but what this Premier offers them when he backtracks on his expensive energy experiments is to take \$1 billion from their own pockets to pay them a hydro bribe.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: I withdraw that.

Only an out-of-touch Premier as this one is would think that because the deficit is \$19 billion instead of \$20 billion, he has \$1 billion to play with. It's kind of like a guy who's overdue on his rent, has maxed out his credit card and owes his friends and family money, but when he finds 50 bucks in an old jacket, he goes out and blows it on a round of beer for his buddies.

You wouldn't put up with a friend who acts that way. What makes you think Ontario families should put up with it from a Premier?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think Ontario families—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Hamilton East. Member from Lanark. Member from Halton. Member from Durham. Member from Lanark. Minister?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think what's really important is that people are going to want to know, and they will hear this afternoon, that in fact our deficit is going to come out 25% lower than what we anticipated. Even these members opposite are going to say that that's good news for Ontario and good news for Ontario families.

To this individual, who is my official critic for the economy here in Ontario: We're going to say that small businesses are going to look forward to the kinds of support that they have been seeing—they, in fact, have received cheques since last week to support them through the transition—when we changed a tax policy that helps small business, when we're seeing a 20% decrease in the corporate income tax for small business. Surely that member opposite has to support this.

My big question today is going to be, when they hear what is in that economic statement today, will that party support the government position that is going to see clear help, not just for everyday—

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

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The McGuinty government has made a lot of promises recently to Ontario families. They promised the HST wouldn't cause any harm, but people are paying more. They promised that business tax cuts would create 600,000 new jobs, but 34,000 people have lost their jobs since July 1.

Given the Premier's track record of spinning fairy tales, why should people believe today's promises?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I was perhaps being overly optimistic, but I thought that when the leader of the third party had the first opportunity to be in this House subsequent to some rumours about the contents of our fall economic statement, she might want to stand in her place and congratulate us and thank us for doing the kind of thing that she has been asking us to do for a long time. Perhaps during her supplementary, she will want to take the opportunity to do that.

The fact of the matter is, and I'll speak to this a good length in my coming answers, we have a lengthy record of assistance to Ontario families. I look forward to speaking to that.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier said that his \$2-billion corporate tax giveaway would create jobs, but 34,000 families have lost a job since those tax breaks kicked in. He said Ontario's recovery is near, but economists are forecasting a long, long period of very slow growth. And he said that the HST would make life better, but people are paying more to turn on the lights and keep their homes warm.

Why should Ontario families believe the Premier when his remedies, to date, have only caused more pain?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I can't share the same bleak outlook, but I thought it'd be appropriate today for me to recite a little bit of a chronology in terms of the supports that we've put in place for Ontario families and the very consistent position taken by the NDP to oppose each and every one of these.

Three years ago we put in place the Ontario child benefit; it's now \$1,100 per child, and they opposed that. A year and a half ago it was the seniors' property tax grant—we doubled it to \$500; a personal income tax cut—that's \$400 a family for mom and dad; a sales tax credit benefiting nearly three million Ontarians—for a family, it's \$1,040, and they opposed all of that. Then there are HST transition payments; the second payment is going to be delivered this December. It's \$1,000 for a family—they opposed that again.

Each and every time we put forward a specific, substantive measure to benefit families, they stand in the way against that.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Across Ontario families are struggling. Paying the bills is still getting harder. The number of Ontarians out of work has grown by more than 30% since the start of the recession two years ago. The Premier's response has only made life more expensive and dampened the economic outlook for this province.

After years of not listening, why should families believe that the Premier is suddenly on their side?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I talked about what we did three years ago; I talked about what we did a year and a half ago; now I'll talk about what we did six months ago. At that time, we put in place the northern Ontario energy credit—that's \$200 a family; the energy and property tax credit—that's \$1,025 for seniors. We cut the price of generic drugs in half. There are over a million Ontarians who are paying for their drugs out of pocket—they opposed all those provisions. Two months ago, the children's activity tax credit: \$50 per child, \$100 for a two-child family. And then there's full-day kindergarten: for parents of four- and five-year-olds, they're saving hundreds, if not thousands of dollars, on half-day child care.

Again, I say, so that my honourable colleague will hear me, every single time we have put forward a specific, substantive measure to ease things a little bit for Ontario families, they have stood in the way of that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a second. I would just offer a suggestion: The Minister of Economic Development and the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, as there's been questions and answers going on, seem to be having a side discussion. I think it would be much better for all members of this House and our guests that instead of having that shouting discussion across the floor, it would be much easier for them to step outside and talk face-to-face quietly to one another.

New question.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. In September, we launched a campaign to have the HST taken off the hydro bills. We urged families that were struggling with their bills to join the effort. All told, 60,000 people signed the petition we started just six

weeks ago. Together, we sent a very powerful message: Families need relief from the growing cost of living.

People have seen permanent hikes to their hydro bills. On behalf of these people, I'd like to ask: Will the Premier's hydro relief be permanent or just a short-term measure?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We look forward to delivering the particulars of the support that we'll be providing to families when it comes to their electricity bills.

I agree with the leader of the NDP that it's important that we find ways to support families in these lean times, and specifically with respect to their electricity bills. We agree in that area.

What I'd like to have is the agreement of the leader of the NDP when it comes to our determination to move ahead and put in place clean energy. I'd like to have her agreement that it's important that we shut down coal-fired generation in Ontario. I'd like to have her agreement that doing that is good for our health, but especially for the health of our children. I'd like to have her agreement in each and every one of those measures, because there was a time when I did have that agreement, but of late, I have not.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We've been telling the stories of families from across Ontario, families that are facing challenges, like paying the bills or finding a job, families like Helen Crabbe's, who writes, "Please do not allow the HST to remain on our hydro bills. Please help us."

New Democrats have been listening to Ontario families since the very beginning, and it seems the Premier is finally starting to prick up his ears. Why does he only start listening, though, when an election is looming?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I just cited 10 separate instances, 10 separate legislative initiatives that provided specific support to families and, in each every and instance, the leader of the NDP and her party have voted against those.

Here's something else which frankly surprises me. Recently, I was in Hamilton, in fact in the leader of the NDP's very riding. I was there with JNE Consulting, who had entered into a joint venture with a Chinese company that I'd met with on my recent trip to China. They've decided to work together to create 300 jobs in Hamilton in the clean energy sector. That's good news for Hamilton. It's part and parcel of our clean energy policy, and it would be nice to have the leader of the NDP's support for that specific measure insofar at least as it benefits the people in her riding.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier is giving with one hand and taking with the other. The HST on hydro is just plain wrong; it should be scrapped. That would offer permanent relief, real relief for families in this province. Ontario families, in fact, agree. Why is the Premier refusing, then, to offer this kind of permanent relief?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, the leader of the NDP has been talking about this for quite some time. I've

told her that we are in agreement that we need to do something, and we look forward to articulating in some detail the specific support we'll be providing to families shortly in this Legislature.

Beyond that, again, I would ask the leader of the NDP to give some real consideration to supporting our plan to bring more clean energy to the province of Ontario. It's good for our economy because it creates new jobs, including the jobs we've put into her riding. It's good for our health. We learned some five years ago by means of a study that dirty coal is costing our health system nearly \$3 billion. There are premature deaths and all kinds of increased rates of hospitalization and lung problems, especially in children.

Of course, the other thing we're doing through our energy plan is, we're creating more energy to ensure that we have a reliable supply, which is especially important for the manufacturing sector in Hamilton. Again, I'd ask the leader of the NDP for support.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. It appears the Minister of Energy's dire prognosis of crumbling hydro meter syndrome is not the most ridiculous statement to come out of the mouth of a McGuinty Liberal this week. The Premier's denial that electoral politics were behind his latest hydro rate cut backtrack takes the cake.

Having raised hydro rates 75% since taking office, have you really become so out of touch that you think Ontario families are going to believe and fall for your latest attempt to confuse them with your hydro bribe?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: That's just more in a series of misinformation that comes out of that side of the House when it comes to not wanting to tell the whole story.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. We'll start with the Minister of Energy withdrawing his comment.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Okay, Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw that.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Davenport will withdraw the comment that he just made.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Mr. Speaker, of course I withdraw the comment. I'm sorry about that.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Hamilton East is not being helpful to the functioning of this chamber.

Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: As usual, the member opposite is not accurate in his assessment of this situation, nor is he even close. But accuracy is not something, I think, that that party has been very used to bringing forward when it

comes to these issues, and I'll tell you why: because they don't want Ontarians to know the facts about what went on in the energy sector. They don't want Ontarians to know just how far behind we were when we took this portfolio over. They don't want Ontarians to know that when they were in power, we lost 1,800 megawatts of power, like running Niagara Falls dry. They don't want Ontarians to know that under their watch, the use of coal went up 127%. They don't want Ontarians to know that we're doing everything we can—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier McGuinty has backtracked so often on the plans his team has come up with that it's impossible for Ontario families to know where he stands. What they do know is this: Every time he backtracks, Premier McGuinty uses Ontario families to pay for the mess that he and his team have created.

He has made Ontario families pay for his backtracks on eco taxes, the Oakville power plant, his public sector wage freeze plan—that was really good—the HST and the child tax credit. He's at it again with his latest hydro handout, something his finance minister and Liberal insiders say is just the beginning of a whole lot more backtracking and electioneering to come, with taxpayer giveaways.

Which of your long-held convictions will you be putting up for sale next week?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I don't need the assistance. I have enough armchair Speakers at home who like to send me emails, and I appreciate them.

I would just remind all members in this House that, yes, the opposition has a role to play, as the government has a role to play, but we have to ensure that we ask our questions in a manner that is not in any way being derogatory or taking shots at other members. I do take some exception to the comment that the honourable member just made at the end of his last question and would just ask him to withdraw it, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

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

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Our energy policy is all about Ontario families. It's about building a strong, reliable, clean and modern system for Ontario families to run their homes, for Ontario families to run their businesses, for Ontario families to engage in the economic development that's going on, and building a budding clean energy economy here in this province. It's all about those families. We're working with those families.

We are one of the first governments in a very long time in this province to be very honest with Ontario families. We cannot build that stronger, more reliable, cleaner system of energy without making important investments. But we're going to stand with those Ontario families. We're going to help them through this trans-

ition. We will not bring those Ontario families back to the condition you left them in seven years ago. We're going to move proudly forward with a modern, clean, reliable energy system, and we're going to do it standing with—

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

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have a question for the Premier. Just over a year ago, the McGuinty government released a report saying that the HST and corporate tax cuts would create 600,000 new jobs, but since the new tax came into effect on July 1, more than 30,000 Ontarians have lost their jobs. How much longer should Ontarians wait before the Premier admits that his jobs plan is nothing more than an expensive flop?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think it's important to note that a member of the NDP was also at estimates yesterday, when we had hours to discuss the Ontario economy, and a very pertinent fact is important to put in the House today: Our American counterparts have seen a 10% renewal of the jobs that they lost pre-recession, compared to a 75% increase in jobs back to the levels that we had before the recession. These are really important figures, so that we can show how we compare to jurisdictions that we actually trade with. Some 80% of our trade is with these jurisdictions in the US.

It's important to note that again yesterday the member for the NDP came to really talk about how terribly the automotive sector was doing.

Let me say that Chrysler alone, year after year, in the last two years, has seen a 30% increase in sales in Canada alone. This is the kind of renewal that we're seeing—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again, back to the Premier: Unemployment now is still more than 30% higher than it was at the beginning of the recession, and the number of people without a job is up more than 60% since October 2007. The Premier's so-called plan, the HST and corporate tax giveaways, drove up the cost of living for families while creating a \$2-billion annual hole in the treasury.

How can the Premier say his plan is working when people are paying more, too many are still out of work and the economic outlook is so grim?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Let me say this—and we've been up front with the people of Ontario: Ontario had it tougher than any province in the country during the last worldwide recession. We knew, because we are the heartland of industry for the country, that that means the work that we can do as a government, counting on support from even opposition parties for some of our initiatives—when we talk about the advanced manufacturing strategy that just in its program alone created 5,200 new jobs—that's like two Toyota plants in Ontario—our

expectation is that the NDP would support these kinds of initiatives exactly when our economy needs it, exactly when we as a government can help lever the kinds of investments that that program alone brought to the province. We expect the NDP to support new jobs in this province. We expect them to support the economic statement that's going to be tabled in the House later today.

MEDICAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. Minister, this week you announced a \$15-million investment in the Ontario Brain Institute at Baycrest hospital here in Toronto. The Alzheimer Society of Ontario says that 181,000 Ontarians are currently living with dementia and another 255,000 Ontarians will be affected in their lifetime by 2020.

There is already a great deal of research taking place in Ontario that is contributing to a knowledge-based economy and bringing Ontario to the forefront of research and innovation. For example, the Rotman Research Institute at Baycrest hospital is considered one of the top five neuroscience research facilities in the world. Minister, how will this new institute help Ontario reduce health costs brought about by our aging population, and will this investment create some jobs?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I first want to set the record straight. Rather than closing 28 hospitals, like the party opposite, we have built 19. And more than that, as my friend knows, we have used the platform of the brilliance of our doctors and researchers through this brain institute to create the most innovative and exciting research solutions to Alzheimer's and brain cancer. This is life-saving research.

The party opposite wants to shut down this whole process by taking \$3 billion out of our health care system in research, shutting our hospitals, taking jobs away, and robbing seniors of much-needed solutions. We will offer our seniors the best available services in research in the world.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: When announcements like this are made, my constituents often ask me how one comes to the decision that investments like this in the institute are necessary. That's in the context of Ontario families carefully managing their money. They want to be sure that the government does the same with their hard-earned dollars. Ontario is going through some of the most difficult economic times since the Great Depression, and this is a significant \$15-million investment of the taxpayers.

How can my Willowdale constituents and other Ontarians be sure that this investment in the Ontario Brain Institute at Sunnybrook is good value for the taxpayers?

1110

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Unlike the party opposite, we are not afraid of the world or that Ontario can compete with the very best.

As a matter of fact, let me share with my friend. This process began in 2008. Toronto businessman and my friend Joseph Rotman and Dr. Martin, dean of Harvard Medical School, began investigating the possibility of creating the brain institute here in Ontario. They established a council that consulted with more than 70 neuroscientists across Ontario and 50 leading experts. I can't think of a government that did that kind of due diligence on anything previous to us getting elected. The council released a report, and when our Premier met with President Peres, he pitched us because even in Israel, they knew that we in Ontario were their best allies and researchers. We've done the due diligence on money, we're leveraging private sector investment, we have international partners and we will be a leader in curing diseases as one in four Ontarians become over the age of 65—

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

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is to the Minister of Education. The Toronto District School Board is proposing to pay students for getting good grades; a very curious strategy, given the government's decision to do away with grades and report cards. When the minister was asked whether she agrees that Ontario families should be paying students cash for good grades, she refused to oppose the strategy, saying it is up to the board.

In light of today's fiscal update, which I think again is going to show that the government continues to pile up massive deficits, I would ask the minister: Would you be prepared to claw back the money the board thinks it can afford to waste like this and instead reinvest it in front-line education for at-risk students?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: First of all, I don't believe that this is the way to go in terms of supporting student achievement. This government has been very clear: We believe the very best way to support student achievement is to have a qualified teacher in a classroom, not on a picket line; that was the strategy used by the previous government. We have hired teachers. We have invested in good places to grow. As a result, since coming to government, student achievement is up. Class sizes are down. Graduation rates are up. We have increased our investment in education by 40%. We have focused on literacy and numeracy, and our investments and our faith in the front-line people in our education system have paid off, and students are more successful. When they were in government, one out of four students dropped out.

I'm happy to say—

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: The issue is this cash for grades. So far, the minister hasn't indicated that she is prepared to put a stop to the waste of this taxpayer money. Until the Premier backtracked at the last minute,

the minister had no difficulty telling boards that they were to implement the sex education curriculum. It was also no problem telling boards to ban chocolate milk. Also, there was a hands-off approach to the sexual orientation survey in Ottawa, and now the privacy commissioner has weighed into that issue.

However, when it comes to this issue of cash for grades—and the research tells us that's not the solution—the minister has deferred to the boards. What is it going to take for the minister to ensure that the priorities of hard-working Ontario families are addressed?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: We've made it very clear: We don't support that idea. We have listened to what the people of Ontario told us. They made it very clear: They were not in support of public dollars going to private schools. We settled that. We're not in favour of that at all. That was a commitment made by the previous government.

We are investing in our schools and our students. We are investing in classrooms and hiring teachers. We are focusing on literacy and numeracy, and our student achievement has gone up. Class sizes have gone down. Graduation rates have increased. Students are improving. That is the way we believe we need to continue to invest in student achievement.

We have received results. There is more to do. We are continuing to work with our school boards and with families to support their initiatives. They have been very clear and they are satisfied that we are working with—

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

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Attorney General. November 20 is trans remembrance day, and I am joined today by members of Trans Health and Rainbow Health in the gallery. New Democrats have tabled Toby's Act (Right to be Free from Discrimination and Harassment Because of Gender Identity) three times in this House. When will the McGuinty government bring forward its own legislation to make sure that gender identity is included in the Ontario Human Rights Code?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'm sure I join all members in the Legislature in welcoming members of the community to the Legislature. This government has no tolerance for discrimination. We have no tolerance for discrimination based on transphobia. The Human Rights Code protects the transsexual and transgendered community. The decisions are clear: It extends the protection. The message that we want to make sure everybody knows is that protection is there for you if you need it. To anyone even thinking of discriminating on this basis: Don't. It's against the law. It's against the protections of the code.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The Attorney General should know that non-specified rights do not hold up. The Alberta Supreme Court has already ruled on that. That's why there's a growing outcry for such legislation.

Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Barbara Hall herself supports our bill and wrote a letter to the Toronto Star calling for gender identity to be added to the Ontario Human Rights Code. Economic data shows that 97% of trans Ontarians face employment discrimination, 50% live below the poverty line and 41% attempt suicide.

The McGuinty government can help end this discrimination by bringing forward legislation. When will it finally have the political courage to do so?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: We have legislation; it's called the Human Rights Code. The decisions are clear. Those of the transsexual and transgendered communities are protected.

We want to be very clear: It is not helpful to suggest in any way, shape or form that there's some challenge to the existing protections. There is not. The protections are there for those who need them. To those who think that they can discriminate: Do not. The law prohibits it. The decisions are clear. The protections exist. We reject all forms of discrimination in this province.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, my constituents in the riding of Davenport are very conscious of the ongoing construction along the Georgetown GO corridor to accommodate the air-rail link, a key transportation connection between Pearson airport and Union Station.

I'm having a stream of constituents coming to my office concerned about their local environment. Understandably, people want to make sure they live in a safe, clean environment. They want their government to ensure it does everything it can to keep the air we breathe clean.

We know that in May 2009, Metrolinx announced that it is going to study the electrification of the entire GO Transit rail system as a future alternative to diesel trains currently in service. Would the Minister of Transportation, in light of my constituents' concerns, give us an update on the electrification study that Metrolinx is doing right now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I thank the member for Davenport for his advocacy. I know that he is as enthusiastic as I am about reducing gridlock, improving air quality and getting people out of their cars and onto transit.

As he mentioned, Metrolinx is currently studying electrification. It's a very inclusive study. It looks at capacity and service impacts, environment and health, community and land use, economic impacts and system costs. I will be reviewing that study once it's completed and once it's submitted to me.

What I want the member for Davenport and his constituents to know and be clear about is that the Georgetown South corridor infrastructure is being built to be capable of converting to electrification. That's what we're doing. All the bridges and structures and all the grade separations will be designed to meet the greater height

requirements for electrification. Track spacing is being designed to allow for the foundations. Signal systems are being upgraded to allow for an electrified train system. It's not a matter of whether we go electric; it's—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary? The member from York South–Weston.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: The constituents in Davenport and my constituents in York South–Weston will be glad to know that the study is moving forward and that Metrolinx will be building ready for electrification. My constituents want to continue to be consulted on this important issue, and I will continue to advocate on their behalf.

Earlier this week we learned that Metrolinx is now in the process of acquiring the vehicles that will run on the air-rail link. My constituents are very concerned about the type of trains that will run on this corridor right in their backyard, and there is still much discussion about dirty diesel trains. Can the minister update this House on the vehicles for the air-rail link?

1120

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to be clear that the shuttles that will be running on the air-rail link will meet the stringent tier 4 diesel emissions standards. Those emissions standards—that diesel doesn't exist yet. It's being created as the cleanest diesel that will be available. Those shuttles will meet those requirements.

The reason that we're doing this is because we want this air-rail link ready for the Pan Am Games in 2015. That air-rail link is part of the bid book. It needs to be ready.

We're going to be working with Metrolinx, obviously. They're entering into negotiations with Sumitomo Corp. to purchase the 18 diesel multiple units. These are convertible units, so these can be converted from diesel to electric units.

The public engagement process has been very comprehensive. The terms of reference were established in conjunction with the community, so the community—

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

GROWTH PLANNING

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. A couple of weeks ago, late in October, you announced amendments to the badly flawed growth plan for the Simcoe area. You asked for feedback by January 31, 2011. I have to tell you: That date is ridiculous, and it's completely unreasonable. You know that there are many changes on municipal councils, and new councils need time to adjust. They need at least a six-month extension for the feedback on a plan that will be in place—this is on a plan that will be in place for 2031. The end of January is completely unreasonable.

Premier McGuinty sat on the plan for two years with no good reason to hold it up. Will you, Minister, extend the January 31, 2011, deadline by a minimum of six months?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question. The member will know that there was a very extensive consultation process that took place over a period of almost two years. We did issue a proposed amendment, and the proposed amendment will have a 90-day, a three-month period for additional consultation. We believe that's an adequate period of time given how much consulting we had done previously. There has been tremendous pressure from the community, from Simcoe county, to move quickly on the development because, yes, it has been held up too long. What the member is now asking for is for that development to be held up that much longer. We're not prepared to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Well, one would wonder why you would leave it until the writ period of a municipal election. You know councils are not even sworn in until the week of December 1—well, maybe you don't know that. December 1 is when they're sworn in. Your scheme gives them two short months to sort through the plan and get approval for feedback.

After sitting on this plan for two years, you decide to rush amendments at a time when councils are in the lame duck position, and the Christmas season falls immediately after. There's no rush for the amendments. There has been no consultation with the new councils. A deadline extension to the end of July 2011, is completely reasonable. Why are the McGuinty Liberals standing by this sham of a process?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'd like to know what alarm clock woke this member up. He's had all kinds of opportunities to raise this issue with me previously—that's number 1. Throughout the whole process of the Simcoe consultation, throughout the whole current process of considering the amendment that has been released, this member has done absolutely nothing in terms of engagement.

We have consulted extensively. We're consulting over a period of three months. I'm getting very, very positive feedback from many of the municipal councillors. Many of the municipal councillors have indicated, including mayors, that they are very satisfied with the process to date. We will have a final answer at the end of January.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier: I was in Windsor yesterday, where I met with a couple of city councillors. Windsor's council unanimously passed a motion calling for the HST to be taken off essentials like hydro. Why won't the Premier take the HST off hydro and give Windsor families a break?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question, and I know that my honourable colleague is going to commend us when she sees the particulars of the support that we're going to be announcing through our fall economic statement.

I know that the Windsor council gave some thought to this, but what I would say to councils around the prov-

ince is to give some thought to what their local distribution companies might do. We're going to be doing something now to benefit Ontario ratepayers, those folks who receive electricity bills and make payment on them. We're going to be doing something here, as a government, in terms of something that's within our control, but we'd ask the municipal councils as well to take a look at what they might do, especially those who have local distribution companies over which they have specific responsibility.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Windsor has been hit hard by job losses. The unemployment rate is nearly 11% and 1,500 people lost their jobs just last month. Families are having a very difficult time making ends meet.

Will Windsor families see permanent solutions to sky-high hydro bills from their government today, or desperate, short-term promises that expire when the votes are counted?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We've had a lot of opportunity to debate electricity policy in here. We're introducing a new measure here and it will be revealed shortly, through the finance minister, in the fall economic statement.

I appreciate the political perspective that my honourable colleague brings to this—in fact, that's a very important part of her responsibility—but I think it's really important to keep in mind the perspective of the Ontario family. I think what we're announcing today will be received as good news. It will be seen as such: good news. They'll be looking forward to this particular measure taking effect and having a specific impact on their electricity bills. That's fundamentally what this is all about.

I thought that there might be a consensus in this House that we need to do something that is received as good news by Ontario families, and I believe fully that's exactly what we're doing today.

NORTHERN ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. David Oraziotti: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. Minister, while we have not fully recovered from the significant downturn in the economy, we are making progress. The effects of the recession in northern Ontario have been particularly challenging, but I'm aware that your ministry is working in partnership with businesses and industry to grow job opportunities in the north through the northern Ontario growth plan. Provincial support for the Huron Central Railway, St. Marys Paper and the Terrace Bay pulp and paper mill are great examples of the investments and the commitment our government has demonstrated to ensure workers and their families in the north have the opportunity to succeed.

Minister, as you know, it's important that we continue to attract investment in the north. Can you tell us what you're doing to promote investment and economic development in northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I appreciate the question, and there's indeed some good news that's coming out of northern Ontario.

I think it's fair to say our government policies and our Open Ontario plan have positioned our province to remain the number-one jurisdiction in Canada for investment, particularly in the mining sector. Yesterday, that came home in a very significant way when the CEO of Vale Canada announced a five-year investment program for Ontario and for Canada. In Ontario alone, Vale announced it will be spending \$3.4 billion to upgrade mining and processing facilities here. That includes a number of positive pieces of news: \$360 million towards the Totten Mine. This will be the first new Vale mine in Sudbury in almost 40 years. It's expected to begin production in 2011, creating 130 jobs.

Let me also give a bit of thanks to our colleague the MPP for Sudbury for the hard work and advocacy he's done on behalf of that. He knows what good news this is for Sudbury and all of northern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Oraziotti: Minister, Vale's decision to invest in Ontario is certainly great news for our economy and for the families that will benefit from these jobs. Vale is making these investments in Sudbury, a city that has been built on the success of mineral exploration and development. It makes sense that companies would want to invest there. It's clear that Vale's investment will also have a positive impact on all of northern Ontario, including First Nation communities.

Minister, we know it's important to create an encouraging climate for investment. How are you working to ensure that all northerners will participate in strengthening our economy?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: That's just a great question. Again, the good news is continuing to come out of northern Ontario. Another recent investment was made by Northgate Minerals Corp. They opened up the Young-Davidson mine, and they worked very closely with the Matachewan First Nation and got an impact benefit agreement in place. Early in September, my colleague for Timiskaming-Cochrane, Mr. Ramsay, and I were celebrating a groundbreaking ceremony for this extraordinary operation. Again, \$1.5 billion will be invested in that mine and the life of the mine—600 jobs in terms of construction, 275 jobs in long-term employment. This is great news. We've got the potential opening of the largest gold mine in North America, Detour Gold—great news; and the Lac des Iles operation, North American Palladium, outside Thunder Bay, reopened with 180 new jobs—good news. The number one investment jurisdiction in Canada is here in Ontario, and it will continue to be.

1130

RAIL LINE

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, I've recently written you on

the situation regarding the Canadian Pacific line running from Smiths Falls to Mattawa, known as the Ottawa Valley Railway.

Earlier this year, Canadian Pacific announced that it was going to discontinue service on the line and look to sell it. This initiated several possibilities, one of them being the federal government purchasing the line. The federal government's option expired on November 5, and they've decided against exercising that option.

The province has now until December 6 to exercise their option and purchase the line, thereby keeping this vital link open. Minister, will the province be exercising their option and purchasing this line?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I thank the member opposite for the question. It gives me a chance to talk about a very important issue. It's a federal issue, but it is a very important issue.

I think the member opposite understands that in the case of some of the other short rail lines that we've been involved with, we don't own those lines. Those are owned by private operators. Without a federal partner, without the federal government stepping up and having a plan for dealing with these rail lines when a company like CP walks away from a piece of line—the federal government needs to understand that that is their responsibility, in my opinion.

I have met with the short rail folks, and I believe that the only sustainable solution is to have the federal government work with the people who need these lines and make sure that they are in place.

I appreciate the question, but I really think he needs to talk to his federal counterpart about what the solution is.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: All across the Ottawa Valley, stakeholders and municipal governments have voiced their deep concern over the possibility that this line could close. This is the last east-west alternative for cross-country trains hoping to bypass the very congested Toronto corridor. If the line is closed, east-west rail traffic is going to have to go through this very congested Toronto corridor. You could be the last hope to save the line and, with it, improve the economic prospects in the Ottawa Valley.

Minister, I would ask that you would exercise this option prior to December 6 or, at least, that you would sit down with your federal counterpart, the minister in the federal government, to work out some sort of solution to keep this vital transportation link open.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: A few weeks ago, some of you may have seen the celebrations around the 125th anniversary of the pounding in of the last spike. There's a lot of emotional and historical energy around rail and Canada. It's a federal responsibility. It's up to the federal government to make sure that we have that network of rail lines across the province.

I think that there's a lot of work that needs to be done. That's why I say I'm very happy that the member has raised the issue, because it's something that we need to work on as a country, and the federal government needs

to take that responsibility. So I hope the member opposite will go back to his counterpart.

I have actually raised this issue with the new federal Minister of Transport. He knows that it is an issue. I think it is something that has to be talked about in the context of a national transportation strategy, like we have to talk about the continental gateway strategy. All of that needs to be part of a national transportation strategy, and we need the Prime Minister to—

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

ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Two weeks ago, I raised in the House the issue that people in northern Ontario are being restricted from getting access to forest roads in northern Ontario. At that time, you said that you're doing great work working with tourist outfitters, and that's raised quite an ire of protest from people in northern Ontario. It's been brought to my attention that, apparently, there are former and current MNR employees who are actually in the outfitters business, setting the rules in order to restrict access to the forest while, at the same time, being employees of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Now, you know that subsection 39(1) of the Public Lands Act says, "No person holding an office in or under the ministry and no person employed in or under the ministry shall, directly or indirectly, purchase any right, title or interest in any public lands...." If this is the case, what are you prepared to do about it?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'm really pleased to have another opportunity to talk about some of our northern outfitters and some of our northern recreational industry opportunities. I didn't get a chance to elaborate on it the last time as much as I would have liked to—because certainly we have a long history of providing service in the north, and the business climate, and encouraging investments in northern Ontario.

Many of our staff in the north work very hard to make sure that there are wonderful opportunities. I think many people in the south don't think there are recreational opportunities in the north once the summer ends. I want to encourage them to visit the north, to visit those remote locations, and see the great opportunities.

We've been working with NOTOA, particularly. They've been a great partner in working with our government. Certainly, our ministry employees are seized with the opportunity to elaborate and engage people in travelling to the north to visit those locations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, you don't even get it. The point of the question is, there's an allegation by people in northern Ontario that your staff, staff of MNR, have purchased or had crown land leased to them; that they're benefiting from that land; that they're setting the rules to protect the land so they're able to run their own businesses and bring tourists in while keeping local residents out.

You're not the Minister of Tourism; you're the Minister of Natural Resources. I'm asking you, what are you going to do in order to investigate this and, if so, take corrective action?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'm not going to speculate on some of the assumptions and allegations that are made by the other member, but I would like to assure Ontario residents that we have some wonderful areas in Ontario's north, and those crown lands are available for recreational purposes.

We want to make sure that people get to use those parks, whether they come in and fly in or they portage in. I get letters all the time from people who fish and hunt in the north about how excited they are. We have a lot of people from outside of Ontario coming to visit. It's a critical part of our economy to make sure that the north is strong, that we provide those recreational opportunities and that we engage people to see the wonderful asset we have in northern Ontario. This industry brings a lot of jobs to northerners, and I think this contributes to the overall economy.

It's something we're excited about. It's something we're engaged about. And we want to ensure that the experience is enjoyed by as many Ontarians and people outside of Ontario as possible.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question is to the minister responsible for women's issues. Minister, it's clear that when you support a woman's ability to achieve economic independence, you also support her family and the community by extension. While we acknowledge the important progress that has been made over time, we know that there is more we can do to help women attain greater economic security. Women's organizations across our great province are doing that important work every day in this area, and I believe that this government has a significant role to play in supporting women across Ontario and, indeed, in Peterborough. What is our government doing to help women achieve this economic security?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm very pleased that the member from Peterborough, a real champion of his community and particularly women in his community, has asked the question today.

Our government knows that helping women achieve economic security means that we improve their lives, we strengthen Ontario's economy, and we improve the lives of the next generation, their children.

Access to affordable child care is a priority for women, allowing them to enter and advance in the workforce. That's why our government has created 22,000 new licensed child care spaces since 2003 and why we stepped in with \$63.5 million to fill the federal gap when the federal government stepped away.

This September, as we rolled out full-day kindergarten—over 35,000 four- and five-year-olds going into school—many mothers across the province no longer had to choose between their jobs and families.

We've increased the OCB, and we are investing thousands and thousands of dollars right across the province to help low-income women gain the skills that they need to make—

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

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Mr. David Zimmer: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In the first part of my question to the Minister of Research and Innovation, I described the Ontario Brain Institute as being located at Baycrest. In fact, it is located at Sunnybrook. I did correct that in my supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is a point of order, and the member does have the right to correct his record.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Simcoe North has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Infrastructure concerning the Simcoe growth plan. The matter will be debated next Tuesday at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

TICKET SPECULATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE TRAFIC DES BILLETS DE SPECTACLE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 172, An Act to amend the Ticket Speculation Act / Projet de loi 172, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le trafic des billets de spectacle.

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

The division bells rang from 1140 to 1145.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On October 21, Mr. Bentley moved second reading of Bill 172. All those in favour will rise one at a time to be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia
Albanese, Laura
Arthurs, Wayne
Balkissoon, Bas
Bartolucci, Rick
Bentley, Christopher
Best, Margaret
Bisson, Gilles
Broten, Laurel C.
Brown, Michael A.
Carroll, Aileen
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob

Fonseca, Peter
Gerretsen, John
Gélinas, France
Gravelle, Michael
Hoskins, Eric
Hoy, Pat
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Johnson, Rick
Kormos, Peter
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Leal, Jeff

Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Oraziotti, David
Pendergast, Leeanna
Phillips, Gerry
Prue, Michael
Pupatello, Sandra
Ramal, Khalil
Rinaldi, Lou
Ruprecht, Tony
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Smith, Monique

Crozier, Bruce
Delaney, Bob
Dickson, Joe
Dombrowsky, Leona
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Levac, Dave
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milloy, John
Mitchell, Carol

Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Van Bommel, Maria
Wilkinson, John
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Barrett, Toby
Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Steve
Dunlop, Garfield

Hardeman, Ernie
Hillier, Randy
Klees, Frank
Munro, Julia
Savoline, Joyce

Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 57; the nays are 13.

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 17, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

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

The House recessed from 1148 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise and to ask the Legislature to welcome Bette Jean Crews, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and farmers and farm groups who are here today to support the resolution to review the OSPCA, which we will be debating later this afternoon.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'd like to recognize the following visitors to the Legislature—in the west lobby and in the public galleries—for this afternoon's debate and vote on the OSPCA resolution: Lynn Perrier from Thornhill, the founder of the Reform Advocates for Animal Welfare, a very dedicated animal rights activist; Sunny Reuter and her daughter Samantha and Danny Mihalcea from Toronto; Gord Macey from Toronto; Douglas Brown from Newmarket; Carla Davidson, who has flown in from Timmins to be with us today; Carl Noble, a former director of the OSPCA; Diane Nielson, Alana Peroff, Sue Nieves, Nasim Mansour, Sandra Lovell, Natalie Serviero, Shannon Broadfield, Katherine Chapman, Beth Linqvist, Paulette Young and Leanne Tucker. Please join me in welcoming them all to the House today.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I, too, would like to recognize the following visitors in the House today who have come for this afternoon's debate on the OSPCA resolution: Andrea Goulding, Steve Straub, Lesley Campbell, Linda Reid, David Honey, Pamela Pitney, Helen Pilicoski, Lisa Gorecki, Daniel Belanger, Laura Hobbs and Michael Franklin. Please join me in welcoming them today.

Mr. Steve Clark: I would also like to recognize the following visitors in the House today who have come for

this afternoon's debate on the OSPCA resolution: William Massey, who is from Brockville; Trudy Booth; Jack Alexandere Amaral; Maureen Johnston; Fran Coughlin; Elizabeth Marshall; Jim Wilson; Janice Henry; Ron Jordan; Ted and Joan Sheppard; Glenn Carter; Elisabeth Jimmink; and Claudia Vecchio. Please join me in welcoming them today.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I would like to recognize the following visitors in the House today who have come for this afternoon's debate on the OSPCA resolution: Shannon Broadfield; Jim Moyer; Corinne Thaw; Leanne Tucker; Stanley Burns; Angie Laurusaitis; Wendy Reist; Lynn Pitney; Carol Tovell; and Ariel Lang. Please join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I would like to welcome Fred Hahn and members of the executive of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, who are here for the statement this afternoon.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I would like the House to recognize and welcome a number of visitors who are here today for the debate on the OSPCA resolution: Henry Vandenbrock; Dean Stewart; Liz Marshall; Deb Madill; Sunny Reuter; Jack Maclaren; Karen Bainbridge; the Probst family; Wayne and Jenny Ireland; and Joan and Ted Sheppard.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I take this opportunity to welcome some guests in the Speaker's gallery today: Louroz Mercader; Scott Priz, who is visiting from Melbourne, Australia; and Michael Binetti. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to welcome Sarah Ker-Hornell from FilmOntario, who has joined us this afternoon as well. Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PROVINCIAL DEFICIT

Mr. Ted Arnott: I rise to read a statement on the importance of understanding the provincial deficit. On Tuesday, the finance minister announced the deficit for 2010-11 would be \$18.7 billion. As a result, by 2012, Premier McGuinty will double the debt, taking it to \$289.3 billion during his term of office.

The debt and deficit are an admission of abject failure of the province's wage restraint, HST, energy experiments and so-called Open Ontario schemes. It's also an admission that this government has been unable to control its spending, and since the government isn't serious about controlling spending, it has only one choice, and that is to increase revenues.

Despite hitting Ontario families with billions in new taxes and fees, the McGuinty Liberals barely made a dent in the largest provincial deficit in Canada. Families continue to pay more and receive less.

The \$18.7-billion deficit clearly shows what members of this side of the House have been saying all along, and

that is: The McGuinty Liberals don't have a revenue problem; they have a spending problem.

DIABETES

Mr. Dave Levac: On November 14, concerned parents, children and medical professionals participated in the 20th annual World Diabetes Day. This day is the focal point of a global effort to increase diabetes education and awareness. Diabetes is a disease that is rising very quickly, and unfortunately, particularly amongst children.

On Monday, we here at Queen's Park had the honour of being visited by parents of children with type 1 diabetes. They brought with them their children and shared their stories of the difficulties a child faces managing their disease while in school. I hope that those of you who had a chance to speak with them gained a new awareness and support their concerns.

Diabetes in Ontario Schools is one of the many organizations around the province that offer support to families that have a child with the disease. The Brantford chapter of the Canadian Diabetes Association is another, and it will have its annual Christmas party for their children with diabetes on November 28. Rumour has it that Santa himself will be making an appearance.

I hope that through the efforts of Diabetes in Ontario Schools, the Canadian Diabetes Association and other such advocates of World Diabetes Day, everyone can be convinced that urgent action is needed to help these children with diabetes minimize the impact of their disease on their daily lives.

There are 7,000 children affected, who have type 1 diabetes. I respectfully ask that members of the Legislature support my private member's bill, Bill 5, to establish a bill of rights for children with diabetes.

1310

UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I rise to read a statement today in recognition of the fall economic update, which we will be hearing later, and on a rather auspicious accomplishment of the province of Ontario. October represented the 46th month in a row that Ontario's unemployment rate was higher than the national average. Our province's unemployment rate is 8.6%, compared to the national unemployment rate of 7.9%.

We lost 2,800 net jobs in October alone. In October, the total number of manufacturing jobs lost under this government's watch reached 294,900. If the mass exodus continues, the 300,000th manufacturing job lost under Premier McGuinty's watch will be in the form of a pink slip to another unlucky Ontario worker in the next two or three months. That represents a decline of 27.5% of good-paying, family-supporting manufacturing jobs.

In fact, there are 628,100 people in Ontario who were out of work in October. That means there are more people out of work in Ontario than the entire populations

of Windsor and London put together. It's a shameful thing to happen to Ontario.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: There is a growing anxiety in my riding and, my guess is, in other ridings in the daycare community.

Parents welcomed the introduction of full-day early learning, and as people in this chamber are well aware, there are many people, many families, who badly need full-day early learning; they need a complete daycare package.

Increasingly, they are coming to me concerned about the implementation of the program. Parents have stopped me on the street to say that because their summer months are not covered by full-day early learning, some people, to preserve a space, are actually spending year-round for child care spaces so that when summer comes, they will have coverage.

There is concern on the part of those who run non-profit daycares that with the loss of four- and five-year-olds, the economics of their daycares do not work, and they don't see the funding coming forward.

The Minister of Education and the Minister of Children and Youth Services need to meet, act now and come forward with the funding and support necessary to ensure that those daycare centres are protected; that parents and children know that their summers and pre- and post-school hours will be dealt with; and reassure families and daycare workers that those daycare centres will be protected.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Today, Ontarians who are concerned about the authority of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the OSPCA, will be joining us in the gallery to demonstrate their support for ballot item 51, which asks the government of Ontario to review the powers and authority granted to the OSPCA under Bill 50, the Provincial Animal Welfare Act of 2008.

Many of these individuals live in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, and I believe it is important for their concerns to be heard. They would like to see legislative changes to ensure that there is a clearly defined and effective provincial oversight of all animal shelter services in Ontario, as well as to having inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA separated from its charitable animal shelter.

In 2008, many public hearings on Bill 50 took place, and certainly there was a divergence of views at that time. However, since proclamation of the act, an event in my riding has galvanized concerned individuals to ask for a review of its provisions. An outbreak of ringworm at the OSPCA shelter in my riding resulted in a plan to

ethanize all the animals there. Although this plan was halted after 99 animals were killed and an independent review has been ordered, I believe further debate in this House is required and I will be listening intently this afternoon to the discussion.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's wonderful to see such attendance here for members' statements today, but I would just ask, if you are having any sort of conversation, out of respect for the members delivering their statements, that you take those conversations to the side lobby—and for our guests' sakes as well.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I would certainly appreciate silence while I deliver this.

Laughter.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: I rise to deliver this statement today in recognition of the fall economic update we will be hearing later and the need for real relief for Ontario families. Premier McGuinty's energy experiments, from smart meters and time-of-use rates to the so-called Green Energy Act and the Samsung subsidy, have electricity bills skyrocketing. Add in the HST, hidden energy taxes and other rate hikes, and the annual cost of electricity bills for Ontario families is set to rise by a staggering \$732 a year by 2015.

Electricity rates for Ontario families are already up 75% under this Premier's watch. This isn't a plan. Ontario PCs will have a well-thought-out plan based on principle, and not make things up on the fly like McGuinty. The government has no plan. This move just means they've hiked the HST to pay for their failed energy experiments. Our plan will put consumers first and respect their ability to make choices—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Minister of Economic Development—and thank you to the armchair Speaker from Leeds.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from York.

Please continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. As one of the truly nice members of this House, I never thought this would happen to me.

Our plan will put consumers first and respect their ability to make choices and, more importantly, respect their ability to pay the bills.

WINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I rise today to remind the members of the House that we have a great, great wine region in southwestern Ontario. I want to invite you to join my friend from Beaches–East York, because he

knows well how it is, to come down and visit us and taste some of that great wine.

Just recently, as a matter of fact, Pelee Island Winery opened up a facility in China, where there is demand for their wine. They are known nationwide and internationally. Colio wines are known nationwide and internationally, and we have other fine estate wineries. I would encourage you to come down at any time during this winter break. We've had a great wine season, so I would like to see you come down and visit us and enjoy some of that wine.

And I tell you what I'm going to do today. I'm going to get out of here as soon as I can, and I'm going to go home and enjoy some of that wine with my bride of 49 years on our anniversary. I just want to take the last few seconds to tell her—wherever that camera is—I love you, Joan.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. Reza Moridi: The McGuinty government understands that a good education is key for our children's future and that good schools need to be safe schools. Our kids cannot be afraid to get on the bus in the morning, so we have to do everything we can to stop schoolyard bullying. That's why our government has made school safety a priority.

Since 2003, the McGuinty government has invested more than \$230 million in our safe schools strategy. The McGuinty government also understands that we can't fix this problem alone, so we have worked together with parents, students, teachers and communities to establish safe schools teams across the province. And to recognize this, our government yesterday announced that we will recognize 10 of these teams across Ontario that have done exceptional and innovative work with the annual Premier's Safe Schools Awards.

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I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to helping Ontario parents, teachers and educators protect students from bullying and to recognizing the great work that so many Ontarians do in our communities and our schools. That is a fantastic step to increase awareness and combat bullying.

I urge those who know of the outstanding work that deserves recognition to submit a nomination before March 31, 2011, so that together we'll keep Ontario's schools safe.

TAXATION

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: The McGuinty government has delivered bold economic leadership and is delivering real results for real Ontario families with the Ontario tax reform plan.

The facts speak for themselves: Ontario is leading Canada and Canada is leading the world in coming back from the global recession. The Ontario economy has regained 76% of the jobs lost to the global recession, compared to only 10% within the US economy. The HST, the harmonization of the GST and the PST, is an

important part of creating a competitive economic environment and creating jobs. This is real progress, and the job growth will continue.

While the McGuinty government has been delivering results, the party opposite has been playing games with Ontario families. The Leader of the Opposition is on record supporting the HST: "To be clear, I believe that there's little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply two separate sets of taxes and policies and collect two separate groups of sales taxes."

When the time came for strong leadership, the opposition and their leader failed to measure up. They now continue to hide behind rhetoric. I want to quote the Toronto Star: "He attacked the 13% harmonized sales and tax that takes effect July 1, but pointedly refused to promise to repeal it."

The McGuinty government has been up front with our plan to create jobs and reform our tax system to generate investment and, most importantly, to create jobs.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Pat Hoy: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

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

Bill 109, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement the Ontario energy and property tax credit and to make consequential amendments / *Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt de l'Ontario pour les coûts d'énergie et les impôts fonciers et apporter des modifications corrélatives.*

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HELPING ONTARIO FAMILIES AND MANAGING RESPONSIBLY ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'AIDE AUX FAMILLES ONTARIENNES ET LA GESTION RESPONSABLE

Mr. Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 135, An Act respecting financial and Budget measures and other matters / *Projet de loi 135, Loi*

concernant les mesures financières et budgétaires et d'autres questions.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In ministerial statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I rise today to present the 2010 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review.

From 2003 to 2008, Ontario enjoyed job creation and economic growth.

As a result of that growth and this government's investments, our children are enjoying the benefits of a stronger education system and smaller class sizes, while our parents are enjoying the benefits of the renewed attention paid to their health care.

Ontario's economy was firing on all cylinders and we felt secure in our ability to take on the world.

In 2008, the world changed—it changed dramatically—and a global recession set in.

The world's financial system came to the brink of collapse.

Global brands—among them the titans of industry—faltered. Factories the world over closed and jobs across the globe were lost.

We took action with our Open Ontario plan: a plan to strengthen the economy, to grow a new clean energy industry, to protect the gains we've made in schools and hospitals and to provide tax relief to families and businesses.

So today, with the changes this government has made, nine out of 10 taxpayers are paying less income tax than they did just a year ago.

With the changes we've made, over 180,000 new jobs have been created since the bottom of the recession in May 2009.

This government was elected to bring change to the province of Ontario, change from the previous government's neglect of schools, of health care, of the electricity system and of the public services that our families rely on.

We've taken action, and now, today, we plan to do more.

Ontario's economy—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would just say to the respected members of the opposition that their leaders

will have the opportunity to respond to the minister, and I think we'd all like to hear the minister.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, Ontario's economy is emerging from the global recession.

Key economic indicators have improved since the recession, though many remain below pre-recession levels.

After declining for four consecutive quarters, our real gross domestic product has increased for the last four quarters in a row.

That's good news for Ontario families.

Based on the best available advice, we project that Ontario's GDP growth will be 3.2% in 2010, up from what we forecast in our most recent budget.

The economy is growing.

Real GDP has recovered 71% of its recessionary loss, and that is helping job creation.

While the United States has recovered just 10% of the jobs it lost due to the recession, Ontario has recovered 75% of the jobs lost in the last downturn.

It is a good sign, though our work is never done when it comes to strengthening the economy and creating jobs.

Economic growth will moderate in the coming years due, in large measure, to slow growth in the US economy.

For 2011, we expect real GDP to grow by 2.2%, and in 2012, by 2.5%. Our planning assumptions are lower than the average private sector forecast.

Though Ontario is emerging from the recession, families want to know that they can feel secure about their economic future.

Across the country, around the world and in the communities in which we live, people are still feeling the impact of the recession. Our government plans to help more.

For decades, governments of every political stripe have failed to make crucial investments in electricity supply and transmission.

By 2003, under the previous government, people did not know if the lights would stay on.

Back then, under the previous government, 25% of Ontario's electricity supply came from dirty coal—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members will please come to order. If there are members in here who are not wanting to listen, I would suggest that they leave the chamber and not disrupt.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The previous government had no plan for conservation and no plan for supply to keep up with demand.

The previous government let the wires that bring power to homes fall into critical disrepair.

At that time, while demand was going up in Ontario, the electricity system lost 1,800 megawatts of power capacity. That's the equivalent of Niagara Falls running dry.

Moreover, in 2003, under the previous government, Ontario had to import U.S. coal-fired electricity just to keep the lights on.

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The previous government even had to set up emergency generators because of the fear of brownouts.

To top it all off, the previous government's market-driven deregulation scheme saw electricity prices spike an average of 30% over seven months in 2002. That hurt Ontario families, and that set us back in a way that we're just now beginning to come to terms with.

Clean, reliable electricity should be a big part of our everyday lives. There's no compromise on clean air and reliable power.

In 2003, Ontario needed action and this government took action.

With the changes we've made, there's enough new, cleaner generation to power some two million homes, about a fifth of that coming from renewables like clean energy wind and clean energy solar.

With the changes we've made, there are 5,000 kilometres of improved transmission lines.

With the changes we've made, conservation programs are in place and are saving families money.

We are closing Ontario's dirty coal plants, the equivalent of taking seven million cars off the road.

All of this is making Ontario a leader in clean energy. It also means new investments in Ontario jobs, including the Sarnia Solar Project, the largest operating in the world, where there were 800 construction jobs.

In addition, in partnership with the Moose Cree First Nation, the Lower Mattagami project, the largest northern hydro project in 40 years, will employ 600 people, many of them aboriginals, in its construction phase.

And the list goes on.

Clean energy manufacturing plants are opening in communities like Guelph and Windsor to serve the Ontario market and to export made-in-Ontario solar panels and wind turbines.

The previous government gave us dirty coal. This government is eliminating coal entirely and cleaning our air.

The previous government left us with 10 wind turbines. This government has built 700.

These investments cost money.

We had to invest. They were necessary and unavoidable costs.

We are all paying for decades of neglect by governments of all political stripes.

Residential and business consumers around the world are feeling the impact of electricity prices.

And if people tell you they can deliver clean, reliable electricity at a lower price, don't believe them.

People want clean air and they want reliable electricity and they are also looking for help paying some of the additional costs until prices stabilize.

That's why today we are introducing the Ontario clean energy benefit.

The Ontario clean energy benefit would give Ontario families, farms and small businesses a 10% rebate on their bills each and every month for five years.

This will help families, it will help hard-working small business owners, and it will make a very big difference for Ontario farms.

The McGuinty government is helping those who are feeling the pinch from the rising cost of living and, especially—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Hamilton East, I'm warning you.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, they're taking credit for something they didn't do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's a warning. You'll be named.

Hon. John Gerretsen: We should have a penalty box.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, and don't be encouraging him.

Please continue.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The McGuinty government is helping those who are feeling the pinch from the rising cost of living and, especially, hydro prices.

Everything we have done over the last few years is helping.

C'est pourquoi nous proposons aujourd'hui la prestation ontarienne pour l'énergie propre.

Cette prestation offrirait aux familles, aux fermes et aux petites entreprises de la province une prestation équivalent à 10 % de leurs factures d'électricité pendant cinq ans.

Ce serait donc une remise de 10 % de votre facture d'électricité tous les mois à compter du 1^{er} janvier 2011.

Tout ce que nous faisons aide.

Since May 2009, the Ontario economy has created over 180,000 jobs.

Many who lost their jobs during the recession have been rehired.

Being without a job for any period of time is very difficult for individuals and their families.

That's why this government trains more than one million people annually through skills development and assistance at Employment Ontario.

Our Second Career program has helped over 36,000 laid-off workers get training. Over 60% of Second Career participants get new jobs within three months of graduation.

Just as we needed to retrain workers and just as we had to rebuild our electricity system, we needed to modernize a tax system that penalized businesses for investing in job creation.

Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth is cutting taxes for people, cutting taxes for businesses and bringing our tax system into the 21st century.

With the changes we've made, the people of Ontario will see almost 600,000 new jobs over the next 10 years.

The Open Ontario plan moved forward with a group of tax breaks specifically designed to help families—breaks on energy costs, on property taxes and on their children's activities.

With the changes we've made, nine out of 10 Ontario taxpayers pay less income tax today than they did a year ago.

Everywhere I go, people talk to me about their retirement savings.

All of us should take comfort in knowing that we're taking meaningful steps to better protect retirement income.

The McGuinty government has introduced two bills on pension reform—the most significant reform to pension law in a generation.

Let me re-emphasize: The McGuinty government will also continue the fight for affordable enhancements to the Canada pension plan for Ontarians and indeed for all Canadians.

We made the decision at the beginning of the global recession to protect jobs and sustain schools and hospitals as well as other vital public services.

Our government is reducing the size of the deficit each and every year.

As economies return to growth, governments must return to balance, and our government is doing that.

We have a responsible plan to eliminate the deficit.

I'm pleased to announce that the projected deficit for 2010-11 has been slashed by almost 25% compared to the forecast just a year ago.

At this time, we are projecting the deficit for 2010-11 to be reduced to \$18.7 billion.

The reason for this decline is twofold: stronger economic growth and responsible management.

We will continue to be prudent and efficient managers and invest tax dollars wisely.

We've taken action on our biggest spending line: compensation.

About half of the negotiated settlements since the 2010 budget have resulted in two years of no compensation increases.

To those unions and employers who have responded to our request for help, we say thank you. Working together, we'll build a better Ontario.

I will be providing periodic updates on the choices we are making to manage responsibly and to focus on the priorities of Ontario families.

We take this responsibility very seriously.

The previous government held a fire sale for Ontario assets, like the Highway 407 deal. We've changed that, and we're taking a thoughtful and responsible approach. We are in the process of renewing our long-standing partnership in electronic land registration.

We are proposing to extend Teranet's licences to provide electronic land registration and writs services while retaining control over fees. The proposed agreement would provide a \$1-billion payment, to be used to reduce our province's debt. This would save up to \$50 million in annual interest costs. It would also provide annual royalty payments of an additional \$50 million starting in 2017.

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When added to the \$1-billion reduction in the deficit, this means we are borrowing \$2 billion less this year than was forecasted.

Last year, the people of Ontario invested in the auto sector to help protect 400,000 jobs right here. General Motors repaid their loans ahead of schedule. We are also pleased to see the turnaround at Chrysler. The government is exiting from these companies in a responsible way within a reasonable time frame.

General Motors issued its stock to the public on the Toronto Stock Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange today. As part of the initial public offering, Ontario and the federal government have offered to sell 20% of their interest in the company.

Overall, this is a good sign that the auto sector is recovering and that the Ontario economy is back on track.

Our task is to encourage a competitive economy that creates jobs, to manage down the deficit and debt, and to help Ontarians fulfill their hopes and aspirations.

We cannot—we will not—turn back the clock to an outdated tax system that discourages investment and costs us jobs.

We will move forward with our plan to make Ontario a better place to invest so that jobs are created for our families.

We cannot and we will not turn back the clock to coal-burning pollution.

With the changes we've made, we'll be leaders in clean air and clean energy.

We will not turn back to crumbling schools and closing hospitals.

Instead, we will be moving forward with full-day kindergarten and educating our students so that they have the skills they need to get the very best jobs.

We will continue to move this great province forward.

We've heard what people have said about rising electricity costs.

We will deliver clean air, clean energy and a 10% clean energy benefit on your bill each and every month for the next five years.

We will continue to make investments that help grow the economy and create jobs. We will keep moving Ontario forward.

The people of this great province deserve nothing less.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Just as we are about to engage in the responses, the honourable members for the most part did tone things down, and I'm asking that the government side be respectful of the responses.

Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tim Hudak: After seven years of more of the same tired old rhetoric, missed targets, job-killing tax, hydro increases, and runaway wasteful spending, it is time for change here in the province of Ontario.

I want to make three key points today. First, Ontario families are working longer and harder than ever. They're spending less time with their children, less time at home, and, thanks to Dalton McGuinty's government, less money in the family—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would just remind the honourable member on the use of names.

Mr. Tim Hudak: For all they pay in new taxes and fees, they're getting less in return from this government. In fact, we find out today costs are going up even more with double-digit hydro increases. What is the Premier's response? More costly energy experiments, more tax increases like the HST, a bloated bureaucracy, and more McGuinty government waste.

Families know that hydro rates have increased by 75%—100%, in fact, if you have a smart meter. They slapped down the HST on hydro bills across our province. Now the Premier, just a few months out from an election, wants to give back a few mere drops in the bucket.

While hard-working families deserve relief in any form they can get, they see this gesture for what it really is: a transparent shell game played with their own money by a government that is out of touch, out of gas and, increasingly, out of time.

Worse yet, families can expect to see even more, with double-digit increases in their hydro bills in 2011 and beyond. According to this government's own fiscal update, this so-called benefit will be erased in very short order as families' hydro bills skyrocket 46% more in the next five years—minimum.

Whether it comes out of the pockets of taxpayers or ratepayers, families know that under Premier McGuinty they're paying more. They're saying, "Enough is enough, and it is time for change in Ontario."

My second point is that this government has mismanaged Ontario's finances so badly that they are somehow responsible for both the largest tax increases and the largest debt increases in Ontario's history. They've taken in since last year more than \$12 billion in revenue. Families are paying more in taxes and fees, but this government didn't put a dent in their massive budget deficit, despite \$12 billion more in revenue.

What does that mean? They continue to spend well over \$2 million more than they're taking in—every hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week—and shrugging their shoulders and leaving it up to the next generation to figure out how to pay for this runaway spending. That kind of fiscal mismanagement is why Premier McGuinty earned the distinction of being crowned Canada's worst financial manager by the Fraser Institute.

This brings me to my final point: Families know that the same tired government that got us into this mess certainly cannot be expected to get us out. For all the Premier's promises that his HST tax grab would somehow create jobs, we've seen over 41,000 private sector jobs lost in the four months since they slapped down the HST.

The Premier's expensive energy experiments, like his sweetheart backroom deal with Samsung, are chasing jobs out of the province and sending them to Korea. In reality, they're taking more money out of the wallets of families, who will soon be paying \$732 more per year on their hydro bills.

Ontario families want change. They didn't get it from the government today. We saw more of the same tired,

out-of-gas policies. Clearly, after seven years in office, the only way to bring the change that Ontario families need and deserve is to change this Premier and his government and bring in a PC majority government so Ontario can lead again.

We will advance our priorities. We'll bring real relief to Ontario families. We'll hold government in restraint so that we focus on the priorities of families and focus on job creation, so that Ontario can once again be the economic powerhouse of our great country.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ministers.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Yak, where's the plan?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Economic Development.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Energy, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Minister of Education.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm going to warn the Minister of Economic Development.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No.

Responses? Leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think the thing that's most clear about this fall economic statement is that this Premier and this government are scrambling. After permanently raising the cost of electricity with private power deals, not-so-smart meters and all kinds of other schemes, on top of which is the salt in the wound, the HST—

Hon. Dwight Duncan: So you're for dumb meters.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The Minister of Finance will withdraw the comment, please.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I withdraw.

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

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Ms. Andrea Horwath: —on top of which is the salt in the wound, the HST on the hydro bills, Premier Dalton McGuinty offers in this economic statement a temporary solution for struggling families.

Now, we absolutely support any move that makes life better for families. In fact, we have been pleading, we have been urging this government to finally take some action to give families a bit of a break. But this is not about that; this is not about helping families with their bills. What it is about, though, is solving the Premier's problems until the next election rolls around in about a year.

People are hurting. Every single day since September, New Democrats have been coming in this Legislature, bringing the stories of those families to the feet of this Premier—every single day. They have been telling us through all kinds of different methods that they just can't take it anymore, that their hydro bills are off the Richter scale and they cannot make ends meet. Families like Helen Crabbe's, who I mentioned in the House today,

She wrote us an email that basically said, "Please help us!" Help us by taking the HST off of hydro.

People aren't being greedy; people aren't being greedy on this factor. They are scared, and they're scared for a good reason. In fact, only in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In fact, only in Premier Dalton McGuinty's Ontario are people literally afraid of opening their next hydro bill.

After promising a big boom with the HST, nothing happened. The HST was going to solve all the province's problems. Nothing happened. In fact, no more jobs have been created in this province. The economy is still struggling significantly, as the finance minister's own documents indicate.

We launched our campaign in September and we had thousands upon thousands of people engaging with us immediately in trying to get this government to do the right thing. Sixty thousand petitions were signed in a matter of about six weeks. We held meetings with people around this province. We listened to what they had to say. We tweeted with them. We received their petitions and their emails. While people across the province are experiencing permanent hikes to their hydro bills, permanent HST on top of those hikes in their hydro bills and their prices keep climbing and climbing, what do we have? We have a plan that the government admits quite clearly they're just going to phase out. We don't really know if they're going to keep their promise about a five-year phase-out plan, but they're definitely going to phase out the plan.

What's not getting phased out, though, is the HST. The HST is going to be there forever, rubbing salt in the wounds of those hydro bills, which this government projects are going to go up considerably—46% in just the next couple of years, and then continue to climb after that. Then what do we end up with? HST on top of those bills as well. The price hikes are still going to be there.

We've seen the McGuinty Liberals promise relief before to the people of this province. In 2003, in fact, he joined Ernie Eves in a promise for a five-year rate freeze on the hydro rates. What happened to that promise? Months after that promise was made, it was scrapped by this government. So I think the people of Ontario know this government very well and they are not prepared to accept that this next promise is one that will actually be kept by the Premier of Ontario.

I don't want to omit commenting on the Teranet deal that this government has announced in their fall economic statement, a 50-year private sector deal. I think we should have learned in this province that we've seen this movie one too many times. Over and over again it plays. The fire sale of the 407 helped the government of the day perhaps, but it's still burning Ontarians day in and day out. An immediate cash grab for a long-term lack of benefit for the people of this province is no deal for anybody.

PETITIONS

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario families are struggling to help put their kids through university;

"Whereas students in Ontario graduate with an average \$26,000 in debt and have the highest tuition and largest class sizes in the country; and

"Whereas Ontario tax dollars should be kept in Ontario to help Ontario students, not sent overseas;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on the McGuinty government to cancel its plan to give foreign students scholarships of \$40,000 a year and reinvest these funds in scholarships for Ontario students."

I want to thank the Duncan family of London for sending this petition to me. I agree with it and I will sign it.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Frank Klees: I have a petition addressed to the Legislature of Ontario. This adds literally hundreds more petitions to the many thousands we've received in this Legislature relating to oversight of the OSPCA. The petition 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 Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution tabled at Queen's Park ... on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

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

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support. We will be debating this resolution later on this afternoon, and we look forward to the government and all members supporting that resolution.

CEMETERIES

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have 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."

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

HYDRO RATES

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

"Whereas the McGuinty government is pushing ahead with the installation of so-called smart meters and mandatory time-of-use billing by June 2011 despite the flaws with the program; and

"Whereas 21 energy distributors, including provincially owned Hydro One, said that the rush to make time of use mandatory by June 2011 doesn't give them time to fix all the problems with the meters, fix bugs with the software to run them, and to fix the inaccurately high bills they produce as a result; and

"Whereas the Ontario Energy Board, in a letter of August 4, admitted that energy distributors 'may encounter extraordinary and unanticipated circumstances during the implementation' of time of use, and said that 'these matters need to be addressed'; and

"Whereas relying on computer technology that the energy industry says is not ready and isn't reliable is making families pay too much on their hydro bills;

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

"To call upon the McGuinty government to suspend the smart meter time-of-use program until billing problems are fixed and Ontario families are given the option of whether to participate in the time-of-use program."

I affix my name in full support.

1400

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: A petition for provincial oversight of the OSPCA:

"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 give this to Donna for submission.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario"—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): One moment, please.

It's wonderful to have all our guests here, but as much as you may want to participate in the proceedings down here, you're not allowed to; you have to get yourself elected. So if you do want to participate, you have to sit on your hands and bite your tongue. But thank you; we do welcome you to the Legislature.

Please continue.

Mr. Jim Brownell: Thank you, Speaker.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

“Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

“Whereas, while more research is needed, MS patients should not need to await such results;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario allow people with multiple sclerosis to obtain the venoplasty that so impacts their quality of life and that of their family and caregivers.”

I shall sign this and send it to the clerks' table.

POWER PLANT

Mrs. Julia Munro: “Whereas the Ontario government has cancelled the Oakville peaker plant, citing a decrease in need for power in that community, proposing to meet needs by better transmission, and despite the fact that the government may face a \$1-billion lawsuit due to the cancellation;

“Whereas the King township peaker plant is going forward, with the Ontario government having shut off debate about the plan at the OMB through regulation, after failing to provide a proper environmental assessment or community consultation;

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

“To give the King township peaker plant and the local community the same consideration as residents of Oakville, and to decide on the future of the peaker plant on a non-partisan basis.”

CEMETERIES

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have more petitions regarding the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act.

“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.”

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

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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

“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 signature and pass it to the table.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This petition is for provincial oversight of the OSPCA as well:

“Petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

“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 couldn’t agree more. I’m going to give it to Miguel to deliver it to the table.

CEMETERIES

Mr. Dave Levac: This is a petition that is supported by an organization in the riding of Brant, through the First Nations as well and the United Empire Loyalists:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas members of the Ontario Genealogical Society are concerned about protecting and preserving Ontario’s cemeteries in their original locations; 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, 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,” which we are celebrating soon;

“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” and any others in Ontario “for real estate development” of this province.

I affix my name to this petition as I support it 110%.

1410

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

“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 the petition, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Sarah.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

TEMISKAMING AND CHATHAM-KENT- LEAMINGTON ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 CONCERNANT TEMISKAMING ET CHATHAM-KENT-LEAMINGTON

Mr. Hoy moved second 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 Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Pat Hoy: I’m pleased to rise and speak to my own bill, which encompasses a change of the riding name of Chatham–Kent–Essex to Chatham–Kent–Leamington. My colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane will be talking more fully about the part of the bill that affects his riding equally so.

I want to begin with this: As members here know, the riding I represent has been called Chatham–Kent–Essex for many years. I’m proposing that it be changed to

Chatham–Kent–Leamington, and here are some examples of why I think that's apropos.

In Leamington, we have the Roma Club of Leamington, the Leamington Lebanese Club, the Leamington Kinsmen, the Leamington Rotary Club, the Leamington Municipal Marina, the Leamington Kinsmen Recreational Complex, the Leamington District Memorial Hospital, the Leamington family health team—I think you see the direction I'm going here—the Leamington and District Half Century Centre, the Leamington Mennonite home and apartments, the Leamington District Secondary School, the Leamington Post and Shopper, the Leamington public library, the Leamington District Agricultural Society, the Leamington and District Chamber of Commerce, the Leamington Fire Service, the Leamington Police Service, Leamington Airport and Leamington Transit.

Nowhere in that list of entities, service clubs and providers is the word “Essex” used. That's because all of them are within the municipality of Leamington.

Essex consists of Lasalle, Tecumseh, Lakeshore, Amherstburg, Essex, Kingsville and Leamington. I represent, and anyone who follows me in the future would be representing, a riding that is called Essex but is really Leamington.

There has always been confusion around the name Chatham–Kent–Essex, because there is a county of Essex, a town of Essex, a federal riding named Essex and the provincial riding represented by my colleague Bruce Crozier, who represents Essex. Having Essex in the name implies that I represent all of Essex, which is not the case. I represent the wonderful municipality of Leamington.

Many people unfamiliar with the riding boundaries do not know that fact, that I represent only that part of Essex.

Leamington has a rich history. There's lots to be said about Leamington, and I want to touch on a few of those points.

Leamington is at the most southerly latitude within Canada. It shares the 42nd parallel with places like Rome and California. It enjoys early springs, warm summers and the longest growing season in eastern Canada. Leamington enjoys the greatest number of sunshine hours of any municipality in Canada: over 2,000 hours, according to Agriculture Canada. Leamington is known as the sun parlour of Canada. This combination of favourable climate and rich soils permits Leamington's growers to produce a wider range of crops than anywhere in Canada. This is aided by being the second-warmest climate in Canada, after the lower mainland of British Columbia.

It is situated just 45 minutes from the Windsor–Detroit international border. There is a ferry service to and from Pelee Island and Sandusky, Ohio, which runs from April through November for tourist travel as well as the movement of agricultural goods and commodities. As I mentioned before, Leamington has a private commercial airport and public transit.

The municipality of Leamington and the former Mersea township cover 262 square kilometres. There is

an Uptown Leamington Business Improvement Area that represents over 200 businesses in that geographic area.

Many members, I hope, would know that Leamington is known as the tomato capital of Canada. Tomatoes are Leamington's largest greenhouse vegetable crop, supplying supermarkets across all of North America.

It is the home of the Heinz food processing plant, the largest employer in Leamington. They process the field tomatoes. The Leamington plant is the second-largest Heinz facility in the world, and when you pick up the bottle, it says “Leamington,” not “Essex.” In 1909, H.J. Heinz decided to expand to Canada and set up manufacturing operations in Leamington. Not only do they work with tomatoes and manufacturing, but they started processing pickles, vinegars and beans. In 1910, it produced its first bottle of ketchup, and two years later, started to make cooked spaghetti. Soups joined the product line in 1917, and juices and baby foods soon followed in 1930. The plant employs approximately 800, and 330 people are hired at the hectic time of harvest, who are additional to that number.

There is also huge greenhouse production in Leamington, and it is a billion-dollar business. With the fertile soils and temperatures and longer daylight hours, Leamington has great support for their crops there.

I want to quote the mayor-elect of Leamington. The previous mayor John Adams also endorsed this change. Mayor-elect John Paterson wrote to me and said:

“I am pleased to offer my support to your private member's bill ... which is about to receive its second reading, requesting the current riding name of ‘Chatham–Kent–Essex’ be changed to ‘Chatham–Kent–Leamington.’

“Understandably the current name creates a great deal of confusion, implying that your riding encompasses all of Essex county, rather than just the municipality of Leamington and Chatham–Kent. The town of Essex, Essex county and the federal and provincial riding of Essex become blurred in most minds, making it difficult to identify what area is actually being represented and by whom.

“We are pleased that you are continuing to pursue this logical name change and feel that changing the riding name to Chatham–Kent–Leamington would help make the riding boundaries much more identifiable and end the current confusion.”

I can say to members of the House that the federal member, Dave Van Kesteren, also endorses this. He sent me an email just yesterday. He has supported this initiative in the past.

1420

I think I've shown and highlighted why this change should be made. It's a logical change. It doesn't affect any other part of Essex in any way. The mayor past and the current mayor-elect support it, and I think the people of Leamington, who've worked so hard at their jobs and in their workplaces to create a municipality that is as wonderful as it is, deserve to have recognition in the provincial naming of Chatham–Kent–Leamington.

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

Mr. David Ramsay: First off, I'd like to thank the members of the opposition for allowing me to speak out of rotation to accommodate my schedule. I very much appreciate that. I'd like to thank my colleague Pat Hoy for accommodating my legislation, which is basically housekeeping to correct a spelling error, a historic error, in the name of Timiskaming, and allowing me to piggyback my bill onto his, so that we could clean up this particular historical error.

I'd like to thank Minister Bradley's office, Minister Bartolucci's office, Carol Price from the whip's office and legal counsel Danna Brown for all their help in this, too.

About a year and a half ago, a local historian by the name of Bud Colquhoun, who I know is watching today and has been very persistent on this, brought to my attention a historic error in the spelling of Timiskaming. Quite frankly, I hadn't really paid too much attention to why, at home, there were two spellings of Timiskaming. In anything to do with the province, Timiskaming was spelled T-i-m, but the lake that the whole area is named after is T-e-m. He had done some research, and when he brought that to my attention, I went to our legislative library here and they confirmed that back in 1927, when the acts of the day were consolidated, there was a spelling error made from the previous one that was about 1914, where it had been spelled T-e-m. For some reason, somebody had put an "i" in there instead of an "e," and that was it. When the electoral act was revised in the early 1950s, that got changed to "i" also because, up to then, the electoral district was still spelled with an "e."

I very much appreciate Mr. Colquhoun bringing this forward to me. But I did think that before I went ahead to make this change—because people were used to this; whether it was an error or not, many people had only known the government spelling as "T-i"—I thought I'd better consult. So I did a householder referendum to every household in the geographic district of Timiskaming, about one third of my riding, that it would affect. There was an overwhelming positive response that, yes, the spelling should be corrected.

Just about four years before that, we had an amalgamation of three communities that touched Lake Temiskaming. Diamond township, the town of New Liskeard and the town of Haileybury had a contest to ask the people there what the name of the new community should be. The name they chose was Temiskaming Shores, spelled with an "e."

So, it's really obvious that this needs to be done. I'm glad to get it done. While it's not the most important thing that's on my plate, it's something that should be corrected.

I very much appreciate the patience of the House to allow me to bring this forward, and I would hope to have the House's support.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased to rise in support of this bill. As someone who grew up in the town of Leamington and got my first political experience as a candidate in the riding of Essex South, which at that time included Leamington and Kingsville as well as Amherstburg and Wheatley, I believe that the clarification that is being sought in this bill is the right thing to do. It's about time that Leamington had a special place in the Hansard and the record of this Legislature.

It was 1975 when I first ran as a candidate in Essex South. I came close, at the age of 24, but not close enough. I was destined for another 20 years of private sector experience before I was first elected in 1995—not in the riding of Essex South and nowhere near Essex county, either. It was then in the riding of York–Mackenzie. I was the first and the last member to be elected in the riding of York–Mackenzie because it had undergone a name change as well.

Then in 1999, I was elected in the riding of Oak Ridges, and I was the first and the last member to be elected in the riding of Oak Ridges, because of redistribution. I served there for two terms. Now, I am the first member to be elected in Newmarket–Aurora. I'm not sure about whether I will be the last or whether I will be re-elected. That, of course, is up to my constituents.

Leamington is a wonderful place. It is, in fact, the tomato capital, I believe, of the world. It has not only one of the best climates in the entire country of Canada, but some of the most wonderful people as well. As this change takes place, I know that not only will it serve the purpose that the honourable member spoke to, but it is certainly the appropriate thing to do.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It is an honour always to rise in this place and to speak on behalf of the New Democratic Party. Of course, we in the New Democratic Party have no objection to this name change either.

In a sense, it would be nice to mend the standing orders so that this kind of debate could happen on a committee level rather than taking up private members' public business, but it is certainly a reasonable request backed by members of the community.

I just had a wonderful lunch, replete with tomatoes. Hearing about Leamington makes me feel even better about it.

I'm delighted to support it. That will be all the debate that we will be engaging in on this issue. Thanks to the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, soon to be Leamington, for bringing it forward.

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

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Here we are with a private member's bill that, I think, is one of those that's in the true spirit of what private members' business is for. In fact, I agree with my colleague from Parkdale–High Park that it is unfortunate that this kind of thing can't be dealt with in a different venue, but that's what we're left with today.

I am a lifelong resident of Leamington. You will know, by the fact that I said today was Joan's and my 49th wedding anniversary, that I am also a long-life resident of the town of Leamington.

My colleague from Newmarket–Aurora and I go back to 1975. He was bred of good stock in Leamington and speaks well of his original hometown, and rightly he should.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: My wife—

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Pardon me, and the wife of the member from Scarborough–Agincourt, Kay, is from Leamington.

I'm supporting this, of course.

A little bit of history: We've gone through several name changes, much like the member for Newmarket–Aurora has mentioned. There was an old Essex North at one time. There was an Essex South, as has been mentioned. There was an Essex–Kent; when my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex was first elected, he represented the north part of Essex county, and it was called Essex–Kent. There have been a number of name changes, and all of these contained the word "Essex" because they had in them all of Essex county.

Now, as has been explained, there is some confusion because my riding of Essex one would expect to contain all of the county of Essex, which it doesn't. Leamington isn't in it; this is as of 1999, I think, when the boundaries were changed. As a matter of fact, Tecumseh, which is now represented by the Minister of Finance, was partly in the county of Essex. These boundaries have shifted over the years, as have the names; hence, I think, in this instance, some of the confusion. When people think of Essex, Leamington is naturally included in that because it's one of the largest communities in the county of Essex.

In fact, it's unfortunate that Pelee Island is kind of left out of that picture, because Pelee Island, some may be surprised to learn, is not a part of the county of Essex, although it's in my riding. It is a separate municipality. So maybe one day we will be thinking of changing the name of Essex to Essex–Pelee Island; I'm not sure.

1430

But today it's all about Leamington. Leamington is a fine community in the county of Essex, but in this instance, when it comes to identifying the community and identifying it in the riding of the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, I think the recognition should be given that it is part of the riding but that it has the distinction of having the name Leamington attached to it. Then that identifies that it's made up of Chatham–Kent, and Leamington shares a good corner of that.

In fact—and this is a little bit of an aside; I didn't clear this with the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, but he knows full well, having been a former mayor of Leamington, that it was not a happy day when Leamington was taken out of the riding of Essex at the time. I suffered in more ways than one as a result of that, but that we'll leave for another day as well. I just simply want to stand today and support my colleague's private member's bill

and say that, yes, Leamington should be part of the name: Chatham–Kent–Leamington.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: It's my pleasure to rise on this private member's bill by my colleague from Chatham–Kent—and Leamington, I hope—and to say that I think from time to time in this Legislature we deal with issues that need correction and adjustments. That's part of our job here, and this is something appropriately before us at this time: to make this correction, in that there is an obvious omission here of the town of Leamington. It would be only appropriate to support this bill to ensure that this is corrected. Also, the member from Timiskaming mentioned the need to correct a century-old spelling mistake.

I just want to say about Leamington: I think many of these names—and sometimes people think, well, it's frivolous to talk about names, but names mean a great deal to people. Certainly, the people living in these communities really honour and treasure the names they have and they don't want to be diminished in any way.

As you know, Leamington has been mentioned. It's an opportunity to talk about some of our incredible communities in our ridings. I know you have the community of Stayner, which sometimes, people forget about, in your beautiful riding, on the largest beachfront in the world—almost; probably—Wasaga Beach. Maybe we should include Wasaga Beach–Stayner in your constituency, Mr. Speaker, but then other communities may be asking for inclusion.

With Leamington, as people have mentioned, in 2006 Leamington was honoured by MoneySense magazine as the number one place to live in Canada.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Still is.

Mr. Mike Colle: Obviously it is an exceptional place to live. People have mentioned the climate: it is as warm as Rome, Italy; as warm as California. It is symbolic of the great agricultural excellence in Ontario. Their water tower, I think, is a giant tomato. I don't think it's still there?

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Colle: There are tomatoes everywhere, and tomatoes are an incredible export product. It's an incredible industry for Leamington and for Ontario, for Canada; all we have to do is mention Heinz tomato ketchup and the number of people who have enjoyed that for decades. Leamington is also mentioned in that great song by Tom Connors. You know, he doesn't say Essex, he says Leamington.

So we must pay some respect to this community, and it deserves that respect. It's obviously a place that people love to call home and that creates a lot of employment; a great place to retire, to live, to raise a family. So by making this correction, I think we're recognizing that Leamington is an important, viable community that deserves to be included in the name of the riding of Chatham–Kent and hopefully Leamington, in years to come.

I hope everyone here will support the bill by my colleague Pat Hoy from Chatham-Kent-Leamington.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? Seeing none, Mr. Hoy, you have two minutes for your response.

Mr. Pat Hoy: Thank you to my colleagues and the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, who endorses my part of the bill and had an opportunity to explain why he needs a change. That was something that I could decide fairly easily, whether it should be put alongside my bill, because it is a spelling error. I know that people, particularly politicians, want to see their name spelled correctly, so why wouldn't the people of Timiskaming want the correct spelling?

I thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora. I think he knows Leamington well and probably has very fond memories of it. Thank you to the member from Parkdale–High Park; to my colleague Bruce Crozier, the member for Essex; and my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence for their comments and support for this change.

The member from Newmarket–Aurora was talking about firsts in his life as they pertain to ridings and name changes. I know I'm very pleased to be the first member to represent the member from Essex. He is one of my constituents and we have great fun when we go to various meetings and social events, when we talk about who is taking care of Leamington the best on any given day. I know that he really does love his home town.

The point to this bill is that the people of Leamington want this recognition and most assuredly deserve it. They have a place in Canada that is unique. It is the southernmost part of mainland Canada. I had the opportunity to go to Attawapiskat, which is about, I believe, as far north as you can get in that part of Ontario without walking further north. I was amazed to find Leamington tomatoes when I was up there. So it is indeed a small world.

Thank you for your support this afternoon on this particular bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll vote on Mr. Hoy's bill in about 100 minutes.

The chair wants to welcome Julie Kwiecinski to the chamber today, a former staff member here at Queen's Park.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
AMENDMENT ACT
(PROTECTION OF DRUG
ENDANGERED CHILDREN), 2010
LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE
ET À LA FAMILLE
(PROTECTION DES ENFANTS
MENACÉS PAR LA DROGUE)

Mr. Dunlop moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 84, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to provide protection to drug endangered

children / *Projet de loi 84, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille pour protéger les enfants menacés par la drogue.*

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm honoured today to take a few minutes and present my private member's bill, Bill 84, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to provide protection to drug endangered children. I should say that I want to read the explanatory note and explain to the House why I brought this bill forward.

"The bill amends the Child and Family Services Act to add drug endangered children as a category of children in need of protection. A child is drug endangered in circumstances such as those where a child is exposed to a substance that is used to illegally manufacture an illegal drug or is exposed to that manufacture or production.

"A child protection worker who brings a child to a place of safety under the act or a peace officer who apprehends a child under the act is required to give notice of the apprehension as soon as practicable to the person who last had charge of the child and, if known, to the persons last having lawful custody of the child. The notice must include a statement of the reasons for the apprehension and the telephone number of the office of Legal Aid Ontario that is nearest to the last known residence of the person receiving the notice.

"It is an offence for a person having charge of a child to cause the child to be drug endangered."

I want to say that we have a number of guests in the office who are also here today with Ms. Kwiecinski and in the members' gallery. I want to read who they are and I want to thank them for all the support they've given me on this piece of legislation: Toronto Police Service Superintendent Ron Taverner, chair of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police substance abuse committee; York Regional Police Superintendent Wayne Kalinski, vice-chair of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police substance abuse committee; Orangeville Police Chief Joe Tomei, member of the OACP substance abuse committee—it's good to have you here; Niagara Regional Police Inspector Cliff Sexton, member of the OACP substance abuse committee; and Police Constable Parm Rai, Toronto Police Service. I welcome you all to Queen's Park today, and thank you for being here.

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Why this bill came up is very straightforward. The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, who are the leaders of our police community in the province of Ontario, doing all the administrative work, deal day in and day out with different ministries, different support groups across the province and of course all their police services people. Just yesterday, I think you'll recall, we had the Police Association of Ontario here, which represents 31,000 police officers in the province. The fellows who are here today are the people who oversee that.

Every year they have a conference, and at their conference they bring forward resolutions. One of the resolu-

tions they asked for was to have something along the lines of what we have today. In June 2009, OACP passed a resolution calling on the government of Ontario to introduce and pass legislation to protect children exposed to illegal manufacturing of drugs, indoor cannabis grow operations, trafficking and other forms of illegal drug activity.

I introduced this bill back on May 31. I'm very proud of the fact that I introduced it, because our responsibility in this House is to provide law and order, but one of the key things we want to do is protect the children we have here in the province of Ontario: our daughters and sons, our grandchildren etc.

I think it was just yesterday that a young mother from Barrie was sentenced to 25 years in prison because she killed her children. That was one of the saddest interviews I've seen—the court case around that—and these things keep coming up. The police are the front-line people who see these problems and have to deal with them. When you see something as sad as that young lady—I'm not sure it had anything to do with drugs—the reality is that two little babies are not with us anymore because of that.

I felt it was very important for our caucus, because I think most people in the province would agree that Tim Hudak and the PC caucus are very proactive on law and order and the protection of children, and I'm very proud of that. I think we saw that yesterday in the support we received in all the meetings we held with Police Association of Ontario members. They're very happy with our position and how we're handling law and order, and how we're providing that in a platform as we move forward toward the next election. A couple of other speakers today will be bringing comments: Ms. Witmer and also Mr. Clark.

This didn't just come out of nowhere. The province of Alberta has passed similar legislation. We believe that our bill is even stronger than the Alberta bill.

Also, we've got a booklet here today, *Drug-Endangered Children*, and I know that Mr. Clark will be reading excerpts from it. It's put out by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and it's a whole booklet on the kind of issues they're facing.

When the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police comes forward and they believe there's a problem with boys and girls in family situations and they do not have the extra protection, and they see a role for the government of Ontario and the police services of Ontario, we support that. That's what our job is. We're not the guys out there charging the people, seeing people going to court, but they do know that in the case of drug-endangered children, there's a responsibility we have as individuals.

As the critic for community safety, which I have been for the last seven years, I've worked very closely with the OACP and all the police services. When I'm talking to these folks, they tell me this is important legislation that should move forward in a proactive manner and should be supported by all members of this House. Whether it's

my private member's bill means nothing to me. You know what? If the government was to bring out a law-and-order bill, I would be supporting this part of the bill for sure, because I believe very strongly in the reasons why we'd bring this forward.

I wanted to add a couple of other things from the bill. I understand that Minister Broten feels that she doesn't need this bill; that's what I'm understanding. We've got a number—I can't get into reading all the different letters. She feels that it's not required. She has written letters back and forth, and I can tell you that if I had enough time today to read all the different letters—letters have come back as recently as November 12 to the minister, saying, "You know what? No, we do need this. You're not quite accurate in what you're saying about drug-endangered children, and we, as the police officers of the province of Ontario, believe that this is what is required to better protect our children."

I know the minister is not here today. I wish she were, because I'd like to hear her comments in debate. But the reality is, I'm hoping that the government members who are here today, and the third party members, will get behind me on this and they'll get behind our caucus, as we have on so many of their private members' bills. These are positive movements as far as private members' hours are concerned. We don't just bring these things up as some kind of a joke just to be disbanded forever. This bill will help protect young men and women, young boys and girls in these situations we hear of almost every day. Almost every day, if you read any kind of clippings, you will hear, in some part of the province or in some part of the cities etc., of situations where there have been a lot of drugs confiscated in a grow op or whatever it may be. In a lot of cases there actually are children there who are endangered.

I wanted to also add a couple of things here. Mr. Clark is adding comments from the OACP, but I did want to say to you—I did have a couple of other things here I wanted to bring in, but the first private member's hour went a little bit faster than I thought it would and I got rushed to get down here. I didn't realize the Leamington bill didn't have more interest in it, so I'm a little bit behind in my organization, because, as you know, it has been kind of a crazy day around here.

Anyhow, we've asked for this legislation. We know that it will protect children, and that's what we are all about here as legislators. I think if you look at the support we've seen from the OACP, from the RCMP, from the province of Alberta, I don't think all these people are wrong. I think that this is an opportunity that they should move forward with.

I think I'm going to save a little bit of my time. I know I've got an extra couple of minutes here now. I'm going to use my remaining time in my time I have to close down at the end, the final two minutes, and I'll add that with it.

Thank you very much, everyone, for the opportunity to bring this forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? The honourable member for Parkdale.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo:—High Park. Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly rise in support of this bill. We do, in the New Democratic Party. It's a necessary bill for a number of reasons. I was somewhat saddened to hear that the Minister of Children and Youth Services is not supporting it. This seems to be a no-brainer. It's a very sad day when they wouldn't support something like this.

In my riding of Parkdale—High Park we've had our share of meth labs and grow ops, and these are not safe places. These are very unsafe places even for adults, never mind children, to be in. Meth labs routinely explode. Breathing in cocaine dust hurts you, addicts you, kills you, especially if you're little. Grow ops, the same. We've had fires in some of our high-rises in my riding. These are not places for children. The folks who continue to keep their children there should be stopped from doing so. It is a no-brainer, an absolute no-brainer. It is an illegal activity, and a dangerous illegal activity at that.

All that this bill is proposing is to make it a little less bureaucratic, a little less cumbersome for our police to do their job, to remove children to safer places.

Now, I would love to see this bill go to committee, because I think there are some other things to look at as well. There are a couple of caveats I would have, and that is that when you take a child away from their parents, it's no easy act. I think we all know that. There are not a lot of good foster homes. You don't want a child to be perpetually in the foster care system. You want, if at all possible—and I know children's aid tries to do this—to have the child return to their parents.

1450

I also know that we live in a province where there's virtually no rehabilitation treatment for people who can't afford it. For those who have drug and alcohol addiction issues, good luck, because there's a long waiting list for beds. There's a long waiting list. We saw this with the mental health and addictions committee, which travelled the province and came back with 23 recommendations, of which this government has only acted on one—one recommendation out of 23. We know that we see this bill against that backdrop, and it's a very sad backdrop indeed.

We in Parkdale started our own drug strategy group. It has been going for years now. The police are part of that. We looked at what the city of Toronto has done, which is really actually a pretty positive move. They looked at harm reduction, enforcement, education and treatment, the four legs of the response to the drug epidemic. We looked at it in the context of our own riding, which has had a history of mental health and addiction issues that have plagued us. We're making some incredible strides in that.

Certainly, we have the police to thank. I know that Chief Blair just came into my riding on Tuesday night along with 11 division, and a week before we had another community meeting with 14 and 11 division with Superintendent Ruth White and Staff Inspector Peter Lennox who came and showed, as they did to a standing-room-

only crowd a week ago, that they are the people's police in our neighbourhood. People could ask them questions about what was going on, in our case about a number of drug-related deaths.

Think about the children of those folks. Think about children who are living in households where people have guns and who are killing each other. We've had six shootings in six weeks in Parkdale—not far from my house, actually. People need to know that their children are safe.

My riding was also the home to Katelynn Sampson—a horrendous case. The most seasoned of police officers said that they had never seen anything worse. Little Katelynn Sampson was turned over to a home more easily than we would adopt out a dog. That happened, too. There's so much more we could do for our children.

I commend the member from Simcoe North for doing this much. Certainly Katelynn's death prompted this government to act. It took that, and it still wasn't enough, because I spoke to the principal of her public school, and still they don't have enough adult supervision; still they don't have what we used to call truancy officers, who will go out and follow a child. All that happened there was that they phoned the home, and the answer they got was that she'd gone back to her reservation. She was a First Nations child. They had no adults available who could follow that up to see whether it was true or not. It wasn't true, of course, with tragic, horrific results.

How many children live in poverty and live in these situations? It's staggering.

I would love to see this go to committee because it would give us a chance to look at the state of children in our community, one sixth of whom live in poverty, many of whom are growing up with parents who have mental health and addiction issues who are not getting the help they need—not because our social workers and our police forces and everyone else isn't overburdened but because this government is asleep at the wheel in terms of delivering those services to the people who need it most.

Here is a bill that attempts to do a little bit. In the course of looking at this bill in committee, we could look at some of that as well. What is the process of taking a child out? Where does the child go once they're with children's aid? Where are the foster families? What happens then? Where is the supervision of that? How do we look after the family, punish the criminal and deal with the addiction? These are huge and weighty issues.

What this bill proposes—it's very straightforward, and I want to make this very clear to those who are watching at home—is a very small move. It's an obvious move, which is why I reiterate that it's so sad we are not hearing from the minister responsible for the portfolio on this bill—very sad. This small move simply says that meth labs and grow ops, places for the active trafficking and manufacture of drugs, are no place for children. My goodness. If we in this House cannot agree on that, I worry. I know that my friends to the right of me worry too.

If we can't agree on that, a simple step—again, I know that this government does not have a good track record of passing private members' bills. In fact, zero private members' bill have passed from opposition members, which is sad in itself because there's a wealth of talent and information; there's a wealth of research on this side of the floor as well.

As the member from Simcoe North said, it's not about partisanship here; it's about getting the government—and only the government could act—to do the right thing. He said, as we have all said, that you learn to be a little humble on this side of the floor of this place. We just want what's right to be passed. Take the credit. Move forward. Have the minister do it, bring it in, and don't even mention Garfield's name—or the member from Simcoe North. We're used to that now on this side of the floor. We don't care. We just want to see some action taken that will protect the children in this province. It's asked for by no less a body than the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. How much more prestigious a body does it have to get before this government will act, asking a simple thing? Their members are in the field all the time, witnessing this.

My husband was a police officer briefly after high school, in the area of Kitchener. His mother actually worked not far from the member from Kitchener—Waterloo and under her ministry's jurisdiction. Since that experience, he went to university to become a detective and never looked back; he ended up teaching at university—unfortunately, I think, for the police force; fortunately for me. But he has never looked back in terms of his respect for those who do the duties of law enforcement in this province. He knows what goes into an average day in the life of a police officer. He knows it's not easy. He knows that we ask the police to do what we don't want to do. We ask them to go places we don't want to go. Trust me: You may be happy when a firefighter runs into your house, but you're not happy when a police officer does, by and large. They're not the most popular people in many communities, but in many communities, they're among the most necessary people. And that's a very hard job to do: part social worker, part enforcement officer, part guidance counsellor, part parent, part friend—they do it all.

We're talking here about some very dangerous places that they walk into. If any of you have watched the series *Breaking Bad*—it's a personal favourite in my household, among my kids and myself—it's about a high school teacher who ends up working in a meth lab, and you see what goes into the manufacture of methadren, which is a growing problem across this province, across this nation and across North America—across the world. It's a dangerous job. He's wearing what amounts to a radiation suit. That's how dangerous it is. And you can imagine: children in that environment?

Grow ops: We had one that was raided not far from where I live, not long ago, in my riding. A fire started; that's how they found out about it. This is a dangerous place. Imagine inhaling those fumes all the time. Imagine

them in the lungs of a tiny child. This is child abuse. Let's name it for what it is. The member's Bill 84 does that, and says, "Let's call it such and let's react in a way that we would if we saw child abuse; let's make it easier to get children out of there, out of unhealthy places." My only hope is that in committee we can look at the ways of getting them into healthy places, because that's the other side of the equation as well.

Just to sum up, we're supporting this in the New Democratic Party. It's a good bill; it's a good move. Thank you to the police chiefs for bringing it forward. Thank you to the member from Simcoe North for putting it into bill form and bringing it forward. Shame on the government, shame on the ministry, for not speaking to it and supporting it. We hope that we do hear something from the other side of the floor. We do hope still—we live in hope—that there is some action.

I'll leave it at that, and I look forward to the words especially from those across the floor.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: In a very non-partisan way—as the member just spoke and then slammed everybody on this side, but I think what the member from Simcoe North is doing is very worthwhile. I think he really feels strongly about this initiative, and I commend him for doing this, because I've known him in the House for many years. This is something that he cares about. He does really feel that it's important to make these changes to better protect children in these horrific situations. I think it's something that I could support as a member. I don't have any major problems with it that I can see in what he's proposing.

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I hope that as this bill hopefully goes through the process, we can maybe see this bill become law one day. As many of you know around here, private members' bills don't happen automatically sometimes. We had one last week from the member from Essex for bone marrow transplants which was done very quickly, which was an excellent move.

I know in the past I've worked on a number of private members' bills, and I've seen a lot of my bills defeated. I don't blame anybody for defeating a bill because we all have differences of opinion, whether in opposition or in government, but in trying to convince members of the opposition, as the member from Simcoe North is trying to do, he's doing his job, and I encourage him to continue to advocate on behalf of this bill because I think it has a lot of merit. With continued effort, some of these bills do get passed.

I've had the good fortune of having a number of my initiatives either adopted by government or basically become law through the influence of a private member's bill, so I think there's a lot of merit in bills like this that are debated here and encouraged to be brought to fruition.

As the member said—and I think we all agree—it's just beyond belief that adults would expose children to these horrific dangers, dealing with everything from

crystal meth to marijuana grow ops to who knows what other drugs and dangers they're exposing children to.

Police officers, I'm sure, can tell us horrific stories about some of the conditions they find not only the homes in but the children or people living in them. It's sad to say that it's quite too frequent that this occurs.

It's not only in big cities like Toronto; it occurs in small communities all across Ontario. I know the crystal meth problem is one that is very prolific in smaller communities, for instance. Nobody is immune from this type of threat. Children, I think, all over Ontario could be exposed to this kind of danger, which is real and very, very harmful, to say the least.

I guess whether we like it or not, the children's aid society is going to be involved. They are important partners with the police in dealing with these very difficult situations in the endangerment of children. I know the children's aid societies are overwhelmed with the severity of some of these issues. They just don't seem to stop. As more sophisticated society gets, as more educated we supposedly get, it seems the number of horrific cases of abuse and so forth doesn't seem to end. It's just a continuing added burden on children's aid societies.

I know that over the last seven years we've had to increase funding for children's aid societies from \$500 million to \$1.4 billion a year. This is the burden that children's aid societies have had thrust upon them, and I'm sure they could even use more money, considering the issues they have before them. Luckily, we're able to continue to fund children's aid societies, because they are also very much on the front line of dealing with these situations.

Recently, we have taken some more measures to help aboriginal communities deal with this and help children's aid societies deal with their budget shortfalls, which are always a constant. They've always been a constant problem for children's aid societies under governments of all stripes.

I would say that it's critically important to look at the whole spectrum of the protection of children. By that, I mean everything from the early years centres, which are excellent places that give protection to children and give at least guidance to parents and a place for children and parents to go.

The all-day kindergarten is now coming in place. It's another stress reliever for families that's very important and that's coming to fruition. That has been done at great cost, but I think it's part of the future.

The ongoing pressure for child care spaces: You know, it is extremely stressful for families with young children who are trying to juggle two jobs, trying to take their children to child care and then rushing back from work to home in all kinds of weather—and the cost of child care. We all agree that there needs to be a national child care strategy, and hopefully that will come to fruition one day also, to help. Again, as I said, in the whole picture of helping children, we have to do more than put this burden on the shoulders of our police forces or our children's aid societies.

I think we also need to, again, condemn these practices because of these grow ops, as they call them. I know they can be almost industrial in size. I think there was one that they caught at the old Molson's beer factory up north of Innisfil; it was an incredibly huge operation. They might be found in basements and apartments, in small, little one-bedroom apartments. They're too common, and what they do is, in many cases, not only distribute these harmful drugs but they also put at risk people who are in those homes, especially, as the member from Simcoe North has said, if you've got children who are exposed to this. In many cases, these ruthless people who are engaged in drug manufacturing really don't care about the impact that may have on a child. So we need to look at ways of protecting children further.

I would say that this bill is worthy of support. It brings attention to this incredible, unconscionable act that puts children in danger, and I certainly have no qualms in supporting this bill.

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I want to begin by congratulating my colleague from Simcoe North. Certainly, throughout his term here as an MPP, he has always demonstrated a very sincere and honest commitment to ensure that we uphold and protect the safety of the community. Again, he has always listened to the stakeholders with whom he has had the honour and privilege of interacting.

He has brought before us, of course, a bill that reflects the concerns of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. They have asked for help, and he is endeavouring to provide that help. Obviously, it will provide protection for drug endangered children, so I want to congratulate him for being responsive to real needs in this province, particularly the children who are in the care of adults. So I'm pleased to support and join the debate on Bill 84, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to provide protection to drug endangered children.

If you take a look, this is a very comprehensive and very carefully considered bill that would, if passed—and we hope it will—provide important protections for children by imposing some very significant consequences and penalties on people who do expose children to the manufacture and trafficking of illegal drugs. Ultimately, the bill will strengthen the existing Child and Family Services Act by addressing a previously neglected category of children exposed to harm.

I was disappointed to learn that the Minister of Children and Youth Services wasn't prepared or didn't think the bill was necessary. I can tell you I will be supporting this bill, because it does provide important protection for vulnerable children who are exposed to the dangers associated with living in homes that house marijuana grow operations or meth labs or are in any other way exposed to illegal drugs and their manufacturing and trafficking. This bill addresses an important issue, and I trust today it will be supported by the members in this House.

This bill would make a number of important changes to the existing Child and Family Services Act, and it's going to address the important challenges that child protection workers and police officers face when dealing with drug endangered children.

1510

This bill defines drug endangerment as a specific category of harm that is inflicted upon our children. It refers to the exposure of a child to the production and the trafficking of all illegal drugs listed in Canada's Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Under this category, children could be removed from circumstances in which they are drug endangered in a more timely and efficient manner than the current legislation allows, and that is important.

Moreover, the bill establishes the specific category of drug endangerment as a form of abuse and as a punishable offence. In doing so, the bill ensures that penalties can be applied against people who drug endanger children, either in the form of a fine of up to \$2,000 or imprisonment for up to two years, as per the existing stipulations outlined in section 85 of the Child and Family Services Act.

According to Superintendent Wayne Kalinski of the York Regional Police, "Over the past five years, York Regional Police officers have been involved in 113 incidents where they've had to rescue children from homes where drugs were being manufactured or trafficked." I would urge the members in this House to keep that in mind.

This is a relevant issue. This is happening in our communities in the province of Ontario today. This bill is needed because in many instances the existing legislation simply is not strong enough to enable the safe and swift removal of children from situations of drug endangerment. The existing legislation also fails to allow for the imposition of penalties. So today we have to recognize that there is more to do.

Today, there is no specific penalty for drug endangering a child. In many cases, children are returned to the homes from which they were removed, where they continue to be exposed to the dangers associated with the manufacturing and trafficking of illegal drugs.

I want to just quote the OACP president, Chief Daniel Parkinson, who said that "the current process of removing a drug endangered child from a grow op or other illegal drug production operation is much too time-consuming and bureaucratic ... because current child protection legislation doesn't clearly define children that are drug endangered..."

So I would urge us to do what is necessary. This is a relevant issue. The safety of our young children is important. We know that children living in grow ops experience safety issues in regard to fire. Today, recognize the bill is important. It gives child protection workers and police officers the tools they need. I would urge you to support the bill today.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure for me to rise and speak to ballot item number 50, which is Bill 84, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to provide protection to drug endangered children, as proposed by the member for Simcoe North, Mr. Dunlop.

I know that colleagues from all sides of the House have done this, but I just want to recognize the member for Simcoe North for this bill. I think he has done tremendous work on this file. I had the pleasure of meeting with the folks from the Police Association of Ontario yesterday, and I met with the delegation that Mr. Dunlop introduced, and I can tell you, as a new member of this Legislature, that his respect in the police community is really enviable. I commend him for all of his work that he's done on that file to date.

Like my colleagues today, I will be speaking in favour of Bill 84. I think it gives us a real opportunity to speak out today. I know that the member for Simcoe North talked about the delegation here from the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. I want to thank them for taking time out of their busy schedule to support Mr. Dunlop. I will be reading some of their comments because I think they're very important. I will talk a little bit about a resource guide from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

To start, I just want to take this opportunity to talk about the fact that today we're talking about protecting children, protecting children who are exposed to an adult's involvement in drug activity, whether it be that of manufacturing or trafficking. It makes it very clear.

I think the member for Simcoe North has been very clear in his feelings about the fact that these children are abused and need our protection. As well, I know that there has been some discussion by some of the members about crystal meth and marijuana grow ops. But as well, we need to protect our young people in places where drugs are being sold.

I want to take this opportunity, too—I just met Toronto Police Superintendent Ron Taverner a few moments ago, and I think his quote back from that May 31, 2010, release is very appropriate: "When it comes to children, the status quo of current legislation shouldn't be acceptable to anyone. We've studied Mr. Dunlop's bill and know that it would help us save these children faster, while acting as a deterrent to the abusers who expose them to the high-risk lifestyle and many hazards of illegal drug production and trafficking." I think that's important to put on the record today.

As well, I have taken a lot of opportunities since I was elected in this House to look at the work of Mr. Dunlop, the member for Simcoe North.

There is a document that I have, Drug Endangered Children: Equating Drug Activity to Child Abuse. It is a resource guide that the RCMP put forward in 2009 that they use as an intervention tool to remove children from homes where illicit drug production operations are suspected. The model allows for enhanced collaboration between our police forces, child welfare services, pediatric practitioners and other stakeholders to respond

more effectively and more efficiently in situations where children are believed to be at risk of serious harm due to exposure to drug activity.

In this document, there is a number of quotes that I want to read in the limited time that I have. “‘It’s very shocking,’ said Detective Kory Keeping of the York Regional Police after discovering a grow op in an Ontario home. ‘Every time we go to a house and find children, it pulls at our heartstrings. The living conditions range from very filthy environments to houses where the upstairs is used as a living quarters and the downstairs is a commercial grow operation.’”

“Paul Jenkinson, chair of the BC Association of Social Workers: ‘Children found in a grow op have been put in harm’s way by their parents. These children are in danger of poison because of the large amount of fertilizers [and moulds] in close proximity. The electrical bypass that steals electricity from hydro companies puts children at risk of electrocution and house fires. Barred windows and multiple locks on doors mean the children will have no way of escape if a fire breaks out. The very real threat of grow rip-offs by rival gangs or growers puts the children at risk of violence, guns, and beating occurring around or to them.’”

This is an extremely important issue. It is an important issue, as the RCMP guide says, to engage all who are involved in this—not just the police but also child welfare services and people in the industry. I think we have a real opportunity today to rally around and support Bill 84. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I’m delighted and honoured to stand up in my place to speak and comment on Bill 84, Child and Family Services Amendment Act, to protect the children who are put in danger in drug situations.

First, I want to congratulate the member from Simcoe for bringing such an important issue to the House. I see a lot of advocates, people and police; many good people came today to listen to this debate.

I listened to many speakers who spoke before me about this important issue. There’s no doubt in my mind that it’s important not just for us on this side but for all the members in this House and all the people in this province.

1520

As you know, we hear a lot about it. We hear about kids found in grow operations, in drug operations, or that their family is dealing with drugs. Or it’s a drug dealers’ house and it happens to be that they have kids, and the kids witness all these difficult circumstances. They’re being forced to live in an environment that will affect them in the future, will put them in danger.

That’s why I believe our government paid a lot of attention to this issue. We invested more than \$800,000 with the police across the province of Ontario to create a special unit to tackle these issues and also to train the police in Ontario to deal with these issues in a professional manner. Also, the children’s aid societies across

the province of Ontario, in conjunction with the police, which—very often, many of the children’s aid societies and agencies across Ontario have a police presence in their administrations. They work together in order to make sure all the kids will be protected in all these drug operations in Ontario, that when they raid or try to close them down, they make sure these kids will be in the hands of the safe environment of the children’s aid society and many other agencies across the province of Ontario.

Also, we invested more than \$1.5 million to train special units with the OPP to make sure all these operations run in a proper manner and also that all these kids who have been found in the drug operations’ facilities or homes will be placed in a good environment.

It’s important too, when we announced the 1,000 police officers across the province of Ontario, we dedicated 128 officers to deal with this issue. I think it’s important for us. It’s not just important for a certain community or a certain party or a certain group; it’s important for all of us in the province of Ontario because our intention is to focus on our children. Children for us in the province of Ontario are the future; they are the future of this province. Therefore, we have the responsibility to make sure all the kids get the proper education, that they live in a proper environment and are protected from any harm. Therefore, I think it’s a very important issue to debate in the House.

I think it’s a very important issue to carry on in the future, to make sure all the kids are not being put in a harmful environment and difficult circumstances, because as you know, kids have no capacity—they are vulnerable; they don’t know any better when they are still young. They require a lot of attention, a lot of support. Therefore, I think there’s a mechanism to be put in place, in conjunction with what we did in the past, to make sure all the kids across the province of Ontario live in peace and harmony, live in normal circumstances, go on a regular basis to school; that they are learning the best things about life, not about the bad things, and are not being put in danger, especially in a drug environment.

In the end, I want to thank my colleague from Simcoe for bringing such an important issue to us to debate. I think it’s a non-partisan issue. I think all of us in this place are concerned about the future of the kids. Therefore, we are here to create a special mechanism to protect them and create a good environment for them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member from Simcoe North has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I’d like to thank the members from Parkdale–High Park, Eglinton–Lawrence, Waterloo, Leads–Grenville and London–Fanshawe for their comments this afternoon, and I appreciate some of the positive comments about it.

I want to just sum up by reading a couple of comments out of a letter sent on November 15 from the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police president, Robert Herman of the Thunder Bay Police Service, to the Honourable Laurel Broten. Basically, this is what he sums up:

“The current Child and Family Services Act does not clearly recognize that drug-endangered children even exist, because they’re not even specifically mentioned as a category of children in need of protection.

“The current Child and Family Services Act does not recognize that drug-endangering a child is a form of child abuse.

“The current Child and Family Services Act does not penalize people for drug-endangering a child, and this lack of a penalty or deterrent for drug-endangering a child has resulted in the turnstile effect of children being returned countless times to the homes of their drug-endangering abusers.

“The current Child and Family Services Act does not recognize that drug-endangering a child isn’t just about exposing them to illegal drugs—it’s also about exposing them to the trafficking of illegal drugs.”

I really appreciate the leadership shown on this bill by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. Guys, I really do thank you all so much for being here today.

As we were just talking about, in a few minutes we’re coming up to speak about an OSPCA resolution. The reality is that the OSPCA inspectors have more authority going after a dog or a cat or going onto someone’s property than these gentlemen do, heading all the police services in the province, going after children who have been endangered by people who expose them to drugs. That is unbelievable. You know what? We should all get together. Even if the minister has to bring her own bill forward and make it a government bill, we’ll support that bill. But if not, after the next election you can be sure of one thing: I will be pushing our caucus to create legislation to make this bill, Bill 84, a reality down the road.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will vote on Mr. Dunlop’s bill in about 50 minutes.

ONTARIO SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION
OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Klees moves private members’ notice of motion number 36. Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Frank Klees: The objective of the resolution before us today is to strengthen the ability of the OSPCA

to carry out its mandate, to ensure it is adequately resourced, has provincial oversight and can carry out its responsibilities without the inherent conflict of interest which is unavoidable under the existing structure.

The importance of this issue is evident by the number of people who have made the effort to be here today to witness this debate. Joining us in the galleries are supporters of this resolution from across the province. I thank them for making the effort to come here from as far away as Timmins, St. Thomas and London, eastern Ontario and throughout the GTA.

The reasons that people feel strongly about this issue are as varied and distinct as the signatures on the thousands of petitions that were submitted in support of this resolution over the last number of months. What is common, however, are the recurring experiences with the OSPCA that point to the need for more accountability and transparency; proper resourcing and training of its staff, especially those empowered with inspection and enforcement powers; and, most importantly, the need for provincial oversight.

The OSPCA has historically been a highly respected organization that enjoyed broad public support for its stated mission to facilitate and provide for province-wide leadership on matters relating to the prevention of cruelty of animals and the promotion of animal welfare. Dedicated staff, an army of committed volunteers and generous donors have attempted to fulfill that mission over the years, and we gratefully acknowledge their contribution to animal welfare in our province. However, there is a growing gap between the OSPCA’s stated goal and its ability to deliver on that goal.

In fact, recent events in Toronto and Newmarket have confirmed that the OSPCA is incapable of meeting its mandated responsibilities under the current legislated framework. It was the OSPCA’s plan to euthanize the entire population of 350 animals at its Newmarket shelter that drew province-wide attention to the lack of accountability and provincial oversight of the OSPCA. Despite the condemnation of the OSPCA’s euthanasia plan by local veterinarians and the public, the OSPCA insisted on carrying on with its plan.

In response to my appeal to the Minister of Community Safety and the Minister of Agriculture to intervene and to order a stay of the killings, the ministers claimed that they had no authority to intervene, citing that the OSPCA is an independent body and that the government has confidence in the OSPCA and its board of directors.

1530

We now know that the minister’s confidence in the OSPCA’s decision was misplaced. There was, in fact, an alternative solution, and it was eventually put in place, but not until more than 100 animals had been killed.

There are many questions that have yet to be answered concerning the OSPCA’s handling of the Newmarket shelter crisis, and I have every confidence that the independent review being conducted by the Honourable Patrick LeSage and Dr. Alan Meek will provide those

answers. I know that they are meeting with current and former OSPCA employees and volunteers, and they will hear the same evidence that was presented to me concerning the lack of training, the lack of supervision, the failure to follow protocol and procedures, and the lack of resources.

Each member of this Legislature received a copy of a binder which contains important information relating to this resolution. There are two sections in that binder that relate to current and former OSPCA employees, supervisors and inspection and enforcement officers. Their comments concerning the lack of training and supervision and inadequate resources are of particular relevance to this debate.

I urge the ministers and Liberal members who have been telling their constituents that they have confidence in the OSPCA to allow those submissions from front-line OSPCA employees and enforcement officers to inform them of the facts concerning the OSPCA's ability to deliver its mandated responsibilities.

I want to read into the record this submission from Mr. Mike Connor. When he retired from the OPP with the rank of chief superintendent, Mr. Connor assumed responsibilities with the OSPCA as director of operations. Here is what he has to say: "During my tenure with the Ontario SPCA it became apparent to me and even somewhat shocking that a charity had the mandate to be responsible for enforcement of criminal offences in this day and age.

"The management staff of enforcement activities were doing their job with little or no training in either the enforcement or management areas. Recruitment, training and supervision of the field inspectors and agents were done on an ad hoc basis....

"As the Ontario SPCA was a charity, the amount of financial resources available for the program was constantly changing based on the success of fundraising efforts.

"The end result was there were not enough funds to adequately train and supervise the field personnel."

I draw members' attention to the following submission from Mr. Rob MacLean: "After a 20-plus year career as a military police officer, I was hired as the regional inspector of the OSPCA, answering only to the provincial chief inspector.

"I attended both agent and inspector training courses at the provincial office ... which totalled approximately 15 training days" in total.

"I left the OSPCA in January 2005 out of frustration and professional ethical standards as I could not participate in the absolutely disgraceful conduct being forced upon Ontarians by the OSPCA activist methods, all the while hiding behind a piece of provincial legislation.

"As a law enforcement professional, I was shocked and appalled at the lack of law enforcement training conducted....

"The SPCA agents and inspectors are not just handing out parking tickets, they are laying Criminal Code charges."

There are numerous other submissions with identical testimony. I want to read just one more from Erika Longman, a former OSPCA cruelty agent and general manager of an OSPCA shelter: "Mr. Duncan's comments have me concerned that the Premier's office is truly unaware of the current state of affairs.... With no government oversight, there is no way to confirm that training is adequate. I agree that currently, it is not." Erika Longman has it right. The Premier's office, the minister's office and the government backbenchers are apparently unaware of the current state of affairs.

And speaking of the current state of affairs, how can the minister and government members ignore the embarrassing conduct of the OSPCA's so-called professionals in the very high profile raid on the Toronto Humane Society? Forty-three charges were laid OSPCA officers, all of which were withdrawn after review by the crown attorney.

In the summary of the crown's reasons for withdrawal of charges, the crown identified numerous incidents of inappropriate and unprofessional conduct on the part of OSPCA agents, further evidence of the serious concerns regarding the lack of training, supervision and resourcing, as described in the submissions of OSPCA employees.

Of particular relevance to this debate is the fact that the crown underscored the inherent conflict of interest in the existing OSPCA structure. I quote from the crown's summary: "The crown is aware that defence counsel for each of the parties charged will be strenuously advancing an abuse of process motion. Such a motion would involve a comprehensive analysis of the motivations of the OSPCA in initiating the investigation and laying the charges, the manner and execution of the search warrant and the arguable conflict of interest inherent in the OSPCA serving as the expert and the investigating authority in the context of being a privately funded organization with policing powers. It is the crown's view that these issues would adversely impact our ability to successfully prosecute the allegations before the court."

The fact that every one of the 43 charges against the Toronto Humane Society were withdrawn for the reasons just set out proves the point that the OSPCA staff, agents and inspectors were inadequately trained, supervised and resourced to carry out their mandated legislative responsibilities. How can this Legislature ignore that fact and how can this government refuse to take the steps proposed in this resolution to address these very serious issues?

The crown's stated concerns regarding the inherent conflict also confirm that the current structure, which empowers the OSPCA with policing powers while operating as a privately funded charitable organization, cannot be allowed to continue.

Finally, I remind members that there's no such thing as perfect legislation. At best, it's a work in progress, and we, as legislators, have the responsibility to amend legislation when we know it's necessary to do that. I believe by adopting the resolution before us today, it will be an

important first step in that direction and in restoring public confidence in the animal welfare system in Ontario.

In closing, I want to share this email, which was received in my office late yesterday afternoon. I ask members to consider it as we continue to deliberate on this issue this afternoon:

“Mr. Klees, on behalf of the board of directors of the Hamilton/Burlington SPCA, an affiliate of the OSPCA, I would like to inform you that we, in principle, are in agreement and support the resolution being placed before the Ontario Legislature on November 18, 2010.

“Sincerely,

“Keith Scott

“Chief executive officer

“Hamilton/Burlington SPCA.”

I trust that members will consider seriously the words of employees, agents, officers and volunteers of the OSPCA who are calling out for help from this government to implement the intent of this resolution, to review those powers, to restore public confidence in an organization that's been entrusted with serious responsibilities, and that we do what is necessary to remove the conflict of interest to ensure that there is proper provincial oversight so that we can, in fact, ensure that we have a strong animal welfare system in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Just before we go to the next speaker, I misspoke a few minutes ago when I said we'd vote in 50 minutes. We actually are ahead of ourselves today; we won't be voting on any items until about 4:40, just so the members know.

Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I couldn't agree more and I couldn't support more this initiative by the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

1540

I want to take the House and those who are watching at home back to a time many years ago in the life of my family when, through unfortunate circumstances, we had to euthanize our dog. Without going into detail, let me say we tried everything else, until we were forced to get to that point. Just years before that, my children had lost their father in a tragic car accident, so we were no innocents when it came to trauma. But let me tell you, the experience of going into that room and watching a beloved family animal put down, even when it needed to be done, was horrific. We suffered for weeks. In fact, I still feel tears coming to my eyes talking about it, and that was years and years ago. Now imagine the volunteers and the staff at the OSPCA in this branch who had to put down over 100 animals.

I was struck by the member from Newmarket–Aurora looking at the OSPCA in, I think, a very, very generous way. He failed to quote—and I will, because I know he didn't have time—some of the comments of the staff who actually had to do the dirty work. One said, “I am also concerned that donations to animal welfare must be funding what I see as a public relations exercise.” She was horrified at what was going on. Another talked about

“the slaughter of innocent lives that could have and should still be prevented. There must be another way!!” Imagine going home from work at a place like that—“a virtual killing field,” described one letter.

And then take this into account: There still has not been any evidence shown that they had ringworm at all, and even if they did, veterinarian after veterinarian after veterinarian has said it's a treatable disease. In fact, one veterinarian said that he had volunteered at the OSPCA and had asked for the transfer of 32 so-called infected animals, 10% of the total, to their clinic for free treatment—and never heard back. We're not talking about one animal. We're not talking about two animals. We're talking about over 100 animals. And the 114 that were saved have also not been demonstrated to have been infected by ringworm.

Think about it, even if you take the OSPCA's story, what does it say about them that so many animals under their care were infected by a preventable disease? What does it say about their systems of hygiene? What does it say about their systems of training? What does it say about their ability to curtail such an epidemic? It's incredibly damning evidence, even if you take everything that they say at face value.

Of course, you can take former CEOs' testimony too. Again, my friend didn't have the time to talk about a former CEO who wrote a letter as well, who outlined the lack of adequate resources, the weak leadership, the lack of accountability, the lack of true unity. This was a former CEO of the OSPCA. You heard from another one. This is yet another one.

What do they do when they get their newfound powers under this government? Where do they go first? Not to a puppy mill. Not to a dogfighting ring. They go to raid their competitors. That's what they do. One has to shake one's head.

Of course, an issue near and dear to my heart, and I know to many who have come today: If they truly were about the prevention of cruelty, and not the promotion of cruelty, to animals, then they should be speaking out loudly against the breed-specific legislation that this government has brought in, under which about a thousand animals have been killed across the province. If they really were advocates for the welfare of animals, then they should be speaking out loudly about that. We don't even hear about that. That is done under the cover of darkness, except when the good people of organizations like stopcanineprofiling.ca or the Dog Legislation Council of Canada—I urge people who are watching to read and go to those sites. If they were really concerned about the welfare of animals, they would be making that their first order of business: to lobby this government to overturn that legislation that has been responsible for the deaths of animals simply because of the way they look, in the hundreds across this province.

I really laud, first of all, the incredible work that the member from Newmarket–Aurora has done. As he said, we each received a whole binder full of evidence, but I also have to say that this is evidence that is readily avail-

able to anybody. One has to ask why the government hasn't accessed it; why the minister responsible hasn't gone over this, interviewed these same deputants; why they haven't acted in a way that should be quite, I believe, dramatic before another animal is seized by these people, before another animal is euthanized, before another volunteer has to go through what can only be described as a traumatic experience simply because they want to volunteer or where a staff person has to quit and write a letter to an MPP about what they witnessed going on before someone acts.

This is a charity acting like a wing of the police force, a charity acting as if it were part of government, and the government, instead of supervising it and overseeing it, simply prefers to look the other way and let them go on, keep on keeping on. It's unacceptable, absolutely unacceptable and, I want to tell you also, unpopular. Thank goodness it's unpopular. Thank goodness the citizens of this province have risen up and are speaking out.

I witness here all the numbers that have come down, but let's look at—you know, there is a Stop Killing Dogs site with almost 100,000 members on Facebook. Supporting my bill, Hershey's law, there's a total of about 10,000 now on two different sites, and even 248 on a children's site saying, "Please overturn breed-specific legislation."

The OSPCA, meanwhile, chugs along. It chugs along and closes shelters even though their revenue has gone up. There's a question we might want to ask: Why is it that their reports to the Canada Revenue Agency have gone from \$2,270,000 in 2003 to \$16,813,000 in 2009, and yet they closed North York, Oxford county and Dryden in that same period of time? One might want to ask where the money is going. Where is the money going?

It's quite horrific. What is going on is quite horrific, and what continues to go on is quite horrific. There's not a week that goes by that we don't read an article about somebody's dog being seized, and quite frankly, some of these animals—it's not the people in Forest Hill or Rosedale. When animal services raids someone's property with warrantless entry and takes an animal, it's usually because they're pretty assured that this person is not going to fight back through the legal system, because we know what it costs. We know that there are many lawsuits against the OSPCA. We know they number in the tens of thousands of dollars and that not everyone can afford that.

I think of the poor woman out in Brampton, the Portuguese grandmother who had her dog taken out of her backyard and had to fight to get it returned. What kind of agency focuses on a grandmother in Brampton when they should be focusing on puppy mills, dog-fighting, all of the active abuse that's going on—and we know it is—in this province?

So absolutely, I support—and so do New Democrats—any attempt to supervise what has become a very questionable enterprise. Absolutely I support and absolutely so do all New Democrats support anything that

will allow us to further the welfare of our animals. Absolutely, oh, my goodness, do I support and do all New Democrats support anything that will prevent the actuality of having another family go through what we had to go through, another volunteer go through what we had to go through, another staff person have to go through what we had to go through, another CEO have to quit rather than go through what we had to go through. Horrendous. I can't imagine. Thank goodness; finally.

Again, the only thing I can say is that I wish I had brought it in myself. Thank you to the member from Newmarket–Aurora for his tirelessness on this issue, for his research on this issue, for his advocacy on this issue. There's no question that we will support it. The only reason that we're not all here Thursday afternoon is that many of our members have gone back to their far-flung ridings; it's not a question of lack of support that comes through a divided vote; it is simply the reality we all know about getting members out on Thursday afternoons.

1550

So here's to our dogs, here's to our cats, here's to our animals, here's to our animal welfare, and finally, I hope, here's to supervision of the OSPCA.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I also want to say thank you to the member from Newmarket–Aurora for his introduction of this resolution. I'll say from the outset that I do support his bringing this forward, and I think he has done very good work in this area. But I do not support the resolution, and I'm going to tell you why.

Some of you may know that I have been involved in animal welfare protection for a number of years. Over 10 years ago, I brought legislation before this House to try to close down puppy mills. I don't know if you know about puppy mills, but they are rampant all over North America—they were rampant in Ontario and still are today—where abusive people, for a profit, are housing and breeding animals in deplorable conditions. The member from Parkdale–High Park talks about the cat or the dog; we're talking about thousands of cats and dogs and birds being bred systematically for profit in the most horrific conditions: no light of day, being poorly fed, being bred when they're sick. It's incredible, and I've seen this first-hand, sad to say.

I travelled with animal welfare public officials and with ordinary people who cared about animals in small communities across Ontario and saw first-hand these deplorable mills that operated for profit and still operate for profit in this province because there are people who hide behind laws that are too weak, hide behind all kinds of excuses and continue to breed animals for profit, and they're sold to unsuspecting people. They're sold in newspapers. Pet stores in this province are selling puppy mill animals daily. In any city, they're selling puppy mill animals. They still do it in all our pet stores. Nothing stops them.

Go to markets. There's a place up in Downsview—somebody's flea market; Fred's Flea Market—selling puppy mill dogs. Last year, dogs that were diseased, obviously from a puppy mill, were being sold right in the middle of Toronto.

Anyway, I brought that legislation forward, and I had 220,000 signatures from across this province; 220,000 names of people who wanted the puppy mills closed. The bill was defeated unanimously by the opposition—unanimously defeated. It went nowhere. But I kept pursuing the issue, as the member from Newmarket is. He's pursuing this issue, which has to be pursued.

I'm not here to slam or condemn or witch-hunt the OSPCA. They're not perfect. We know that, as has been evidenced by what happened up in Newmarket. They're far from perfect, and that's why I fully support and await the findings of Justice LeSage, to see what he has found out there. I await that, and I think it's needed, because none of us accept what happened in Newmarket as being what we think the OSPCA or any other animal welfare protection agency should be engaged in—as with the Toronto Humane Society and what they were doing or not doing.

But as you know, these are charities. They are not for profit, they are volunteer-based and they get some support from government. But they are caught between a rock and a hard place. If they are too aggressive in protecting animals, they are condemned. If they are not aggressive enough, they are condemned by another side that thinks they should be more aggressive. You're always in a difficult situation when you're trying to protect animals in this province or in any other jurisdiction.

This goes on not only in Ontario but in Europe, in every state of the Union and across the country, where people who care about animals try to do something and are always condemned for trying to protect animals as being frivolous and not doing enough and not doing it right.

I think what we should be looking for is ways of making animal protection more meaningful, more comprehensive and more effective. What we're seeing here is basically doing something that I don't think achieves that.

Just last year, we finally passed updated animal protection legislation in the province in Ontario for the first time in 100 years. It was updated. We went across the province, and they criticized—

Interjection: You got it wrong.

Mr. Mike Colle: They just proved what I said. They're saying it was wrong.

The attempt to do something, which took over a year of hearings, meaningful input from all kinds of organizations—advocates, humane societies, OSPCA people—was wrong. But at least there was a very determined attempt by this government to pass legislation which is comprehensive and which was modernized to meet the reality of what's happening in this province in protecting vulnerable animals.

That's not to say that the legislation is about interfering with the daily activities of the agricultural com-

munity. It's about, generally speaking, protecting animals that are used or enjoyed as pets. That's where most of the abuse is. People who are trying to have healthy pets or to purchase or adopt a healthy pet are caught in this conundrum of not knowing where that pet came from.

Then we see that it is quite common to have huge dogs kept in apartments, never allowed to get outside of an apartment. A neighbour will complain: "That dog's been in the apartment. I haven't seen it for a week." What happens? That neighbour who complains then is caught for informing on their neighbour. Then, if animal control comes in from the city of Toronto or the OSPCA or the Toronto Humane Society, they're condemned for entering that person's property, for being too aggressive in trying to protect that animal that hasn't been out for a walk in a week. You can't win.

I think where we can do something better is by waiting for the report from Justice LeSage and seeing how we could improve the practices of the OSPCA to make it more effective, more responsible, more accountable.

But we also need to understand that attacking and condemning the OSPCA is not going to make it better for animals in the long run. We have to do more than just condemn the OSPCA and the mistakes that they made. Let's be a lot more thoughtful. Let's be a lot more comprehensive and understanding that the abuse of animals is systemic across this province, as it is across North America. Let's not talk about the food we eat. If you want to go there, we'll talk about that and how animals are treated.

So we must understand that at least last year, there was very progressive, meaningful new legislation passed that took the best ideas from across Canada to update our animal protection legislation. It was done. It's not perfect. Can it be improved? Yes. But let us do it after we get more evidence on how we can make it better and find out how we can fix problems that do exist. Let's not think that, by just pointing the finger at the people in Newmarket, it was their fault by themselves. I think it's part of the tip of the iceberg. Let's not just condemn and point fingers. Let's try and make things better for animals that are vulnerable and depending on us to stand up and speak for them because they can't speak for themselves.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to support the resolution brought forward by my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora. Clearly, there are issues with the current system of animal welfare that need to be addressed, including ensuring that there is proper oversight and training of people who are enforcing our animal welfare laws.

I'm pleased to recognize the farmers and the farm organizations that are here today in support of this resolution. Many people may not realize that farm animals fall under the jurisdiction of the OSPCA, too. In fact, approximately 10%, or 1,500, of their calls each year relate to farm animals.

Dealing with farm animals and their needs is significantly different than dealing with household pets that are

being inadequately cared for. It requires proper education and training in large animal science and farm practices. If the OSPCA doesn't have the funding for proper training, it is putting not only the animals but those workers at risk.

1600

A number of farm groups have expressed concerns about the lack of oversight of the OSPCA. In a recent article, Crystal Mackay, executive director of the Ontario Farm Animal Council, was mentioned as saying that a movement towards government funding and oversight of the OSPCA's enforcement side is definitely a step in the right direction.

Bette Jean Crews, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, says that the federation is "totally supportive of government oversight of OSPCA."

As you know, Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, Bill 50 gave OSPCA agents and inspectors the right to enter any building or any place used for animal exhibit, entertainment, boarding, hire or sale without a warrant. There's nothing that ensures proper oversight or training regarding biosecurity. There is nothing to stop an OSPCA inspector from visiting multiple barns in one day without following the proper procedures, and as a result actually spreading disease to the animals that they are in charge of protecting.

Since there is no requirement for a search warrant, the farmer has no opportunity to object or explain the procedures needed. By the time the farmer or any animal owner has the opportunity to appeal, the damage may already be done: The barn has been contaminated or the animal has been euthanized.

If they do manage to appeal and go to the Animal Care Review Board, they face seven people, five of whom live in the city of Toronto. You might expect that the other two who aren't from Toronto would be farmers to ensure that someone with proper knowledge of normal farming practices would be there. Not so, unfortunately. One is from Ancaster; he's in marketing. One is from Kemptonville and is a counsel with the Office of the Commissioner of Review Tribunals. In fact, only one member of that board is a veterinarian. Five of them are lawyers—not exactly an expert panel on animal care.

It is clear that the current system needs review. The current design results in conflicts of interest, inadequate training and funding, and doesn't work for the pet owners, farmers or animals that the system is supposed to protect.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: During private members' time, I've always made the commitment to listen carefully to the debate and make a decision based on my own feelings regarding that because it is just that: private members' time. I will not be whipped, nor did I ever ask to whip anyone when I was whip. Private members' time is just that.

I want to start on that note and thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for bringing this up. I agree that

review is always healthy. Quite frankly, your asking for that review is reasonable. I don't have a problem with supporting that. I have a slight difficulty with the rest of the motion. If the review is to take place, then are we not pre-determining what you want in terms of the outcome before the review is finished? That's the part I would ask you to address in terms of making that assumption. It's not a criticism; it's just a question on the validity of the review. What happens if somebody does this review, a legislative counsel or a committee or whoever we send it to, and they come back and say, "Do you know what? We only need a few little tweaks about this; we don't need to do these other things that you're asking about"? If I'm getting it right, you're mandating what must happen before the review is done. I just need a response to that, if you don't mind.

The second thing is that I have received an email from Larry Davis, who is the area representative of the OFA, supporting your resolution. I've told him that I would pass that information on—and I have done so—to the minister, and now I'm telling you that I did receive that from the OFA, Larry Davis in our area.

Contrary to what the characterization is, a farm-experienced vet should be accompanying an OSPCA member in terms of an inspection of a complaint-laid reason for an inspection from the OSPCA onto a farm. If that does not happen, then the farmer has a right to ask for a vet to be present. During the deliberations on Bill 50, that was some of the clarity that I brought to them as I carried the bill. This is what is supposed to be happening with the agents and the training.

During our extensive stakeholder consultations during the bill, we had the Ontario Farm Animal Council; the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters; the humane societies; the WSPA; the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Anyone caught mistreating an animal can receive, as a result of the bill, jail time, fines of up to \$60,000, and potential lifetime ownership bans.

Some of those things have been included in the bill, but while we are asking for this review, I would like to know that we're talking about the application, how the bill would be applied to not just humane societies or not just the OSPCA, but also across the board with all animal ownership. The member knows that I've introduced a bill, An Act to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, in order for us to get a handle on wild, exotic animals being held in captivity or being owned. I would hope that that too would be able to be under the auspices of your review.

I've got about 25 minutes' worth of discussion points and others that I would like to make. I do want to tell the member that I continue to listen carefully to the debate. I will tell you what I would do, and you'll see by my vote.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to enter the debate today. I'm sorry; I have a very brief time in which to

speak, so I will keep my comments as concise as possible.

Animal welfare is and always has been important: to my constituents, to me and to my party. Therefore, I am pleased to join this debate and congratulate my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora on his resolution.

We all know there are problems in Ontario's animal welfare system. The sad events at the Newmarket OSPCA are but one example. The whole saga with the raids, charges and then the dropping of charges at the Toronto Humane Society is another example. A lot of people are losing confidence in this government's attitude towards animal welfare, an attitude which seems to be one of neglect. This is not the attitude of our party. We know that animal welfare is important.

A good example of our party's commitment to animal welfare is our stand against puppy mills. In 2001, I was very proud to see my private member's bill to outlaw puppy mills passed by the Legislature. I was very pleased to have unanimous support of my bill from members of all parties. Puppy mills are the scene of abuse of animals, but I can report that my bill against these operations is working. Within 18 months of being passed into law, my bill was used successfully in court. The fine imposed was \$17,000, several times greater than the pre-existing maximum of \$2,000. It shows that we can work together in this House to help animals.

The current resolution is exactly right in calling on the government to establish "clearly defined and effective provincial oversight" and "to separate the inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA...." We need to ensure the highest standards of care in all animal protection centres in Ontario. We also need to restore public confidence in our animal protection system. Both of these actions are necessary, and this resolution will help. I hope the government members support it. They have to ask themselves what their party's animal welfare legacy is going to be. So far, their chief accomplishment is to ban pit bulls, leading to hundreds of dogs being unnecessarily euthanized. This is not much of a legacy.

I am proud of our party's record on animal welfare and proud to support this resolution today.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure for me to speak for a few moments in support of the private member's resolution presented by the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

As a new member of the Legislature, I can remember the day like it was yesterday—I think it had been less than two months since my swearing-in—when the member for Newmarket–Aurora posed the question to the Minister of Community Safety. He's right across from me. I couldn't believe the answer that he gave. As the days unfolded and as the member from Newmarket–Aurora kept asking the tough questions, I was again shocked at the minister's indifference to what the member was talking about, and in the weeks that have followed. I can appreciate all of the people who have come from all over Ontario to support this motion. I

really hope that in a few moments we will get some support.

1610

I've heard from lots of people. I, like many of the members on this side, have presented a number of petitions in support of the resolution. Even last evening, I heard again from farmers in my riding. Brian and Andra Wintonic wrote me a letter last night, a quick email, supporting today's resolution, and as farmers, they feel that the OSPCA powers are hanging them out to dry. Their last quote really says it all: "Our industry supports humane treatment of animals but we cannot support those who make decisions about our animals, with little or no knowledge of animal husbandry," signed the Wintonics. I think that's really important, and I know the member from Oxford talked about that.

Again, what we're talking about is not another level of bureaucracy. We're not talking about it being taken over by the government; we're talking about a review. I think, as legislators, there are times that, perhaps, we don't do it right the first time. I believe this resolution that the member has presented really touches on that, that we do have an opportunity to make things right. We do have an opportunity to sit down, from all levels, from all sides of this Legislative Assembly, do the review and take away the conflicts, separate the powers of enforcement from the charitable side.

I'm supportive of the humane society and the shelters in my area, in Brockville and Gananoque. Nothing—and I mean nothing—gets between my baby cat, Lily, and myself. Let me tell you, nothing gets between Lily and I. I'll tell you, if I was in that position where I had to make a choice, this resolution really says it all. It gives us the opportunity to bring back the balance, the mistakes from Bill 50.

Again, I support what Mr. Klees, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, is talking about.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm pleased to speak in support of this resolution. People are talking about the failings of the SPCA, but what we're really talking about are the failings of this Legislature when we passed Bill 50. We know that our society believes that the fundamental requirement is for checks and balances in our society, and checks and balances can only be achieved by the separations of power. Bill 50 did not separate powers; Bill 50 combined powers, powers of charity and enforcement. And that's really where the failings are.

This resolution in large part is because of these two high-profile cases with the Toronto Humane Society and the Newmarket shelter, but those two failings really have been found throughout rural Ontario since the passage of Bill 50 on a multitude of farms and with landowners throughout this province. They have felt the failings of Bill 50 in the same fashion as the Toronto Humane Society and Newmarket.

I would like to ask this House, what do you think of any government service that is provided with enforce-

ment? Here we have a charitable organization that has police authority. They need the revenues from those authorities to fund themselves. Would we fund health care? Would we give doctors police authority and tell them that they have to raise revenues to pay for our health care? It is fundamentally wrong that we're saying to a charity, "You raise your funds by having the badge." It is absolutely atrocious—and we knew that this was going to happen. We raised these issues during the debates on Bill 50, but they were dismissed. They were just completely dismissed.

I'll go back—separations of power: That's what this review is looking at, a review of those authorities. We don't have to wait for Justice LeSage to understand the nature of society to understand what is fundamentally wrong with the OSPCA legislation.

I call on every private member here. Really, let's get back to the basics, let's get our legislation—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Mr. Klees has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to thank all members who spoke to this proposed resolution. To the member from Brant, I want to assure him that when the resolution speaks about a review, that is precisely what I'm calling for. There is no intention whatsoever to presume what that review will, at the end of the day, do to change that legislation.

I have included in that resolution some areas that I believe are absolutely critical for that review to pursue. If, in fact, the review, held by and with all stakeholders, determines a certain solution that is, in fact, in the public interest, we'll live with that. But I can tell you that based on the evidence that I have presented, I believe that every person here has to conclude that there are serious problems inherent in the existing structure. You have heard from former employees and from current employees. You have heard from officers. You have heard from enforcement officers of the OSPCA who themselves are saying, "Help us. We need help. We need government oversight."

Yes, we have a new bill. However, what the recent events have shown us is that we need to revisit that bill and to ensure that the flaws that are there are fixed. That's our responsibility. How long do we want to wait? What else are we willing to allow to have happen until we are finally forced to do something about it?

This is a proactive opportunity for the Legislature. I would appeal to every member here today to consider the facts that have been presented and give us an opportunity to right the things that are wrong in the existing legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time for that ballot item has expired, but I'll just explain to people why we can't vote until 4:40 today, and we can't change the rule through unanimous consent, and it's not debatable.

The standing orders very clearly say that from the time we begin the first ballot item under private members'

public business to the end of the third item, two and a half hours have to elapse. Two and a half hours are allotted, and that's to allow members that may be throughout the building or are out at meetings somewhere to know when to come back to have the vote and to give them some certainty.

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would love to actually make a motion to allow us to continue the debate on this issue if there's unanimous consent for that, because I believe there's so much more that we can say that would perhaps help to convince some of the people who are not quite yet convinced of this issue. So I would ask for unanimous consent to continue debate on this bill until such time as we're ready for the vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Nice try. The rules are pretty fixed here. Maybe some day we'll want to look at them again.

Mr. Frank Klees: On another point of order—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Let me rule on that point order, because I think this is going to go on for a while.

We're not composed as a full House right now, so we can't ask for unanimous consent, and the time is fixed in the standing orders.

Mr. Frank Klees: On another point of order, Mr. Speaker: In light of the fact that many people have travelled a long way, I'm going to invite everyone to join us for a reception in the Legislative dining room in the basement. Make your way to the elevators. I'll extend the invitation to all members of the House to join us as well. That'll give us an opportunity for some fellowship until such time as we return here for the vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Not a point of order, don't put it on my tab, and, pursuant to standing—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: There are some introductions I would like to make here today associated with the folks from the OSPCA resolution. I'd like to recognize the following visitors in the House today who have come for this afternoon's debate on the OSPCA resolution: Fred, Anne, Alexander, Tristan and Kelden Probst; Sharron Purdy; Diane Cartwright; Michelle Langston; Eva McDowell; Wendell Palmer; Wayne and Virginia Ireland; Richard Anderson; Clarence and Rose Rutledge; and Allan and Rachel Pamilton. They're joining us here today for this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It's not a point of order, but welcome to Queen's Park.

Pursuant to standing order 98(e), private members' public business having concluded before the expiry of the two and a half hours allotted, the House is suspended until 4:40 today, at which time the questions will be put to the House.

The House suspended proceedings from 1620 to 1642.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. I'd just ask members to please take their seats.

TEMISKAMING AND CHATHAM-KENT-
LEAMINGTON ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010

CONCERNANT TEMISKAMING
ET CHATHAM-KENT-LEAMINGTON

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will first deal with ballot item number 49, standing in the name of Mr. Hoy.

Mr. Hoy has moved second reading of Bill 132, An Act to change the name of the territorial district of Timiskaming and the electoral district of Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Hoy.

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'd ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Agree to refer the bill? So ordered.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
AMENDMENT ACT
(PROTECTION OF DRUG
ENDANGERED CHILDREN), 2010
LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE
ET À LA FAMILLE
(PROTECTION DES ENFANTS
MENACÉS PAR LA DROGUE)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 50.

Mr. Dunlop has moved second reading of Bill 84, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to provide protection to drug endangered children.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Justice and social policy.

Interjection: Which one?

Interjections.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I think I said justice policy. It's been a rough day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Agreed. So referred to somewhere down the hall, the justice committee.

ONTARIO SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION
OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item number 51.

Mr. Klees has moved private member's notice of motion number 36. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1645 to 1650.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia
Brownell, Jim	Hoy, Pat	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Clark, Steve	Jaczek, Helena	Prue, Michael
DiNovo, Cheri	Jones, Sylvia	Savoline, Joyce
Dunlop, Garfield	Klees, Frank	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remaining standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Dickson, Joe	Phillips, Gerry
Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq
Balkissoon, Bas	Kular, Kuldip	Ramal, Khalil
Best, Margaret	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Sergio, Mario
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Dhillon, Vic	Moridi, Reza	Takhar, Harinder S.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 17; the nays are 24.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negated.

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

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Phillips moves adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1653.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
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Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

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Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

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Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R (LIB)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Oraziotti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB) Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB) Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie Oshawa Kitchener–Conestoga Elgin–Middlesex–London Scarborough–Agincourt	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Beaches–East York Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Ramal, Khalil (LIB) Ramsay, David (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord London–Fanshawe Timiskaming–Cochrane Northumberland–Quinte West Davenport Guelph Burlington York West / York-Ouest Thornhill Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Vaughan Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Carleton–Mississippi Mills Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex Perth–Wellington Simcoe–Grey	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) Yakabuski, John (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
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Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling
David Zimmer
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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
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**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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