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Monday 6 December 2010

Lundi 6 décembre 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 6 December 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 6 décembre 2010

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

WEARING OF BUTTONS

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear buttons in recognition of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I'm delighted to welcome visitors from the most beautiful area of the province. Marcel and Laurencia Chatelain are from the french fries and poutine capital of Canada, the village of Alfred. Mr. Chatelain is a former mayor of Alfred and also a former county warden of Prescott and Russell. Welcome to our visitors. Bienvenue.

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure today to introduce and welcome to the Legislature Strachan Heighington, the son of Wilfred Heighington, who was a former member of provincial Parliament first elected to the Ontario Legislature as a Conservative member in 1929 for the Toronto riding of St. David and re-elected in 1939. Prior to serving as an MPP, Wilfred Heighington served as a captain in World War I and fought in the Battle of the Somme and the battle of Vimy Ridge. He was also a lawyer and later appointed King's Counsel.

Mr. Strachan Heighington, like his father, is a lawyer and also has been appointed Queen's Counsel. He's joined here today by family members in the members' west gallery: Martha Heighington, Douglas Heighington, Andrew Heighington, Gerald Owen, and Robin and Mary Dickie. Please welcome them to the Ontario Legislature.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to introduce my friend Tess Hooks, who's here in the members' gallery. She is the mother of page Breana Hooks, who is doing such a wonderful job for us all.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and page William Boulter to welcome his mother, Jean Boulter, his father, Paul Boulter, and his brother James Boulter to the members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of the member from Wellington-Halton Hills and page Elizabeth Wilson, we'd like to welcome her aunt Anne Ruddy and her uncle Jim Ruddy to the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of the member from Kenora-Rainy River and page Kira Kuzemchuk, we'd like to welcome her mother, Michelle De Coninck, her father, Brian Kuzemchuk, her sister Corrin Kuzemchuk, her grandmother Rose Walker and family friend Charlie Ivan to Queen's Park today.

On behalf of the member from Windsor-Tecumseh and page Gabriella Howes, we'd like to welcome her mother, Jennifer Howes, her father, Bernard Howes, and her brothers, Benjamin Howes and Theodore Howes, to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation from the economic committee of the National Assembly of Vietnam, led by committee chairman Mr. Ha Van Hien.

Please join me in welcoming all our guests to the Legislature. It is a pleasure to meet with you today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. After seven years, the legacy of McGuinty government waste continues; in fact, it gets deeper and deeper. Take the rot at eHealth that the auditor exposed a year ago. You said you'd fix the problem; you failed to do so. We saw eHealth-style rot then spread to our hospitals and LHINs and the Ministry of Health.

Today, the auditor will report on casinos. As you know, the Ombudsman warned you some time ago about what cheaters were getting away with back in 2007, and the auditor had more to say about this in June of this year.

Premier, why should Ontario families have any confidence that you can change when your scandals keep having sequels? Why should we trust you to clean up your own growing messes?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question coming from my honourable colleague, but I would have thought he would want to speak about something that is very heavy and weighs on the minds of Ontarians, and that's jobs and the state of the economy.

I'm pleased to report that the November job numbers are out. We are now leading Canada, with 31,200 new

jobs; that's the strongest gain since June. The unemployment rate is at the lowest point it's been in almost two years. We've regained 87% of the jobs lost during the recession. Again, that compares favourably with the US, which has only regained 10% of their jobs. In the last two weeks alone, there were 2,700 new jobs announced.

We look forward to dealing with those in some detail when it comes to the supplementaries.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Obviously the Premier does not want to talk about his legacy of scandal and McGuinty waste. Premier, the problem is that your scandals have more sequels than Rambo, and each one gets worse as we come along. You say you're going to change the rules, but the same kind of waste keeps happening over and over again.

Since your eHealth and lottery and gaming corporation scandals, the auditor revealed that they kept handing out sweetheart deals at the Ministry of Health, the LHINs and OLG, and now at the Niagara Parks Commission.

Premier, in 2009 you were told that the Municipal Property Assessment Corp., MPAC, handed out \$11.4 million in sweetheart deals. The auditor has MPAC in his report today. Please tell us that your eHealth-style rot has not also spread to MPAC under your watch.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm always interested in the rhetoric, but I think Ontarians are more interested in reality.

Of course, the auditor will be speaking to a number of issues. We welcome his report, as we always have. We look forward to receiving his advice, and we look forward to acting on his recommendations, as we have a number of times in the past.

My friend says he is focused on efficiencies in government—I'll translate it that way. I'm pleased to report that Ontario has the fewest civil servants per capita in the country; we have the lowest per capita government spending in Canada; we are on track to reducing the size of the OPS by 5% or 3,400 full-time employees.

There was a time when the federal government collected corporate taxes and we collected corporate taxes. We've stopped doing that, and shortly we'll stop all sales tax collection as well. Those are two specific measures that my honourable colleague does not support.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Obviously the Premier is not interested in talking about a potential scandal at MPAC. I think families are getting sick and tired of seeing you wash your hands and say you'll do better, and then find out that the exact same scandal happens over and over again.

We saw it, Premier, with eHealth, and that spread to your LHINs, the Ministry of Health, as well as the hospitals themselves. We saw it at OLG, and we're going to hear more today. We saw it at MPAC, and I think, Premier, you are dodging because you know that eHealth-style rot has likely spread to MPAC as well.

1040

You've had seven years. The scandals happen over and over and over again, and nobody pays the consequence. The only way to bring change is to change the government itself. Premier, when will you learn your lesson?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It doesn't matter how you slice it or dice it: Rousing rhetoric is no substitute for a plan. We're pleased to put forward to the people of Ontario solid, substantive plans for bringing about real, measurable progress.

I'll stack up our progress against their rhetoric any day. Take a look at our schools: smaller classes, higher test scores, higher graduation rates. In health care, one million more Ontarians today have a doctor; wait times are down for MRIs, CTs, cataracts, cancer care, hips and knees, and also in our emergency rooms. We're the only province in Canada to have in place a plan to reduce emergency room wait times.

We're making progress. All those areas are specific areas of progress. The same applies to our economy; the same applies to our job count. Again, we'll put our plan up against their rousing rhetoric any day.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: Sadly, your only plan, as has become clear after seven long years in office, is to reward Liberal friends and insiders and stick Ontario families with the bill.

You say you are bringing down ER wait times. Premier, you have lost touch with what's happening in communities around the province: seniors and families waiting up to 23 hours for care in emergencies in Premier McGuinty's Ontario. And now you've set your eyes on St. Marys hospital. St. Marys hospital has its ER in jeopardy. You're cutting out their rehab beds and making patients drive 50 kilometres for service, and you are going to cut five acute care beds.

Premier, why are you rewarding Liberal friends? Why did you blow a billion dollars at eHealth while you're cutting services at St. Marys?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The pattern that has emerged here is very clear. It's just an endless string of slogans and rhetoric which have no bearing to reality and the concerns of Ontario families whatsoever.

We will continue to put forward plans. We will continue to act on the basis of our plans. My friend says he is not in favour of our emergency room plan. He has no plan to offer of any kind.

Let's listen to what the chair of public affairs from the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians said about our plan. He said, "The commitment of the McGuinty government to addressing the issue of prolonged ER wait times has been nothing if not impressive...."

“They ... have dedicated considerable resources to defining and addressing the problem that was not of their making and are unwavering in their search for a solution. This is leadership and we can only hope that other provincial governments follow” the Ontario government’s lead.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, sadly, Premier, there’s no opportunity for another province to follow Ontario when we’re dead last when it comes to economic growth and job creation in the province. That is the legacy of the McGuinty government, on top of the billions of dollars wasted at eHealth, wasted at OLG, wasted at the Niagara Parks Commission, Cancer Care Ontario, MPAC. The only endless string is the endless string of McGuinty government scandals that have wasted money and cut services to Ontario families who pay the bills.

Premier, you’ve already closed down Fort Erie’s ER. You’ve closed down Port Colborne’s ER. Now you have St. Marys hospital in your sights as well. But you are putting \$250 million into regional health bureaucracies called LHINs. Premier, won’t you admit your bloated bureaucracy, the LHINs, is a tragic mistake that—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: They don’t have a plan, but it has been said that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. They shut down 28 hospitals. We’re building 18 new hospitals in the province of Ontario. We’ve hired 10,000 new nurses. We’re the first province to ever measure wait times for emergency rooms. We’re the only party with a plan to bring those down. We do know that they remain absolutely committed to cutting \$3 billion out of health care. What exactly is that going to transfer into when it comes to nurse losses, doctor losses, hospital losses and wait times going up? We need to take that into account because, again, they refuse to put forward a plan of their own.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: There’s no doubt that when it comes to Premier McGuinty—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Start the clock. Please continue.

Mr. Tim Hudak: There’s no doubt that when it comes to the way that Premier McGuinty conducts himself in office past behaviour is every predictor. This was a man who said he wouldn’t raise taxes, a man who says everything to try to get elected and then breaks those promises one by one once elected.

You had an eHealth scandal, and then you had another eHealth scandal. You had a lottery and gaming scandal, and then you had two more. The Niagara Parks Commission scandals were followed by scandal after scandal after scandal. Premier, the legacy of the McGuinty waste runs far too deep and Ontario families want to see a change.

Let me give you one more example, Premier, when it comes to these LHINs. They don’t do a single minute of patient care, they don’t spend one minute in surgery and they don’t do a single MRI, but you’re closing down, potentially, an ER and beds in St. Marys. Premier, we would close the doors to the LHINs and put every penny into front-line health care for Ontario families instead. Why won’t you?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members will please come to order. I’d just remind the honourable members that we are about 20 days from Christmas and there’s somebody out there who’s keeping a list.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I’m happy to contrast the plan and the progress that we continue to make on behalf of Ontarians with their absence of a plan and the signals they’ve made which threaten health care in Ontario. We’re getting wait times down. One million more Ontarians have access to a family doctor. We are building 18 new hospitals in the province of Ontario. We have 2,900 more physicians practising in the province of Ontario. We’ve increased medical school spaces. We have 200 more family health teams treating millions more patients. We’ve hired over 10,000 new nurses.

All they have to offer is a promise to take \$3 billion out of the public health care system, and beyond that, now they’re saying they don’t believe in local input, they don’t believe in local direction and they don’t believe in local authority shaping the use of their precious tax dollars.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’ll start with the member from Renfrew, who will withdraw the comment that he just made.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I withdraw.

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

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday I met with the Bonin family in Sudbury. They’ve been slapped with a \$2,000 hydro bill for a summer residence that was supposed to be a retirement investment. They are convinced that this bill is not right and they’ve been struggling with this government’s hydro bureaucracy for months trying to get it fixed. Does their problem have to come all the way to this Legislature before it gets resolved?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I’m pleased to hear the question from my honourable colleague. I think it would be very helpful if she were to produce the bill so we could take a good, long, hard look at it to better understand the nature of the challenge faced by this particular family.

1050

Again, I will remind Ontarians that this question comes from the leader of a party which has yet to put forward a plan when it comes to meeting the long-term energy needs of the people of Ontario. We put forward a long-term energy plan. It's all about ensuring that we have all the electricity that we need—furthermore, clean electricity that creates jobs—so that our families can enjoy good-quality lives and our businesses can expand and grow during the course of the next 20 years.

We have some very important themes that run throughout that plan. We believe in more jobs, we believe in creating a new and exciting industry, we believe in clean air and we believe in reliability of supply. Those are the important imperatives that inspire our plan.

Again, I put it to my colleague—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Bonin family is quite unique, but the problems facing families as they struggle with the Premier's hydro schemes are not unique at all: a smart meter scheme that doesn't help people save money or conserve energy; local utilities scrambling around to make the smart meter program work; and private power deals that drive up costs and keep families in the dark. How does the McGuinty government expect families like the Bonins to cope?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I encourage my honourable colleague to use our long-term energy plan as the basis for consideration as they develop theirs. The sooner they can put that into the mix, the better off the people of Ontario will be, but again, we remain absolutely committed to our plan.

Last week we announced the culmination of two weeks of announcements. I think there are over 2,000 new jobs: 900 jobs in Tillsonburg, 700 jobs in Windsor, 126 jobs in Essex county, 150 jobs in Waterloo, 300 jobs in Hamilton, 100 jobs in Atikokan, 16 high-skill jobs in Kingston—all related to our clean energy plan.

My honourable colleague knows that one of the things that families desire most is the assurance of a good-paying job. We are speaking to that directly through our clean energy plan.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Bonins' story is familiar to families across Ontario. Every month people are gathering around the kitchen table, looking at the paycheque, then looking at the bills, and wondering how they're going to make it all work, and when they look at their government for help they get no reply whatsoever. All they see are so-called smart meters, private power deals and an unfair sales tax slapped on household essentials. Is this really the best the Premier can do for struggling families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The honourable member opposite said that the most important thing we could do would be to reduce electricity bills by 8%. We've gone 2% further. There's now in place a clean energy benefit;

it takes effect on January 1. It's going to cut all our bills by 10% over the course of the next five years. You would think that she would stand in her place and say, "You know what? I came up short. Not only did I never put a plan before the people of Ontario, I only asked for 8%." We've gone 2% better than that.

More than that, there is an energy and property tax credit for Ontario seniors which is going to be very important for 740,000 seniors, who stand to benefit by up to \$1,025. So it's 10% off electricity bills, every electricity bill, effective January 1 for five years, and then, especially for seniors, an energy and property tax credit of up to \$1,025. That is real, it is substantive and it's important to our families.

NIAGARA PARKS COMMISSION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. With each passing day, the scandal enveloping the Niagara Parks Commission gets murkier and murkier. To date, this Premier has avoided answering any questions whatsoever on this matter. Rather than passing the buck again this morning, will he stand in his place and agree with New Democrats that the only way to clear the air is by calling in the Auditor General?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question. Our government is taking a responsible approach to address the concerns that have been raised. Earlier this year, in February, we took a hard look at the commission and we felt at that time that the commission needed new direction. This is why we chose to appoint a new chair and this is why we chose to appoint a vice-chair, two individuals who understand the need to chart a new course for the commission.

We chose to move ahead with internal and external audits. We made changes to the board. We made changes to senior management. We are committed to take all necessary action to ensure that tourism remains strong and vibrant in the Niagara region.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: As much as this government would like this scandal to go away, it deserves investigation by the Auditor General so that we can get to the bottom of what really happened here. Why is the government so stubbornly refusing a call for this kind of investigation?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question again.

This much is clear: There's a long-standing corporate culture and practice at the commission that needs to be changed. Recently, the former general manager of the commission, from 1995 to 1998, described the way it was functioning then as backroom deals, botched projects, distorted construction bids and a severe lack of policies and procedures. In 1995, the NDP was in government. In 1998, the PCs were in government. In 2001, the Leader of the Opposition was the tourism minister. Why didn't those parties do anything about the problem then?

On this side of the House, we have made significant changes to the commission, and we are committed to making more changes to bring greater accountability and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members from Nepean and Simcoe North.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Lavish spending, loosey-goosey financial controls, questionable links with contractors—if ever a situation cried out for the Auditor General, this is it.

Since the Premier refuses to call in the Auditor General, New Democrats are bringing forward a motion at the public accounts committee on Wednesday. Will the government members be voting to bring in the Auditor General, or will they continue to try to sweep under the carpet this horrible scandal at the Niagara Parks Commission?

Hon. Michael Chan: We have a plan. We are moving ahead with our plan. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members for Simcoe North, Oxford, Lanark, Simcoe–Grey—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): —and Lanark again. Members will please come to order.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Chan: In February of this year, we assessed the situation. We needed to chart a new course. We needed a new chair, one that is experienced and knowledgeable. We moved ahead with a new chair. We moved ahead with a strong vice-chair. We needed to change the board; we changed the board. We needed to change the management; we changed the management. We moved ahead with internal and external audits.

On this side of the House, we are committed to finding solutions. On that side of the House, there's a lot of empty rhetoric, a lot of empty voices.

NIAGARA PARKS COMMISSION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question as well is to the Minister of Tourism. Earlier this year, Premier McGuinty asked public servants to make a sacrifice and agree to freeze their wages. So the question we have in the opposition is, why is Fay Booker of the Niagara Parks Commission allowed to double her pay while non-unionized public servants were forced to take a wage freeze?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question. That question will be debated tomorrow night at 6 o'clock.

It does give me the opportunity to talk about the commission. We have a plan to bring change to the commission. Let me remind them of what we are doing. Earlier this year, we took a hard look at the commission. We assessed the situation. We wanted to make changes. Let's look at the changes: a new chair; a new vice-chair; change to senior management; change to the approval of

expenses; change to governance; and last but not least, change to the board.

The PC Party remains without a plan, without a clue. Let's hope that the party opposite can recall some of that information.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That was disgraceful. First of all, if we're going to debate this question, we'll debate it here right now, not tomorrow night. The second thing is, if he wants to talk about change, we'll talk about change in October of next year.

1100

Premier McGuinty has asked public sector workers and Ontario families who pay them to make sacrifices in these tough times, but there is apparently a different set of rules for those who are friends and family of Dalton McGuinty and his Liberals. Fay Booker —

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just remind the honourable member about the use of names, titles, ridings or ministries.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

Fay Booker says that she should be allowed to collect pay for meetings' pre-prep time because she cut the number of commission meetings, but she collected her \$250 per diem for more than just six commission meetings because she took home over \$20,000 for half of the year.

Minister, stand in your place and tell me, is she collecting twice her pay to do the same work, or is she being paid the same amount to do half the work?

Hon. Michael Chan: I invited the honourable member tomorrow, Tuesday at 6 o'clock, to come to the House and let's have a debate.

Let me draw attention to this. The Leader of the Opposition was questioned about complaints he received as tourism minister and he says, "I don't have a recollection."

The Conservatives don't have a plan—they don't. They don't have a clue. We have a plan. Earlier this year we took a hard look at the commission. We felt that it needed to chart a new course, so we brought in a new chair, a new vice-chair. We are seeing positive changes: change to the board, change to senior management, change to approval of expenses, change to governance.

That party remains without a plan, perhaps without a clue.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Premier. The McGuinty government has repeatedly promised new light rail transit for tens of thousands of Toronto commuters who now spend hours each day commuting on overcrowded buses. But in the budget, the government pulled \$4 billion in funding for Transit City and now it appears willing to stand aside while the new mayor cancels the light rail lines, wastes hundreds of millions of dollars and further delays access to better public transit for years if not decades.

My question is this: Why is the McGuinty government abandoning its Transit City promise so willingly?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think we've been very clear that we are willing to work with the new mayor and council, but I really would expect that the member opposite would understand that there's just been an election in the city of Toronto, as there have been municipal elections across the province. A new council has been elected and a new mayor.

We've been clear that we think we've got a very good plan in place. If the city council and the mayor decide that they want to go in a different direction, it behooves us to have that conversation with them, but we have to at least let council meet. Council has not even met yet. So I would hope that the member opposite would give council and the mayor some time to talk about what they'd like to do going forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question, part two, is again to the Premier. The McGuinty government doesn't know what position to take. Last week, the transportation minister said that any Transit City decision should be made by the full Toronto city council, but this weekend, the energy minister declared that the decision should be in the hands of the mayor and that, "We should not pass judgment on the mayor's decision-making."

With years of planning in limbo, tens of thousands of commuters waiting and hundreds of millions of dollars on the line, is this really the McGuinty government's approach to resolving the situation? Have one minister say one thing and have another contradict her?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We're on the same page—the Premier, the Minister of Energy and I—as is our government. We believe in public transit. We are making the biggest investment in public transit in a generation. We have worked with the municipalities all over the GTHA and across the province to make sure that there's more public transit in place.

The party opposite voted every single time against those investments. The member opposite has spoken consistently against the air-rail link.

We know that people in the GTHA need more public transit. That's why we are making the investments that we're making. There has been an election in Toronto. There needs to be a discussion among the mayor and the council members about their priorities going forward. We are willing to work with them, but we are committed to building public transit in the GTHA.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Energy policy is also economic policy, and two of the key indicators of good economic policy are the creation of jobs and attraction of private sector investment.

The global recession highlighted the need to look beyond our traditional areas of expertise, particularly in the manufacturing sector. We have one of the most highly skilled workforces in the world here in Ontario, but as the global economy presents new challenges, Ontario needs to lead when it comes to creating new opportunities for our workers.

Minister, how is energy policy in this province supporting those workers and creating that new opportunity?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for raising what is a very important question.

He's absolutely right: Ontario does need to lead the way when it comes to opening up new opportunities for workers, particularly in the manufacturing sector, as our economy recovers.

We're doing just that by making Ontario a global clean energy powerhouse. Just last week, I had the pleasure to be in Windsor with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade to announce that Windsor would be the location for Samsung and CS Wind's new tower manufacturing plant; towers, by the way, that are going to be made with 100% Ontario steel. That's good news for steelworkers across this province. This state-of-the-art facility is going to employ 300 Windsor workers directly and another 400 indirectly.

These new manufacturing jobs come as a direct result of the investment in Ontario by Samsung and its partners; investments that the party opposite does not support, did not support when they came forward and continues—

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

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: Thank you, Minister. It's important to see a new, leading-edge economy taking root right here in Ontario.

Clean energy is our future, here in Ontario, across North America and, frankly, around the world. Those who are willing to recognize that fact and who have a plan to seize those opportunities for global leadership in this new economy are the ones who will prosper from it. Ignoring the economic opportunities produced by clean energy, shunning private sector investment and having no plan whatsoever when it comes to energy is absolutely no way to move Ontario forward.

Minister, for the sake of Ontario workers, can you commit to continuing to champion our province as a place that is open for business and open to new investment from around the world when it comes to clean energy?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Absolutely. This government will always stand up for Ontario as the place to invest in North America for clean energy investment.

In fact, the day following my visit to Windsor to announce those 700 jobs, I travelled to Tillsonburg, in the riding of Oxford, to announce the Siemens turbine blade manufacturing facility that's going to be located there. This facility is the first of its kind in Ontario. It will create 300 direct jobs and another 600 indirect jobs for families of Oxford county.

Again, these jobs in Tillsonburg are a direct result of the investment in Ontario by Samsung and its partners,

an investment, I remind members opposite, that the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the third party do not support.

I'm curious about how the member for Oxford will explain to his constituents why he and his leader want so badly to remove these jobs from his community. If he doesn't want to stand up for his constituents, we will. We're going to—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You're debating with one another. New question.

NIAGARA PARKS COMMISSION

Mr. Jim Wilson: To the Minister of Tourism: Last week, the member from Thornhill asked about a \$50,000 contract that the chair of the Niagara Parks Commission, Fay Booker, had handed to her friend from Burlington, Peter Van Kessel.

The minister's response in this House was, "That went through a competitive process." Well, it did not go through a competitive process, Minister, and while standing order 23(j) does not allow me to charge that you uttered "a deliberate falsehood," it doesn't stop me from saying that you did utter a falsehood—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You can't say indirectly what you would like to say directly, and I would just ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Withdrawn.

Would the minister then tell this House why he told this House that the contract went through a competitive process when clearly it did not go through a competitive process?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question. Again, that will be a debate tomorrow, Tuesday, at 6 o'clock, and we look forward to the honourable member coming to the debate.

1110

It does give me the opportunity to talk about the commission. There is a long-standing corporate culture that needs to be changed. There are long-standing practices at the commission that need to be changed. These go back to 1995, to 1998, to 2001—2001, when the current Leader of the Opposition was the tourism minister. The root of the problem is at the heart of today's Conservative Party. Yes, the seed of the problem was planted when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Tourism.

They don't have a plan; we have one.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: The minister says that Fay Booker, the chair that was chosen by the Liberal government, is taking the Niagara Parks Commission in a new direction. That direction is marked by her sole-sourcing a \$50,000 sweetheart deal to her friend, extending the same deal without competition, scrapping the competition for an external auditor when it was clear that her friends at her

old firm wouldn't win that competition on merit and trying to double her pay. And there's more to come.

Minister, you've already tied yourself and your Liberal caucus colleagues to Fay Booker. Do you not understand that expressing confidence in Ms. Booker will just embolden her to continue to break the rules?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question again. That will be debated tomorrow, Tuesday, at 6 o'clock.

Concerns have been raised, recently and in the past. How far does it go back? It goes back to 1995, 1998, 2001—backroom deals, botched projects, distorted construction bids and a severe lack of policies and procedures. What we see is a systemic, historical—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister.

Hon. Michael Chan: It goes back. It went back to the Mike Harris government. It went back to when the current opposition leader was the Minister of Tourism.

They didn't have a plan, they don't have a plan and they don't have a clue. We have a plan that looked for the new chair and we have a plan that brought the new vice-chair.

ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have a question to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, you know that there is increasingly more frustration every day in northern Ontario when it comes to the MNR shutting down access to pieces of northern Ontario where people have been travelling and going for years.

I have a particular example, and we're soliciting your help to see if at least you can fix one of these. There is what they call Fushimi Lake. Fushimi Lake is just outside of Hearst. For three generations, local people in Hearst have been accessing that lake through Brûlé Creek. All of a sudden last year, MNR decided that they're going to post a sign, and nobody's allowed to have any motorized access to Fushimi Lake from that particular creek.

Are you prepared to do something to fix that or are we going to have to continue seeing more and more of northern Ontario shut down to northerners?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'm happy to talk about access to our parks. Certainly, I've spoken with many people and organizations who represent people who love our parks and want to fish and hunt in those. We work very closely with our partners to make sure that we have arrangements in those parks that work for the local communities. We do a lot of consultations. We make sure that, particularly for those remote parks in the north, we are only closing down vehicular access to those parks. That's the only thing we do. The rest of the time you can come in and canoe and portage; you can fly into those parks.

The access is something we want to make sure continues because these are our greatest assets in Ontario. We feel very strongly that these are resources that everybody wants to take part in, and we continue to work with

local communities. I'm happy to have those discussions with any local community.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, the local mayor and council, along with the people affected, have been meeting with MNR on numbers of occasions; I have as well. We brought this issue to you, but it's yet one more example about how people in northern Ontario who have been accessing an area for either fishing, snowmobiling or picking blueberries aren't able to access particular parts of northern Ontario because you're posting signs saying, "Don't enter here. You can't get in. Off limits to you."

For three generations people have been going on to Fushimi Lake. They know well where that place is. What we're asking you to do is, will you do what you have the right to do as minister and allow access on to Fushimi Lake from the Brûlé Creek, or are you going to continue shutting down more of northern Ontario?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: As I stated earlier, I understand that there are some Ontarians who are concerned about their ability to access crown land. I want to assure Ontario residents that they continue to enjoy unrestricted access to the vast majority of crown land for recreational purposes. As I said earlier, they can still use these lands to hike, to canoe, to portage or to fly in to access those areas. Fishing and hunting are still permitted.

Restricted access is primarily aimed, as I said earlier, at motorized vehicles. It's also used to protect sensitive fish and wildlife populations from overexploitation—we have sensitive trout lakes that we want to protect—and for public safety reasons, if there's a culvert breakdown or a washout. We're working towards balancing the public need to access our recreational opportunities with the need to protect our wildlife and enhance remote area experiences.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Ontario, like many jurisdictions around the world, is only now beginning to feel the effects of recovery following one of the most devastating financial recessions. It wasn't long ago that thousands of Ontarians, even in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, lost their jobs due to cash-strapped businesses needing to cut costs or even having to close their doors.

Last week, Statistics Canada reported that upwards of 31,000 net new jobs were created in our province last month alone. What a stark contrast from where we were just 12 months ago. This is definitely encouraging news for the people of this province. However, despite this good news, many of my constituents are understandably still worried about their future and the future of their loved ones.

We know that we aren't out of this recession just yet, so I ask the minister to tell us what our government is doing to strengthen our economy and to keep Ontarians working.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I am delighted to take this question from the MPP from Oak Ridges–Markham because it is good to see that the Ontario economy is starting to turn around. We got some very good news from StatsCan just recently that Ontario has actually regained 87% of the jobs that we had lost due to the recession. This is very important for us to see.

It's also important for us to be mindful of those that are not yet back on their feet. We still have more work to do, and families still need to feel that strength where we can lend a hand. That's why there are initiatives like the 10% reduction on their hydro bills to help families cope with their bills even as our economy is improving.

It's important that we see highlights, as we saw this weekend—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member knows better than to bring a prop.

Supplementary?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to thank the minister for that response. It is definitely encouraging to know that 87% of the jobs that were lost during the recession have been recovered in our province and that 31,000 more Ontarians were back on the job last month. Compared to the American numbers, where only 11% of the jobs that were lost during the recession have been recovered, it is clear that Ontario is back on track.

Statistics Canada reports that in the 12 months ending November 2010, Ontario employment in all sectors increased by 139,800 jobs. The goods-producing sectors gained 41,000 jobs, and the service-producing sectors 98,800. My constituents have been calling my office to ask me specifics about these new jobs that have been created. I ask the minister to provide this House with specific examples of some new jobs recently created in the province.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I am delighted that some of our initiatives are actually helping Ontario families, that we're able to extend the off-peak pricing for electricity by two more hours, helping families at a very local level. In the meantime, our larger provincial strategy is to assist industries to actually exist, like our new clean energy sector. We've already heard today in the House—and it bears repeating—that all of these hundreds of jobs being announced just in the last week alone tie directly to our new green energy plan to build clusters, where we use the expertise that we've gained over the years in the manufacturing sector and apply it to new sectors—and then other sectors like financial services. Special congratulations to a company like Barclays that literally doubled in size; that announcement was just last week.

We see these pockets of growth. We know there's more work to do. We plan to be there for Ontario families just as we have been in this last year.

1120

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Health: On April 22, I tabled a resolution in the House that calls on the government to implement online organ and tissue

donor registration. This is not groundbreaking technology; in fact, it's in place in almost every state in the United States and in eight provinces.

Given Ontario's dismal record of donor registrations compared to other jurisdictions, this should be a priority for the Ministry of Health. Can the minister tell us why Ontarians still, after these many months, don't have the ability to register their intentions online?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the question from the honourable member opposite, who has been advocating hard to increase organ donation in this province. We are making good success. We know we could do better. In fact, the Ministry of Government Services is working right now to bring online donation to be a reality in this province. We of course have to ensure that all privacy issues are dealt with appropriately.

We've done a good job increasing donor registration. We could do better if we had an online donation possibility in this province, and we're on our way to getting there.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: It's been literally months since the minister appointed a working group on this. Some 1,600 Ontarians are on a wait-list. More than 100 people in Ontario die every year while on that wait-list. The Auditor General has made Ontario's organ and tissue transplant program a target of his audit, and I'm sure the minister will probably be informed by his report.

Will the minister today undertake that this will in fact be identified as a priority for her ministry, and will she tell us today what her target date is for implementation of an online registry for Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think it's important to acknowledge the work that has been done when it comes to increasing the number of transplantations in this province. In fact, we've increased by 50% the number of transplants since 2003.

As I said in the first question, we can do better when it comes to registration. We are hopeful that this will be up and running by next year. Some time next year, people will be able to go online and register their willingness to be a donor, should that occasion arise.

However, people should not wait for this enhancement. They can go online today, access the form, send that in and their wish to be a donor will be registered.

So now in our hospitals, we have 24-7 lookup of registered donors, and that increases greatly the likelihood—

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

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question's to the Premier. Last Wednesday, the Sault Area Hospital released its so-called hospital improvement plan. Can the Premier explain how cutting 22 front-line nurses actually improves care for the people of Sault Ste. Marie?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for the question. You know, all of our hospitals are working very, very hard to make the changes that are necessary in order to have the best possible health care system. We are really focusing on enhancing the capacity of our health care system outside our hospitals, investing in community care to make sure people get the care they need as close to home as possible.

Status quo is not an option in the health care system today. We have to continually be improving our health care system, making sure we're getting the very best value for our health care dollars and, at the same time, improving the quality of health care received in our communities and in our hospitals.

These are not easy decisions that hospitals are making, but I have every confidence the hospital improvement plan at the Sault Area Hospital is the way to go.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Sault Area Hospital is facing the second-worst deficit of all hospitals across the province. The hospital has been operating at 107% capacity, and alternate-level-of-care patients account for 35% of all inpatients. On top of firing nurses, the hospital is cutting out patient safety improvement programs in maternal care.

Again, how can the Premier and his minister think that cutting care and safety programs will improve hospital services for the people of Sault Ste. Marie?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The leader of the third party actually did touch on what is so important about this hospital improvement plan. This plan is predicated on reducing the ALC numbers to 15%, so they are doing exactly what they should be doing: ensuring that there is capacity outside the hospital for people who do not need to be in hospital, do not want to be in hospital and are not getting an optimal level of care in the hospital. They would be better served elsewhere.

As the Sault Area Hospital works to reduce their ALC rates, that means that they will be able to, in fact, reduce the service in their hospital, but that is contingent on having enhanced services in the community.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I have a question for the Minister of Revenue. The riding of Algoma-Manitoulin has 35 municipalities, but amongst its 86,000 square kilometres we have a great number of unincorporated areas. The provincial land tax bills have come out very late this year, and in coming out very late, some of my constituents have not even had the opportunity to pay them by the due date. What are the Minister of Revenue and the ministry prepared to do to help these constituents?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I want to take the opportunity to thank the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for that question and also for the hard work that he does for all his constituents.

It came to our attention that many provincial land tax bills were sent out later than normal due to a system change. The due date on these bills left very little time for taxpayers to pay on time. We recognize that this was an error on our part at the ministry and I'd like to apologize to all those who were affected by this inconvenience. The deadline for northerners to make payments for their final 2010 provincial land tax bill has been extended. The due date for instalment payments originally due on December 3, 2010, is extended to January 31, 2011. Payments originally due on December 17, 2010, are extended to February 28—

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

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I appreciate the minister's answer.

Some of these bills were due Friday—wow—and people in the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin and across the north have been asking me what is happening with these bills. There is a great deal of miscommunication out there these days. I'm wondering what the ministry is doing to provide communication to these folks.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: First, let me just again mention the instalment dates and the extension to those. December 3, 2010, is extended to January 31, 2011. December 17, 2010, is extended to February 28, 2011. The provincial land tax payment may be made at most financial institutions in Ontario free of charge.

When we talk about communication, I want to say that we apologize for the inconvenience. We have sent out a press release to media across the province, including northern media, to provide clarity about this issue and we will be following up with the media today with a personal phone call. We're also posting all the information on our website at ontario.ca/revenue and we are here to help if there are any questions.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, as you know, in August the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions presented its final report, which included 23 recommendations to improve mental health and addiction services across Ontario. Recommendation 17 in the report calls on the government to divert more individuals with a mental illness or addiction out of the justice system and into appropriate services and supports. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health has also identified a need for specialized care for women involved in the justice system, yet few services are available. Minister, will you move forward on recommendation 17?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me take this opportunity to thank the members of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. They did an outstanding job, under the very capable leadership of the member from Oakville. I think all of us in this Legislature can take a lesson from the select committee on how they

worked in a non-partisan way to really understand an issue and provide recommendations to the government.

I was very pleased, the day after the report was released, that I was able to move on one of the recommendations. I can assure the member opposite that we take the recommendations very seriously and are working to release a 10-year mental health and addictions strategy.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: I was appalled when I saw the reports of the Ashley Smith tragedy. It's deplorable that so many women in the prison system don't get the mental health treatment they so desperately need.

This could be addressed by creating a secure treatment unit for females at the Brockville Mental Health Centre. The model now in place for men has seen a remarkable 38% reduction in recidivism amongst the highest-risk group. We have the facility, we have the staff, we have the program, and we have a willing host community. That's why I'm working with municipality and federal partners and the Royal Ottawa Hospital.

Minister, my question is, when will this government join us at the table to build this treatment unit before another Ashley Smith has to suffer?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I can report to the House that the government has invested some \$50 million since 2004 in service enhancements to keep people with mental illness out of the criminal justice system; I know the committee was very concerned about that. It has expanded the continuum of services such as crisis teams, safe beds, mental health court workers, case managers and supportive housing to prevent people with a mental illness from being charged with criminal offences and to support diversion to other services.

The treatment programs exist within our correctional systems to support prisoners with mental health and addictions. We've established on-site fitness assessment clinics for court-ordered mental health assessments at five of our institutions. We continue to work on this, and we really like the recommendations that have been made by the select committee. I think it's been an outstanding exercise—

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

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Today is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada. Violence against women remains a serious problem, from acts of hatred, such as the Montreal massacre, to acts of coercion, such as sexual harassment and domestic abuse.

New Democrats put forward a motion, actually years ago, to form an all-women, all-party committee to form recommendations regarding domestic violence. Why

won't the government overcome their partisanship to focus on this?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to stand in the House and talk about women's issues on this day, a critically important day. December 6, 1989, was a day that changed our country. As a young university student, I recall watching the television and gaining an understanding that the act that had been committed, which was being described as a violent act, was in fact a violent misogynistic act; it was an act of violence against women. It took some time for our country to acknowledge that issue, and since that day in 1989, we've worked very hard as a nation and as a province to stand, recognize and take action.

As someone who was privileged to work with the Premier and the minister responsible for women's issues at the time to develop our province's domestic violence action plan and now to work on our sexual violence action plan, I'm very proud of the steps that we have taken in our government to name issues, solve problems and find ways to better support women in the violence that they face in their—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The actual fact is that violence is up across the board, if you speak to people working in the field. Quite frankly, I didn't hear anything approximating an answer to a very simple question. We New Democrats have had on the books for a while now a simple request. It's a simple, obvious request, and people in Ontario, women in Ontario, are absolutely horrified that this government has not acted on it.

The committee on mental health and addictions, also an all-party committee, worked well, and we need the same for action to end violence against women. Are women simply not worthy of the McGuinty government's attention?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I would have hoped that this was a non-partisan issue. We work on this side of the House every day with stakeholders right across the province to find ways to invest more to protect women. That's why we've invested more than \$208 million each and every year to protect women from violence and support victims of abuse. In fact, our actions have demonstrated the support that we have for women right across the province. We want women to feel safe in their homes, in their communities, in their workplaces. That's our government's goal. That's a non-partisan goal. That's a step that we take with the groups right across the province. But I do remember that the NDP has voted against many of those initiatives. They haven't stood side by side with us as we've fought and fought for a better world for women in Ontario.

We will do that work, we have done that work and we'll continue to do that work, and I hope we will see the NDP—

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

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, as you know, I represent a downtown urban riding where a number of my constituents live on low or fixed incomes and in affordable housing. Minister, we've seen a lot of partisan posturing on energy prices recently from the opposition, but a discussion about how we can achieve a clean, modern and reliable electricity system, and talking about how we plan to accomplish that, is a valuable debate for all Ontarians.

Minister, I'm concerned about those folks who live on low incomes and are being shamelessly targeted with cheap political scare tactics. The proposed Ontario clean energy benefit, a 10% reduction on totals for the residential bills, is undeniably a big step in keeping electricity affordable for families everywhere.

Could the minister explain what impact this has on those who are living in social housing?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I want to thank the member for the question. It's a very important question. I want to thank not only this member but the other members from Ottawa who sit on this side of the House who have been so very proactive on the social housing issue.

The reality is that of all the tenants living in social housing across Ontario, 32% pay their own energy bills. That means roughly \$5 million will be going directly into the pockets of social housing tenants. But don't take it from me; let's hear what others have to say. Jo-Anne Poirier, for example, the CEO for Ottawa Community Housing: "A 10% reduction in our hydro costs would save our organization approximately \$750,000 per year.... This would enhance the quality of life for our tenants and further protect our assets."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Time for question period has ended.

I just want to remind the members that tonight is the Lights Across Canada celebration from 6:00 to 6:20. Our pages will be providing a musical interlude. The Mega-City Chorus will be here as well tonight and the official lighting will take place just past 7 o'clock this evening. Everyone is welcome to attend down in the main lobby.

DEFERRED VOTES

TAXATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on private members' notice of motion number 64 in the name of Mr. Clark.

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

The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On Thursday, December 2, Mr. Clark moved private member's notice of motion number 64. Remember, this is private members' business. All those in favour will rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Steve
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine
Hardeman, Ernie
Hillier, Randy

Jones, Sylvia
Klees, Frank
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.

Savoline, Joyce
Sterling, Norman W.
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Yakabuski, John

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed will rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia
Albanese, Laura
Arthurs, Wayne
Balkissoon, Bas
Bartolucci, Rick
Bentley, Christopher
Best, Margaret
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Broten, Laurel C.
Brown, Michael A.
Brownell, Jim
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Delaney, Bob
Dickson, Joe
DiNovo, Cheri

Dombrowsky, Leona
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fonseca, Peter
Gélinas, France
Gravelle, Michael
Hampton, Howard
Hoskins, Eric
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Leal, Jeff
Levac, Dave
McNeely, Phil
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milloy, John

Mitchell, Carol
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naqvi, Yasir
Phillips, Gerry
Prue, Michael
Pupatello, Sandra
Ruprecht, Tony
Sandals, Liz
Smith, Monique
Takhar, Harinder S.
Van Bommel, Maria
Wilkinson, John
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 17; the nays are 49.

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

Motion negated.

Mr. John Yakabuski: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In response to a question I asked the energy minister on November 2, he said: "For the seventh time, no, we're not raising any fees when it comes to our efforts to continue to invest in conservation." Now that he has voted against the member for Leeds–Grenville's motion to scrap—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That sounds more like a member's statement than a point of order. I would encourage it to be a member's statement.

USE OF LEGISLATIVE PRECINCT

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just call the members to order, please. I have a ruling to deal with.

On Wednesday, October 6, the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, Mr. Sterling, rose on what he claimed was a point of order concerning a reception that was held the previous evening in the legislative dining room. The member complained that the event did not comply with the established rules for use of public spaces in the Legislative Building. The government House leader, Ms. Smith, also spoke to the matter.

As I said when this matter was raised, a matter of parliamentary procedure was not at issue and therefore, the House was not the proper venue for the issue to be raised. It is common and expected practice for matters relating to the internal administration of the assembly to be raised privately and directly with the Speaker. How-

ever, I did commit to review and report back on this matter, and I now welcome a chance to do so because I think there is some value in confirming our policies and practices, there having been some uncertainty in the past respecting appropriate uses of the parliamentary precinct.

Events held in the public spaces of the Legislative Building, most commonly one of the committee rooms or the legislative dining room, are subject to policies that have been established for use of those facilities. One of the key aspects of this policy requires that events held by or on behalf of an outside organization must include invitations to all MPPs.

The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills raised two specific issues. The first had to do with what I have just mentioned, being the inclusiveness of the event. The member claimed that he was not certain that all MPPs had been invited to the event, or if they had, that it was impractical for some members to attend because the invitations were issued at the last minute.

I can confirm that this event was properly booked, according to the existing policy, and that the requirement to include all parties was both conveyed by assembly officials to and acknowledged by the organizer. Since it is the organizer's responsibility to issue those invitations, I'm not in a position to address how they were issued or whether the gap between confirming the event and notifying all members of it was both reasonable and sufficient. However, in principle, I do consider it extremely important that as much notice as possible be given to members of all parties when events of this type are being held. Not only are members entitled to such basic consideration, but the overall success of such events is surely more likely to be achieved with good attendance by many members from all parties. This is only possible when members have the time they need to make the required arrangements on their calendars.

The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills's second issue was with an alleged partisan tone of the remarks made by some who spoke at the event. As I'm sure he can appreciate, there is a significant difference between the Speaker's jurisdiction, under the existing policy, to insist upon invitations for all members to attend these events, on one hand, and the Speaker's ability to vet or regulate remarks made at the same events on the other. However, one might hope and expect that an event with the diplomatic stature of the one that is of issue here would be non-partisan in tone.

Suffice it to say that the very attendance of members from all parties should, in itself, work toward ensuring the fair dissemination of various viewpoints at such events, and that is why it is important that all members are invited and all parties can participate.

Finally, the raising of this matter has accelerated the consideration that was already being given to ways of enhancing the dissemination of information around the Legislative Assembly about various activities that go on here each day, whether it be a committee meeting, construction or work of some other type, temporary entrance closures or events of the type raised by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

I'm considering ways to get this information out more proactively. One method I'm looking at is mounting video displays in various parts of the building, including the members' lobbies, where this information can be prominently displayed and updated as required. I would appreciate your thoughts and any other members' thoughts on this idea and others that would serve to better keep members informed about the numerous activities that take place here.

I thank the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills for raising the matter and the government House leader for her contribution.

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

The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.

ANNUAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2010 annual report of the Auditor General of Ontario.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BARRHAVEN LEGION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is an honour for me to be able to bring to this Legislature a very important incident that occurred in my riding during remembrance week.

The Barrhaven Legion's members include some of Canada's greatest war heroes. On Saturday, November 6, 2010, the quick action of civilian bystanders at the Legion gave new meaning to the term "local heroes." That evening was our Barrhaven Legion's remembrance dinner. One of the Legion's comrades, a very good friend of mine, went into cardiac arrest.

Bystanders performed CPR and used the on-site defibrillator to shock him twice as Ottawa paramedics, police officers and firefighters rushed to the scene. Today, my friend, and our comrade, is alive and well due to the heroism and quick thinking of many of the Barrhaven Legion members, and in particular, two very special women I want to tell the Ontario Legislature about: Stacy Lamb and Lynn Hughes.

I was present that evening. It was highly traumatic for many of us to see a friend fallen. But these two women, Stacy Lamb and Lynn Hughes, went above and beyond. They kept their cool, knew their stuff and saved a life. Without their immediate action and training in CPR, this night may have ended in tragedy. I'd like to take this opportunity not only to commend Ms. Lamb and Ms. Hughes on their heroic actions but to thank them, because without them, one of our comrades might not be alive and well.

I'd also like to speak on the importance of on-site automatic external defibrillators in public buildings. The Barrhaven Legion's executive is an active proponent of

on-site defibrillators, and their decision to purchase two AED machines for their Legion has proven itself in true life or death situations, as accessibility of these life-saving machines and the actions of the members saved our comrade's life that evening.

Again, to Stacy and Lynn, thank you.

PIERRE AUBRY

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge a well-known attorney from Alexandria, Maître Pierre Aubry.

Maître Aubry was recognized last month by the La Fondation de l'Hôpital Glengarry Memorial Hospital Foundation for his outstanding commitment to the community of Glengarry and surrounding area.

Maître Aubry served as a director and chairman of the board of directors of the Glengarry Memorial Hospital Foundation for the past six years. During his tenure as chairman of the foundation, Maître Aubry helped raise over \$1.5 million for the hospital in support of a new emergency room, a new day surgery and ambulatory care unit, and a new ultrasound machine for the radiology department, just to name a few.

Maître Aubry gave generously of his time, his energy and his know-how, and has been an inspiration for all of us.

On behalf of the members of this Legislature, I would like to wish Maître Aubry the very best in all his future endeavours.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. Jim Wilson: My office has received hundreds of postcard petitions from the residents of Green Briar and Briar Hill in New Tecumseth who are fed up with the McGuinty government's refusal to install traffic signals at the entrance to Green Briar on Highway 89. Let me tell you what my constituents are saying about this.

Chris from Alliston wrote: "The traffic signals are long overdue. As Green Briar is basically a retirement community, cars are coming and going all day long. Now we have two hockey rinks, plus the hotel, plus the golf course, plus soccer fields, plus the ongoing traffic to Walmart and all of the traffic from Honda. Please install them soon before a major accident occurs."

Mary from Alliston wrote: "Hopefully someone won't have to be killed before the light is put in. The flashing lights are useless."

Earl from Alliston wrote: "The traffic lights are essential! We moved to Green Briar in late November of 2007 in the midst of a major snowstorm. It did not take us long to realize how necessary traffic lights were for turning on Highway 89."

Brian from Alliston wrote: "It is extremely dangerous. The quick fix of flashing lights to slow down has done nothing. Residents in the area are aging and reflexes are not as quick" as they were. "Honda traffic at times is relentless. Someone is going to be killed."

It was wrong for the McGuinty government to cancel this project in 2003, after it was approved by the PC government. This is a very serious safety issue, and today I'm urging Premier McGuinty to act now before somebody gets hurt.

COMMUNITY RADIO

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: This past November 14 saw Carleton University's CKCU-FM celebrate 35 years of community radio for the students and citizens of Ottawa.

While many universities and colleges have radio stations, Carleton's CKCU was the first in Canada to hit the airwaves that November day in 1975, when Joni Mitchell's *You Turn Me On, I'm a Radio* was broadcast on 93.1 FM.

Since then, CKCU has been a pioneer in community broadcasting, with a mandate to provide an alternative to mainstream commercial radio and serve the many communities who may not be reflected in that media.

Fulfilling that mandate has been both interesting and challenging. As the Carleton alumni magazine recently put it: "With gutsy spirit and a predilection for pranks, CKCU's volunteer broadcasters have relied upon creative steam and gumption to remain on the air despite often-empty pockets."

As a registered charity, donations from students and listeners at large are integral to their service, and I encourage those who find themselves engaged by CKCU's distinct and important programming to consider assisting this very vibrant voice in our community.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer congratulations to Matthew Crosier, the station manager; and to the current and former volunteer journalists, DJs, announcers, commentators and community engagers. But also, I'll give props to the entire Carleton University community. You can be proud of the voice, ideas and current content you project to our city through your very own CKCU 93.1 FM.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Sunday, December 5, as International Volunteer Day.

Volunteering is the most fundamental act of citizenship in our province. As more and more people become involved in volunteering, our communities continue to grow and prosper.

By caring and contributing to change, volunteers are changing lives while increasing their own life skills. Every day, thousands of volunteers donate their time and energy without expectation of monetary reward. Thousands of Ontarians benefit from the selfless acts of volunteers.

In April, I introduced my private member's bill, the Criminal Record Checks for Volunteers Act. Most volunteer organizations, particularly those dealing with children, require their volunteers to submit a criminal

record check. In many cases, volunteers have to pay out of their own pocket for a criminal record check, or the organization has to fundraise to underwrite the cost of a criminal record check.

The goal of my bill would be to create a system whereby volunteers pay for their criminal record check once per year, yet can access this record to distribute to multiple volunteer organizations at no additional cost to the volunteer. This cost-saving initiative would encourage more volunteers to donate their time to multiple causes.

Volunteerism is an important sector, and without them in our schools, hospitals and community groups, our communities would suffer. As we recognize the important work of volunteers, we must remember that volunteers don't get paid not because they're worthless but because they are priceless.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Last night, I watched the television news and I saw President Santos of Colombia talking about the unprecedented national disaster that his country is facing. I saw clips of people digging frantically in the mud to try and rescue those who have been buried in mudslides.

A few days ago, Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel spoke about what he called the unprecedented forest fires in Israel. If you saw the clips, you saw the burnt-out hulk of the bus where dozens of Israeli prison guards were killed in that fire.

A few months ago, President Gilani of Pakistan talked about the unprecedented flooding and rain that left 20 million people homeless.

All unprecedented, but none unpredicted. Even 10 years ago, Israel was told about the potential for huge forest fires. A year ago, Colombia was told by the NDP about the potential for devastating flooding. The potential for flooding in Pakistan has been known for a long time.

Climate change is at the centre of all of those incidents. The countries and jurisdictions that have not acted to take it on—and Ontario's Liberal government is one of them—have failed ethically and have failed morally, and that inaction has to come to an end.

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RIDING OF MISSISSAUGA-STREETSVILLE

Mr. Bob Delaney: As the first grey winds of early winter bring swirling snow and Christmas shoppers to the streets, I'd like to pause and wish our many friends and neighbours in Streetsville and Meadowvale, Churchill Meadows and Lisgar a merry Christmas.

Western Mississauga is rich in Christmas tradition. Last weekend, I and my iconic cat, Obi-Wan, attended the annual Streetsville tree lighting ceremony. Our community lined Queen Street in Streetsville to catch a

glimpse of Santa and to see the many floats during the annual Santa Claus parade in Streetsville.

While the children of western Mississauga plead to their parents they have been more nice than naughty, I'd like to encourage all residents to consider kids less fortunate. The Salvation Army and Peel Regional Police's Toys for Tots program lets thousands of children across Mississauga experience the joy of unwrapping a new toy on Christmas morning.

Eden Community Food Bank in Meadowvale serves needy families in western Mississauga. They need monetary donations. You can donate online, by cash or by cheque.

Each year, I visit our seniors and attend many events celebrating the Christmas season and holidays of many different religions and communities. Merry Christmas to one and all throughout Meadowvale, Lisgar and Streetsville and a happy, healthy and fulfilling 2011.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Ms. Helena Jaczek: In September 2009, Ontario faced the first pandemic in over 40 years. During that time, we were not only preparing for the annual flu season but also anticipating the spread of H1N1. After several deaths were reported, many of my constituents in Oak Ridges–Markham called my office anxious to find out when and where they could receive the H1N1 immunization.

This year, it seems that complacency set in, perhaps because there is no threat of a pandemic. However, it is still important for Ontarians to get a flu shot. Taking the time to be immunized is very worthwhile. Although seniors and people with weak immune systems or chronic conditions are most at risk, even healthy kids and adults can become seriously ill or die from the flu. The flu shot is safe and, typically, 70% to 90% effective in preventing illness.

York region community and health services do an excellent job organizing flu shot clinics throughout York region. My constituents are able to attend these clinics at various community centres throughout Oak Ridges–Markham to receive their immunization. This year, the flu shot will not only protect Ontarians from several types of influenza but it will also provide protection against H1N1.

I encourage all Ontarians to take the time to get immunized. For residents of York region, check my website, helenajaczek.on.mpp.ca, for a flu clinic near you.

Protect yourself, your family and your community.

JOB CREATION

Mr. David Zimmer: The McGuinty government's leadership during tough economic times has led to 87% of jobs lost during the recession returning to Ontario. In an article from *The Toronto Star* of December 3: "Ontario was the only province with notable gains in

employment the agency said, up 31,000 jobs in November and pushing the unemployment rate down to 8.2 per cent."

The article goes on to say: "That brings jobless numbers for the province, which continues to build back from the heaviest job losses reported during the recession, to the lowest level reported since January 2009."

While the opposition and their leaders continue to wander around aimlessly through their plan-free zone, our government is delivering results for real Ontario families. In Windsor, CS Wind will create 700 new jobs with their wind turbine plant; 150 jobs will be created in Waterloo with ATS automation system manufacturing solar panels; 100 jobs in Thunder Bay when they convert their coal to clean fuel. These are just a few of the examples of jobs created in Ontario under the McGuinty leadership.

Our government is leading the nation in job creation. Ontario families and businesses have worked hard to cope with the recession, and our government has been there to help them.

Despite the good news, we continue to work hard daily to create jobs and stimulate the economy.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I beg leave to present a report on the literacy and numeracy secretariat from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: The committee is responding to section 3.07 of the 2009 auditor's report; as you are aware, the auditor released his 2010 report today.

The committee meets and talks with regard to some of the sections of the report each year. The committee decided to look at the Ministry of Education's literacy and numeracy secretariat, which was dealt with in last year's report.

This was a relatively positive report about the literacy and numeracy secretariat, one of the reasons being that with the EQAO, the Education Quality and Accountability Office, we in the public accounts committee were able to actually know whether the commission was doing its job or not. In other words, there was a measure of accountability with regard to how our education system is doing. I want to say, in a general way, that that's where the committee would like all departments of the government to go: Measure the performance of a program, and then the committee and the auditor will know whether or not they're doing a good job.

I must say that, in general, the secretariat was doing a good job. There were some improvements they could

make, and those were noted in the report; there are six recommendations in the report.

With that, I would like to adjourn the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BAHRAM & HAMID INC. ACT, 2010

Mr. Zimmer moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr42, An Act to revive Bahram & Hamid Inc.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

ORGANIC WASTE DIVERSION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE RÉACHEMINEMENT DES DÉCHETS ORGANIQUES

Mr. Sterling moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 146, An Act to ban organic waste from landfill sites / Projet de loi 146, Loi visant à interdire l'enfouissement des déchets organiques.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: This bill attempts to deal with the poor waste diversion record, at 22%, that we have in the province of Ontario; it was mentioned today in the auditor's report. This bill bans organic waste from landfills three years from proclamation of the bill. This would not only include municipal waste; it would also include waste from the industrial and commercial sectors.

If we were successful in banning all organic waste from landfills, we could increase our diversion rate from the present 22% to over 50%. We have to take some action, and this is one small part of that action to deal with solid waste problems in the province of Ontario.

JOURNÉE DE COMMÉMORATION ET D'ACTION CONTRE LA VIOLENCE FAITE AUX FEMMES DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to

each party to speak on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

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

L'hon. Laurel C. Broten: Nous rendons hommage aujourd'hui aux 14 étudiantes en génie dont la vie a été tragiquement écourtée à l'École Polytechnique de Montréal.

Today, on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, we honour the 14 female engineering students whose lives were tragically cut short at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. We must never forget that the horrible events of December 6, 1989, were caused by gender discrimination. The acts of that day 21 years ago are a stark reminder of one terrible fact: Women are at risk of violence because they are women.

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I was about the same age as these women when they died. This tragedy changed us as a generation, as women and as a society. This tragedy pointed then, and still does, to the inequality that is at the root of violence against women. Whether it is the sexual exploitation of women through human trafficking or the high number of missing and murdered aboriginal women across Canada, we see that inequality in all of its forms reinforces violence against women.

La rose du macaron que nous portons aujourd'hui symbolise l'engagement que nous prenons de ne jamais fermer les yeux sur la violence faite aux femmes. C'est un symbole de notre engagement à l'élimination du fossé qui sépare hommes et femmes.

The rose button we wear today signifies a commitment to never condone or remain silent about violence against women. It is a symbol that we will continue to strive to eliminate the gap in equality between men and women.

We can make a difference as individuals. It starts with each of us asking ourselves, "What can I do?" Equality grows with each of our efforts. Let's teach our boys and girls to value each other as equals and to demonstrate respect. As adults, we can lead by example.

As a woman who felt the tragedy at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal so personally, I want to ensure that this day is always remembered and always serves to mobilize us. As the cabinet minister responsible for women's issues, I want to ensure that women live without fear of violence at home, at work and in their communities. As leaders, we can ensure that all girls have equal access to all benefits of society to grow up, go to school and reach their potential with confidence and without gender-based violence. Each of us has a role to play.

Le 25 novembre a marqué la Journée internationale pour l'élimination de la violence à l'égard des femmes. Nous avons tous porté un ruban blanc ce jour-là pour souligner le rôle que peuvent jouer les hommes pour mettre fin à la violence contre les femmes. Le 25 novembre a aussi marqué le début des 16 jours d'activisme contre la violence faite aux femmes, une campagne d'une portée internationale qui dure jusqu'au 10 décembre.

November 25 was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. We wore a white ribbon to recognize the role men can play in ending violence against women. The day began the internationally sanctioned 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, which continues through to December 10.

Today, on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, I ask that all members join me in wearing a red rose button. Wearing this rose, we remember women whose lives have been cut short by violence, including those who died in Montreal on December 6, 1989.

Let us take a moment to remember and acknowledge 14 lives lived and tragically lost: Geneviève Bergeron, age 21; Hélène Colgan, age 23; Nathalie Croteau, age 23; Barbara Daigneault, age 22; Anne-Marie Edward, age 21; Maud Haviernick, age 29; Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz, age 31; Maryse Laganière, age 25; Maryse Leclair, age 23; Anne-Marie Lemay, age 27; Sonia Pelletier, age 23; Michèle Richard, age 21; Annie St-Arneault, age 23; and Annie Turcotte, age 21.

Let us all ensure these young women will remain forever in our memory and in our hearts.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm very pleased to rise today on behalf of my leader, Tim Hudak, and the Progressive Conservative caucus to acknowledge and recognize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Today we remember the 14 women who were killed by a heinous act of violence at the École Polytechnique in Montreal 21 years ago today. But also today we speak out against the reality that continues of violence against women and to call for action in preventing it in our world.

This tragic incident was and continues to be profoundly troubling because the acts of violence perpetrated on December 6, 1989, were targeted at women simply because they were women who occupied a place in what is a predominantly male-dominated environment, an engineering classroom. We remember today the women who were killed in the Montreal massacre, but we also reflect on the broader issue of violence against women in our society and our world.

While generations of women before us have made incredible strides to ensure equal rights for women, the fact remains that more must be done. Since sexist, anti-feminist attitudes and the lack of real gender equality in society lie at the root of many, if not most, of the acts of violence against women throughout our world, we all share the responsibility for eliminating these attitudes and doing what we personally can to end violence against women. Men and women need to work together.

Positive attitudes adopted at an early age can help put an end to violence before it happens. We need to make sure we do everything we can at that early age to shape the attitudes of our sons and our daughters so that they learn to treat everyone, regardless of gender, with equal dignity and respect. Violence against women is not just a women's issue. Men too have an important role to play in

speaking out against gender-based violence and acting as role models for young men and boys by setting an example based on healthy models of masculinity that do not rely on negative stereotypes of gender roles.

Violence against women in any form is never acceptable. Equally unacceptable is the failure of those who witness it or are aware of its occurrence to speak out and take action against it. When Marc Lépine separated the women from the men in the classroom at the École Polytechnique, he encountered little resistance and few objections. Silence in the face of something so fundamentally wrong is just never an acceptable option. When we respond to violence against women with silence and tolerance, we normalize it, and we tacitly condone it. This must change.

Organizations such as the White Ribbon Campaign and the UN Secretary General's Network of Men Leaders encourage men to speak out against violence against women, and I think we all need to applaud the work that they have undertaken.

So we need to remember that we must change attitudes and we must speak out against gender-based violence if we are to prevent it. Unfortunately, when we take a look at the statistics, violence against women continues to persist. I want to acknowledge the work that is done by the organizations, the houses and the shelters in our province, that support women who are the victims of violence. Regrettably, however, Mr. Speaker, reports of domestic violence have been increasing in recent months and years. According to the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, during times of economic recession, the incidence of violence against women increases. For example, organizations in London, Durham region and Brockville have all reported significant increases in the requests for support in response to the cases of domestic violence. Unfortunately, the concern is that during a recession, violence against women will rise while meaningful action on the issue will fall. I would encourage the government not to ignore this important fact and issue even during these difficult economic times.

So today we remember the women. We remember the horrendous actions of one man on December 6, 1989. We remember that this marked a very tragic day in this country's history. And I join with my colleagues on all sides of this House in remembering the 14 women who lost their lives that day and all those in this province who have as well.

I would encourage all Ontarians today to pledge never to condone or remain silent about violence against women in order that we can, together, continue to make progress toward the eradication of violence against women, not only in our province but throughout our world.

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Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It is an honour and a privilege to rise on behalf of our leader, Andrea Horwath, and also on behalf of the New Democratic Party.

I remember it like it was yesterday—the day that violence came into our church. I was a minister at the time and was there on a Saturday afternoon when this

woman came running through the door. She came running through the door, asking for a safe place, so I put her in my office and closed the door. She was followed by her husband. I want to say that these were not marginalized folk; these were well-respected, well-heeled, well-educated members of our congregation. He went around the church looking for her, banging on doors, opening doors, interrupting yoga classes, children's classes, language classes. I can safely say in this place that, in that place, I was absolutely terrified. What I immediately thought of was, if this is how terrified I am in this moment, imagine what this woman lives with every day of her life. There wasn't enough time to call the police. There wasn't enough time to do anything much, except ultimately pray for her and her family.

The question about violence—domestic violence, in particular—always is, why do women stay? The answer, inevitably, is sadly the same: because they can't afford to leave. She was no exception.

I think of, as the member from Kitchener–Waterloo mentioned, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses' report. Violence is on the increase, and the stay in shelters is lengthening for women—it's not shorter; it's longer—because there is no housing for women to go to that they can afford. Many women find themselves economically trapped with their abusers, with their children.

Certainly the long-awaited housing strategy has not provided an answer. Not one new unit of housing is to be built. Not one new rental supplement is to be paid. Not one new dollar is to be spent. Carol Goar, one of my constituents, says in her article in the *Toronto Star* that it's "a flurry of announcements but little content" that this government has brought forward when dealing with poverty. We know that poverty, women's poverty, children's poverty, is the root of women's lack of independence and lack of ability to escape violence.

I've asked, and we in the New Democratic Party have asked, for something very simple, something that exists in many workplaces, in many governments around the world: an all-party, all-women's committee, simply to meet and look at the issue of violence and how we could work together to confront it. We have an excellent example: the all-party committee that came together over mental health and addictions. This would be an obvious first step and one that has been called for.

But I want to end on a happy, upbeat note, because where governments fail to tread, women tread anyway. There are three members of this House who have come together: I was privileged to be one of them, the member from Etobicoke Centre and the member from Whitby–Oshawa. We came together and, together with faith leaders across the province of Ontario, we launched what's called Ruth's Daughters of Canada. What Ruth's Daughters of Canada is asking their congregations to do—and there were Roman Catholics, Tibetan Buddhists, members of the Salvation Army, leaders of the United Church, leaders of the Muslim Canadian Congress. All faiths came together in this place last May 6, on Mother's

Day, to launch this initiative. They're calling for chapters to be set up, in all congregations, of women who get together, who pray together, who share together and who do something together about domestic violence. How often do we women get together about just about everything else in places of worship, except this issue, which is our issue, this war against women? And it is a war against women. One in four women will experience abuse or violence in her lifetime. That is millions of women in this province.

I wanted to end on an upbeat note, on something that we women are doing to confront this. But again, as in past years, I plead with my friends across the aisle to take a step, even a small one, towards a long-term answer that only governments can do. Our daughters and our granddaughters are counting on it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask all members, staff and guests to please rise as we observe a moment of silence in memory of the 14 young women murdered in December 1989.

The House observed a moment's silence.

PETITIONS

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to first recognize all the work done by Heather Rutherford in preparing this petition. It reads as follows:

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments raise concerns among citizens over environmental impacts as well as health, safety and property values; and

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass municipal approvals and meaningful public input;

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

"That the Minister of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approval on all industrial wind farm developments and that the Minister of the Environment conduct a thorough scientific study on health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

It's signed by Dave Rutherford and others, and I'm pleased to submit it to Justin, one of the pages in his last few days here.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Mahir to bring it to the Clerk.

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

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“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.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there are over 7,000 people with disabilities waiting for the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services’ special services at home (SSAH) funding and almost 4,000 on wait-lists for Passport funding; and

“Whereas such programs are vital and essential to supporting Ontarians with developmental disabilities, and their families, to participate in community life;

“ARCH Disability Law Centre supported by Family Alliance Ontario, People First of Ontario, Community Living Ontario, Special Services at Home Provincial

Coalition, Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario and the undersigned individuals and organizations urge the Ontario government to take quick action to substantially improve developmental services.

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

“—Ensure that all qualified Passport and SSAH applicants immediately receive adequate funding;

“—Make the application and funding allocation process transparent; and

“—Ensure that sufficient long-term funding is in place so that eligible Ontarians with disabilities can access the supports and services they need.”

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

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

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: on average, 97% of collective agreements are negotiated without work disruption; and

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly “to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Donna to deliver it to the clerks.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I have, from the great city of Hamilton, a petition that is exactly the same as the one read by the member from Dufferin–Caledon, and I’ll file it on behalf of the signatories.

POWER PLANT

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

“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.”

As I am in support of this, I will affix my signature and give it to page Tony.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Steve Clark: I would like to thank Beth French, executive director of the Brockville and District Association for Community Involvement, for sending me this petition from hundreds of people from Leeds–Grenville. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are over 7,000 people with disabilities waiting for the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services’ special services at home (SSAH) funding and almost 4,000 on wait-lists for Passport funding; and

“Whereas such programs are vital and essential to supporting Ontarians with developmental disabilities, and their families, to participate in community life;

“ARCH Disability Law Centre supported by Family Alliance Ontario, People First of Ontario, Community Living Ontario, Special Services at Home Provincial Coalition, Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario and the undersigned individuals and organizations urge the Ontario government to take quick action to substantially improve developmental services.

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

“—Ensure that all qualified Passport and SSAH applicants immediately receive adequate funding;

“—Make the application and funding allocation process transparent; and

“—Ensure that sufficient long-term funding is in place so that eligible Ontarians with disabilities can access the supports and services they need.”

I agree with the petition, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Emily.

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’;

“Whereas relying on computer technology that the energy industry says is not ready, isn’t reliable and 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.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a number of petitions here, submitted by residents in the constituency of Durham. It reads as follows:

“Keep Ontario Dollars for Ontario Students.

“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’m pleased to sign this petition and give it to Elizabeth on her third-last day here at Queen’s Park.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition 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 affix my name in full support.

TAXATION

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

“Whereas residents in Leeds–Grenville do not want the McGuinty 13% sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$400,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

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

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families.”

I want to thank Jean Barton from Portland for sending me this petition. I agree with it, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Emily.

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly which reads as follows:

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

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“Whereas speech-language therapy can make the difference between someone with Parkinson's retaining their ability to speak or not, and their ability to swallow or not, yet most Ontarians with Parkinson's are unable to access these services in a timely fashion, many remaining on waiting lists for years while their speaking and swallowing capacity diminishes; and

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

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to intervene immediately to ensure that CCACs across Ontario develop a plan to ensure that all Ontarians living with

Parkinson's who need speech-language therapy and swallowing therapy receive the necessary treatment.”

I'm pleased to sign it and support it and present it to Joshua, the page from my riding of Durham, on his third-last day.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas there are over 7,000 people with disabilities waiting for the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services' special services at home (SSAH) funding and almost 4,000 on wait-lists for Passport funding; and

“Whereas such programs are vital and essential to supporting Ontarians with developmental disabilities, and their families, to participate in community life;

“ARCH Disability Law Centre supported by Family Alliance Ontario, People First of Ontario, Community Living Ontario, Special Services at Home Provincial Coalition, Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario and the undersigned individuals and organizations urge the Ontario government to take quick action to substantially improve developmental services.

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

“—Ensure that all qualified Passport and SSAH applicants immediately receive adequate funding;

“—Make the application and funding allocation process transparent; and

“—Ensure that sufficient long-term funding is in place so that eligible Ontarians with disabilities can access the supports and services they need.”

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the orders for second and third reading of the following private bills shall be called consecutively and the questions on the motions for second and third reading of the bills be put immediately without debate: Bills Pr37, Pr38 and Pr41; and that Mr. Yakabuski may move the motions for second and third reading of Bill Pr41 on behalf of Mr. Shurman.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.
Motion agreed to.

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF PETERBOROUGH ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2010

Mr. Leal moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr37, An Act respecting The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of Peterborough, in Ontario.

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

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH
OF PETERBOROUGH ACT
(TAX RELIEF), 2010

Mr. Leal moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr37, An Act respecting The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of Peterborough, in Ontario.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

BIG BAY RESORT
ASSOCIATION ACT, 2010

Mrs. Munro moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr38, An Act respecting Big Bay Resort Association.

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

Second reading agreed to.

BIG BAY RESORT
ASSOCIATION ACT, 2010

Mrs. Munro moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr38, An Act respecting Big Bay Resort Association.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

TONUM LTD. ACT, 2010

Mr. Yakabuski, on behalf of Mr. Shurman, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr41, An Act to revive Tonum Ltd.

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

Second reading agreed to.

TONUM LTD. ACT, 2010

Mr. Yakabuski, on behalf of Mr. Shurman, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr41, An Act to revive Tonum Ltd.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

GOOD GOVERNMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SAINTE
GESTION PUBLIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 1, 2010, on the motion for third reading of Bill 110, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 110, Loi visant à promouvoir une saine gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I am certainly happy to continue my remarks from last week on Bill 110. I just want to set the stage here. Bill 110 is An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts. It's almost like a conundrum here, really. This bill is about a government talking about being good government when most of what they're doing is utterly wrong. In fact, there's a list of items—with your indulgence, Madam Speaker.

The Premier, today, in one of his answers said—you want to know about the future?—"The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour." That's an old axiom that's often referred to, and from that premise I'm going to refer to the Premier's remarks by saying—for instance, they were elected in 2003. I remember the Premier in the ads leaning up against a lamppost saying, "I will not raise your taxes," and then he said, "I won't lower them either."

That's a conundrum right there because we now have two of the largest tax increases in Ontario's history. We also have the largest debt in Ontario's history—the largest debt in all of Canada. You can't have it both ways.

I agree that many things in the economy are important—and society and our social awareness are all important. Our leader, Tim Hudak, reminds us all the time of the importance of having a strong, competitive economy so that you can fund the social programs that are so important to make Ontario the best place to live. But where are we? We're basically in last place.

This is one of the things he did. He brought in the health tax in 2003 and, just recently, brought in the HST, which is about a \$3.5-billion to \$4-billion deal for them. I can tell you right now that those two taxes are still hard for people to digest.

Now, we just dealt with Bill 135, which was the interim budget response. In fairness, what did they do in that bill and the previous bill? I think it was Bill 122. What did they do? It's quite treacherous. Maybe that's an incorrect word, but it's quite tricky anyway. They promised everybody in Ontario that they would reduce their energy bill by 10%. It sounds like a fairly respectable idea since people are struggling—in fact, they're bent over carrying around their energy bills. So, what they've done is, they're going to reduce your bill by 10%, but they didn't tell you the whole story.

In fairness, the NDP had a resolution here one day, which was debated and defeated by the McGuinty government, which was going to make Premier McGuinty,

his Minister of Finance and his Minister of Energy eliminate the HST on energy. Well, they voted against that.

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Now, since that tax is in place—and let's keep it simple for the people of Ontario, whom I represent—let's say your bill is \$100. When you put the HST on that, that makes it \$113, and you're going to get 10% back on that \$113. Ten percent of \$113 is about \$11, okay? You're already paying \$13. They're paying you back with your own money. So don't be hoodwinked.

How much does this cost? It's important to put this in, because the people of Ontario pay for everything we do here. They pay me, they pay you, they pay the Premier. They pay everybody through tax revenue, basically. So how are they going to pay for this? I'm told by the auditors that this move in Bill 135 will cost about \$1.3 billion.

Good government? They already have a deficit of almost \$19 billion. Let's put that in reference now: If the budget is \$100 billion—it's actually a little over that, \$106 billion or \$107 billion—and of that they're missing or are in deficit around \$20 billion, they have a 20% deficit on the whole budget. They're in the hole. It's the largest deficit in the history of this province.

If they already have a deficit of around \$20 billion and they're going to borrow another \$1.3 billion to pay back this 10%, my goodness, the children are going to be paying for this. You can't have it both ways. You've got to be forthright with the people of Ontario.

When I see a bill entitled—here it is; I've spoken on this two or three times—An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts, I'm sad to say that my commentary will be pretty much uniform, in that it's a bad bill by a bad government. That's basically the best way to summarize it.

I think they've tried. When the Premier first came here in 2003, the people of Toronto, the Toronto Star—everybody—loved him. I don't know what's happened to him. He's sort of lost his way. He's lost his conviction. If he had been listening—I know that I'm listening, and I know the member from Peterborough is listening to his constituents most of the time, except on the hospital, where they're laying people off all the time.

Nonetheless here is what I see: Seniors in my riding are the people who lived through the Depression, fought the wars and made this country what it is. They are very reluctant to call or complain—some of the younger groups will complain about what day it is. Nonetheless, these younger people should be worried too, because this is all future debt. The debt has doubled in the last seven years.

I'm almost discouraged. I've got to continue; there are only four minutes left so it will not be hard. The thing is, if this continues the way I see it, seniors may not be able to stay in their own homes. Then I look at one of the strategies called aging at home. Our critic from Whitby—Oshawa, Ms. Elliott, is strongly supportive of making sure that people are allowed to age with dignity in their homes. But we determined that under the government's

current plan, the aging at home strategy is actually the aging alone strategy, because there's no one coming to help you out.

They also have a plan under the LHINs to eliminate \$1 million in emergencies. Do you know how they will do it? They're going to send you home quicker and sicker, and there are not enough home supports now. We met this past week with the CCACs in my riding and in Durham, and they are concerned. They don't want to speak too loudly, because it would upset the Premier and the finance minister and potentially the Minister of Health, but I can feel very comfortable that the people I speak to and believe in, and that I serve, say they've gone too far, too fast. Instead of putting the foot on the brake, they've got the foot on the gas.

The eco tax is another thing that I'm worried about. They didn't clearly, in any definite way say, "That's the end of that." If I look at the eco tax, it was a cash grab. All of us want to make sure that the right products get into landfill and the wrong products don't get into the landfill. The eco tax was a tax on things like batteries and fire extinguishers. There's an argument to be made, but the proper policy would be to end the pollution at the source. Disincent businesses to create products that create a hazard to the environment. Don't tax it at the end, at consumption. That's not solving the problem. That's creating a revenue flow.

Good government: Who are they kidding? If the people don't watch out—I'm not being unkind. I think they care almost as much as our leader, Tim Hudak, does. But what's wrong is they have no plan.

The energy file is in complete and utter disarray. Imagine trying to power industry with wind power. Imagine. It's a wonderful idea conceptually, but it's an economic policy we're concerned about. They're treating it as a social policy. Imagine trying to power the economy of Ontario, once the greatest in the country, the most industrialized in the country, and now arguably shedding jobs quicker than the snowflakes that I saw falling this morning on the way to work—it's tragic; it's concerning.

I cannot support this bill for one moment. It's just one more example of a government that has lost its way. I don't say that in a negative way. I think the people of Ontario are catching on.

Our leader, Tim Hudak—I have the confidence. We met with people last week—he's touring the province—and I could feel what I'd call the embracing of the concept and energy of Tim Hudak. I actually felt it. I've been here for 15 years, and I sensed the change. I know the content is there. I know that Premier McGuinty had that once, back in 2002 or something. But now it's 2010-11. Times have changed. The people are catching on.

The economy's going south and the spending is going north. We have a convergence of issues here. We're paying more and we're getting less. I see it in health care. I see it even in the all-day kindergarten. Did you read the paper today? It's not funded. Good idea; bad policy and implementation.

I look forward to the remarks on my few moments of comments.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm going to have a chance to speak to this bill in my own right in a few moments' time, and it's going to be my lead. My lead was deferred from when this bill was first called for third reading.

I'm having a hard time getting past the very front page, because as you know, the title of a bill is a debatable matter. It's a debatable matter and it's voted on, so I'm going to find myself, I think, stuck for an hour debating the title, "An Act to promote good government."

In the context of debating the title, it's going to be necessary to make frequent reference to the 2010 annual report of the Auditor General, because, let me tell you, there's no good government talked about in this very, very lengthy report by the Auditor General, no good government at all. As a matter of fact, if you read the Auditor General's report, you'll know what most Ontarians know: Things are getting worse and worse.

No wonder 76% of Ontarians think another party should be in power rather than this one. No wonder 86% of Ontarians say that they're worse off now than they were two years ago. No wonder Ipsos Reid, notwithstanding that it screwed up the polling when it came to Smitherman and Ford and the mayoralty race, has this Liberal government trailing and in something akin to freefall. Good government, my foot.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Only your foot?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm looking forward to the chance to debate this bill.

The member for Kenora—Rainy River is diligently, as usual, in the House and he'll be speaking to it later this afternoon. I suspect he may be as concerned as I am about this government calling itself good in any way, shape or form.

I suppose the only thing that's good is that in October of next year, less than 12 months' time now, Ontarians will have a chance to tell folks what they really think about this government's HST, *inter alia*.

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

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Mr. Ted McMeekin: I think the member from Dufferin is absolutely right. He says that we need to be forthright with the people of Ontario, and we need to do that. We don't need to sweep things under the rug; we need to be straight up with the people of Ontario.

He's also said that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. Come a year from now, I think we'll be reminding the people of Ontario of that quote as well, because that is paramount to the kind of discussion that we have in this place, where we continually see the politics of complaint here. Anyone can stand on a soapbox and scream about what's wrong, but to be effective, you need to be instructive and constructive. You can't just be critical; you need to come up with ideas. It always takes more time, more energy and, frankly, more in-

tegrity to get invested in that kind of a process, but that's what we need to do in this place—focus on that.

The member from Dufferin—and I want to keep my remarks to what he said—suggested that—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Durham, not Dufferin.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Durham, sorry. See what kind of an impression you've made?

He suggested that we're moving too far, too fast. Well, if we're moving too fast to restore peace in our school system—I remember when teachers were lining up to take early retirement—and to restore peace and stability in our health care system; if we're moving too fast to provide more doctors, nurses and home care—home care, by the way, is up 60% in the last four years; and if we're moving too quickly in restricting tuition increases for post-secondary students and assisting our disabled and those in need of a social housing strategy, then we plead guilty. We're moving too quickly.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The member from Durham spoke eloquently, as always. It was a truncated speech, so you had to be here for the first part of his speech. I think I split my time with the member for that the opening hour lead. He was eloquent, as always, bringing the fact of what they call good government and pointing out some of the inequities that the government just doesn't seem to get.

So much of it revolves around the management of an issue. There are many ideas that come from the government that have merit, a lot of merit, yet they just don't seem to get managed very well. It goes from the planning stage into implementation, and somehow it gets a little distorted. We're seeing it this week—we're talking a lot about the distortion that's taking place at the Niagara Parks Commission, where they talk about being frugal, they talk about having no increase in wages or no cost-of-living increases, and here's the chairman, here's a member of an Ontario parks commission, who's trying to double their salary. The implementation just doesn't get through. It just doesn't work, and that's always difficult. It's embarrassing, I'm sure, for the government—at least it should be embarrassing for the government—and the government doesn't take the decisive action that it should be taking.

In politics, you always have difficult times. The thing is to solve the problem and get it off the front pages of the paper. The government isn't doing that as well. They seem to be afloat, they seem to be at sea in not managing the issue very well. They come up with these great ideas, and then they fail to manage the program—and the member for Durham pointed that out, I thought, very eloquently.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: I was here to listen to my colleague from Durham. Once again, while I do not often agree with some of the positions taken by members of the Conservative caucus, I do think the member from

Durham, in the length and breadth of his speech, in fact laid out what is a central problem for this government.

Some of this goes back, of course, to the eHealth situation, where the government was boasting that it was investing in e-health and it was in the forefront of e-health. Then there was a report from an officer of this House, who concluded that \$1 billion had been blown on eHealth under this government and there was little to show for it.

After that happened, the government made many pronouncements about good government; that it was going to make sure this didn't happen again. Well, not long after that, it was disclosed that, for example, all kinds of consultants and lobbyists, many of whom were former staffers of cabinet ministers or former staffers in the Premier's office, were in fact everywhere in the Ministry of Health insisting on very large payments and, of course, what they promised to hospitals and homes for the aged and others was insider access to cabinet ministers. And we heard more talk about good government. Now, most recently, we have the fiasco at the Niagara Parks Commission, and once again we hear more talk of good government from this outfit, but we don't see it.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm listening and thanking the members who commented. The member from Welland spoke of the Auditor General's report and I'm looking forward—I think he's the next speaker and I'm sure his hour will be informative and perhaps entertaining, or perhaps entertaining and informative—whatever sequence there.

Also, the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, probably indirectly, talked about—he was asking what we would do, in looking at the past. The one thing you could count on in the Mike Harris days—nothing is perfect, I understand that, but at least he kept his word. That's most important to remember that. What you say is what you should do and you should let the people decide at the end of the day. And I can only say—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: Madam Speaker, see, that's what they want; I'm just saying.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Order.

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Halton, I thought most importantly, brought up the issue of the Niagara Parks Commission. I see that the minister is in here, Mr. Chan, and he knows himself that the Niagara Parks Commission was out of control. He has a script that he's told to read; I understand that. I understand he just reads the notes they give him not to get into trouble.

But I think the best remarks: The member from Kenora–Rainy River was right. He mentioned some of the bad government things, sort of like the eHealth decision. We all know the auditor caught it; it was \$1 billion wasted, money that could have gone to seniors and health care, money that went into the pockets of people who maybe shouldn't have got it. I don't want to get into the mire here, but that's the fact. The auditor said it. I

think he said a lot of things and talked about eHealth and the Niagara Parks Commission, as I recall.

So we're on to you, the people of Ontario are on to you. This is not good government. This is a government in decline.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: Here we are. It's Monday and we're only here for three more days before we have the modest Christmas break until—what?—February 22 or so? Nice work if you can get it.

I do want to indicate to the pages, because, of course, this is their last week here too before the Christmas break, that they've been a very impressive group of young people, a delight to work with. Yet again, we had a sibling page; that's happened quite a few times in the 22 or so years that I've been here. We had Josh as a page whose brother Kevin had been a page before, and that's always a nice thing to see. You'll recall a couple years ago we had pages who were twins. Do you remember the twins? Of course, you can't be a page more than once, so this one young fellow is a page and then six months later he appears to come back again and we wondered how it happened, but of course it was a twin brother.

Jeez, good government. Good government, good grief, my goodness. The Auditor General's report today: Discharge of hospital patients—50,000 Ontarians were waiting in hospital in 2009 to be discharged because of delays in arranging post-discharge care. Fifty thousand are in beds in hospitals long after the time when they should have been discharged because the post-discharge care wasn't available to them.

I don't know about where you come from, Speaker, but where I come from it's a heck of a lot cheaper to have a care worker come in for an hour or two hours a day, even if it's seven days a week, than it is to keep people in hospital. And, as the Auditor General points out, people get sick in hospitals. The sooner you're out of the hospital, the less likely you are to pick up something that somebody else brought into the hospital.

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I don't know—just inadequate resources, improper management of post-discharge care, like medication management plans, and lack of oversight to ensure that the needs of patients are met. How can this government look people in the eye and hold up this good government bill when one of them, one of those Ontarians, or a sibling or a parent or a child or a spouse, was one of those 50,000 Ontarians who were being kept in hospitals longer than need be because there wasn't adequate post-discharge care? That's not good government.

Let's keep going. Ontario bungled the federal-provincial jobs stimulus funding. It botched it. It screwed it up. It mucked it up badly. It was just an incredible foul-up. As of March 31, 2010, the end of the first year of a two-year program, less than \$510 million, or only about 16% of the total \$3.1 billion committed by the federal and provincial governments, had actually been spent. It's as if somehow the government figures we don't have a

problem out there with unemployment, that we don't really need those jobs that this infrastructure spending was going to create. Look, we all know that the infrastructure spending doesn't create full-time jobs, by and large, but, by gosh, where I come from, down in communities like Wainfleet or Port Colborne or Welland or Thorold or St. Catharines, some highway construction, some bridge construction, some sewer repairs, some water pipe repairs, some road repairs, some road building could provide some awfully welcome jobs in tough, tough, tough times.

Only 7,000 jobs occurred as a result of that expenditure of about 16% of the total funds available, instead of the 25,000 jobs that should have been created. The way I calculate it, this government blew 18,000 jobs; this government squandered 18,000 jobs. Huge, huge unemployment levels already in the province of Ontario, and this government is just so out of touch, so aloof, so disdainful that it shrugs off 18,000 jobs. Bill 110 is called An Act to promote good government. What's good about blowing 18,000 jobs? You blew it. You haven't even got the courage to say you're sorry. You don't even have the courtesy to look those unemployed folks in the eye and tell them that you squandered 18,000 jobs, and maybe you wish you hadn't.

When it comes down to the 16% of the funds available being spent, we find out that some of the deadlines for review of applications were just two days. That meant that there probably wasn't a very efficient prioritization of where that money was spent. You know what that causes one to suspect, don't you, Speaker? Remember Collegiate, the little end-of-the-year spending spree when any number of organizations were hand-picked? Nobody is saying they weren't in and of themselves deserving, but there was a whole lot of queue-jumping, wasn't there? Hand-picked—I can tell you the Auditor General's summary in his chapter on infrastructure stimulus spending causes one to make some pretty frightening inferences. Shall we go on?

Oh, yes, MPAC and property assessment—wow. About 8% of Ontario property owners have properties that are assessed at more than 20% above their sales price. Yikes. MPAC is failing to investigate these over-assessments, and in almost no cases is correcting their mistakes. Of course, mistakes like this wouldn't be made nearly as often if MPAC actually inspected the properties, yet they only inspect once every 18 years even though the already inadequate policy calls for an inspection once every 12 years. That means people have been getting ripped off, ripped off by this government. Over-assessments of 20%—do the math.

As if property taxes were not onerous enough already for hard-working folks, and as if the cost of heating your home, lighting it and insuring it weren't already expensive enough, this government bungled, botched, screwed up, mucked up when it came to the MPAC file and municipal property assessment. Good government? I don't think so. Do you? But there's more.

Let's talk about the Niagara Parks Commission for a few minutes. The Niagara Parks Commission, which

appears to be a cesspool of corruption during the course of the last seven years of Liberal stewardship, always has been a plum appointment. A seat on that commission was always considered a real prize, the brass ring, if you will, if you were a political friend, hack or lackey. Now we're starting to learn why.

Heck, I got more phone calls in the last week from folks asking me if I can help them get on the Niagara Parks Commission than I've ever had for any political appointment anywhere in the province of Ontario. I've got doctors, lawyers, engineers and veterinarians calling and asking me if I can get them appointed to the Niagara Parks Commission because it's nice work if you can get it. People are using the commission public money as their own personal ATM account, and all this government does—well, the minister somehow keeps challenging somebody here to a debate at 6 o'clock tomorrow night. I have no idea what he's talking about. If he's talking about one of those five-minute—when you talk about one of those five-minute late shows, that's hardly a debate. Just suck it up; fess up. You screwed it up; fix it. But find out what happened and hold people accountable.

The minister recites the mantra of moving forward. Fine, move forward. But if you go to your bank and find out that somebody emptied your account on you fraudulently, what do you do? Smile at the bank manager and say, "It's okay. I'm just going to move forward"? You want to find out who stole the money. You want to find out how it could happen. If you come home and you find your front door smashed in and your big-screen television gone, along with the Blu-ray player, what do you do? Call the cops and say, "Don't worry about it, though. I just want to move forward"? You want somebody to be held accountable, don't you?

That's all the opposition has been asking for. That's why. Because the government refused to do anything at all—zip, nothing. That's why Andrea Horwath, leader of the New Democratic Party, has written to Ontario's Auditor General asking him to investigate what the heck's been going on at the Niagara Parks Commission.

1430

We're not talking about somebody pilfering paperclips here. We're not talking about somebody using the photocopier to duplicate their kid's grade 12 essay. We're talking about some pretty big bucks. And we have no idea, and nor does the minister have any idea, just how much has been pilfered from the Niagara Parks Commission. We do know that that incredibly successful body, the jewel of Ontario, has suffered a loss for the last four years—unprecedented. Now we know where the money's been going. I suspect that what we've heard about is only the tip of the iceberg. I don't know that for a fact. And none of you ever will until we investigate it. That's why the NDP called for the Auditor General to go in there and, quite frankly, if need be, call the cops too. Because there could well have been crimes being committed; it certainly isn't out of the question.

I heard the minister the other day talk about "unfounded allegations." What an intensively stupid thing to say.

How does he know they're unfounded if he hasn't investigated? Allegations are precisely that: allegations. Oh, slowly, slowly, slowly, like a tap dripping, we're learning some of the real facts, we're getting some of the hard numbers. And there's more than enough here. The public of Ontario know it. Folks down there in Niagara think that this stinks to high heaven. It's got a hum about it, an odour about it that is unbearable. And Niagarans, just like people across Ontario, expects good government to do something about it. This government hasn't even sat on its hands. It would be giving them too much credit to suggest that they sat on their hands. They've been twiddling their thumbs—hardly good government. Yet we've got a bill before us today that's called "An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts." I suppose "An Act to accelerate the election by 10 months" might be a more appropriate one if we are going to achieve good government.

The Family Responsibility Office: I remember when the member for Nickel Belt, Shelley Martel, broke into that place and got videotape of a Family Responsibility Office that was in a shambles. It wasn't even in a shambles because it hadn't even come out of the box yet. The Attorney General sat right about there, and every day—every day—Shelley Martel, the member for Nickel Belt, or the leader, Howard Hampton, or I, was standing up explaining to the Attorney General that something was wrong up there in North Toronto. You remember what happened. You recall that they shut down seven, eight, nine or 10 local offices, regional offices, and consolidated them. And Charlie Harnick, who was the Attorney General, insisted day after day after day that the place was up and running, that the consolidated office was working, that it was buzzing along just fine. And then Shelley Martel broke in—I'm surprised she never got arrested—with a video camera, came back to Queen's Park and the whole world saw the videotape. The Liberal critic was so quick to jump on that. Boy, oh boy. Even though Shelley Martel did all the hard work, the Liberal critic was so quick to jump on it and join in the criticism of, as it was, the Conservative government of the day.

Well, what does the Auditor General tell us today? After seven years, the McGuinty government has failed to fix the failures of the family service office. That was back in 1996, that particular exposé. I well remember when that particular exposé took place; that was 14 years ago. After seven years of McGuinty Liberal government, over 100,000 Ontario families are waiting for support payments and being forced to survive without billions of dollars that they have a right to.

Everybody is paying for it. Everybody is paying for the negligence, the outright negligence, of this government. Over 20,000 families have been forced onto social assistance. Isn't that sad?

The Liberals were just happy as pigs in a barnyard when we blew the whistle on the FRO office back in 1996. As a matter of fact, I'm sure they were reminding voters about it in the election in 2003. But seven years later, the Family Responsibility Office is still in shambles

and 100,000 people are not getting their support payments.

Look, support payments—98.9% of them are kids. These are kids going without support. The Family Responsibility Office is failing in its responsibility to ensure that the payments are being made and that they're being sent on, you see, because one of the big problems that the FRO always had, and still does, apparently, is not that, usually, the father isn't paying the money but that the office isn't getting it out to the families.

There isn't one of you who hasn't had that come to your constituency office at least once a month, or more, where the estranged mom or divorced mom or separated mom comes in with her former spouse. They both sit down. They show you his pay stub, where the money has been deducted. The employer isn't pocketing the money; it's getting sent on to the Downsview FRO office, but it isn't getting out to the moms and the kids.

Think about where we are. It's December 6 today. Maybe some of these families, or at least the kids, were planning on a thing called Christmas. You may not think it's such a big deal, but kids do. These families, instead of having that little bit of extra money that they need to put a ham or a turkey or a tourtière on the Christmas table, never mind some presents under the tree, are being forced onto welfare; 20,000 have been forced onto welfare.

This government, this Liberal government, has never set clear targets. It has had some vague, multi-year plans.

In 2003, seven years ago, the same year that this government was first elected, the Auditor General identified lack of action to ensure payment of child support. The same problem still exists seven years later: \$1.6 billion in payments outstanding; only one in four cases acted upon every year—only 25% of the files get any attention—80% of the calls never get through to call centres. You know what that's like, don't you? You may not have had to call the Family Responsibility Office, but have you ever had to call Rogers Cable, or Bell, for that matter? You want to reach down that telephone line and grab somebody by the throat, and that's about your cable being fuzzy; it's not about not having money for your kids. It's about you not being able to get the high definition on channel 4; it's not about you not having money for your kids. But 80% of calls never get through to the call centre. Good grief.

Good government? My foot. That's not good government; that's bad government—bad government.

These guys blew \$21 million on a new IT system, and all we get is a press release saying that delinquent fathers are going to have their cars seized for a week. I don't want their cars; I want their money. I don't want them in jail; I want their money.

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It's easy to fix the easy cases. The easy cases don't even need an FRO, do they? The easy cases don't need a Family Responsibility Office. It's the tough cases that need a Family Responsibility Office. By God, we've got files in my constituency office where we know where the

husband is; where he works; what vehicle he's driving, for that matter; his telephone number; and his SIN number, and somehow, the FRO can't get their act together—this government's FRO. It's not the FRO from 1996; that was 14 years ago. It's the FRO of 2003-10. Here, we've got the government today expecting us to be happy about their bill, Bill 110, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts. I never thought I'd spend this much time debating the title of a bill on third reading, but let's move on.

The Auditor General's report when it comes to emergency rooms: Down in Niagara, this government is notorious for shutting down emergency rooms—Port Colborne emergency room, shut down; Fort Erie emergency room, in Mr. Craitor's Niagara Falls riding, shut down. What the Auditor General tells us today is that since April 2008, emergency room wait times have not significantly improved or met provincial targets. What's this hoey we get from them on a daily basis—that is to say, from the Liberals—about shortening emergency room waits? Why, it's just not the case. It's bull feathers. Since April 2008, emergency room wait times have not significantly improved or met provincial targets. There are problems with ensuring adequate nursing staff at emergency rooms and huge costs because of overtime paid due to inadequate nursing supply. So what's this bull spit that this government gives us about hiring more nurses?

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Bull spit.

We've got a problem in staffing emergency rooms when it comes to nursing. There's an inadequate number of nurses. That's part of the problem with inappropriate emergency room waits. Lower-acuity patients make up about 30% of ER visits and could be treated elsewhere. The Auditor General found that high-acuity patients—these are the real emergencies—are actually faring worse.

The pay-for-results program has been a failure. The hospital that performed the worst received the most money in year two. That's just the opposite of what it's supposed to be, isn't it? Good government? I don't think so.

Home care services, CCAC: Oh my, oh my. As if there isn't a single member here who isn't aware of the reality in their own community about the inadequate resources for people at home. As a matter of fact—you heard me in the Legislature not even a month ago talking about a case down Welland way where the hospital couldn't discharge this patient because the CCAC didn't have sufficient staff to meet the X number of hours per month to assist that person in their home. We talked about this just a few minutes ago as well. That person is costing—what's a day in the hospital worth: \$400, \$500, \$600? It's huge. And what do a couple of hours a day of personal aid from a support worker cost: \$20, \$30, \$35, \$40? And that's a person at home, where they're at less risk of either making somebody else sick or getting sick themselves. Never mind being cruel, it doesn't make good fiscal sense.

Some CCACs have people on wait-lists for care for as long as—how long?—262 days. Some clients are waiting as long as 15 months for an assessment—15 months. You could be dead. Well, maybe they're counting on you simply dying. Or in 15 months' time your recovery is complete so you don't need CCAC assistance any more. Fifteen months for an assessment? That's in the Auditor General's 2010 annual report.

CCAC is a complete failure. This government has bungled it, botched it, screwed it up, mucked it up, made a mess of it. It's made it worse, not better. That's why 86% of Ontarians feel they're worse off today than they were two years ago. That's why, in that Ipsos Reid poll that I'm inclined to refer to so often, 76% of Ontarians think a party other than the Liberal Party should be the governing party.

I know the polls are snapshots. So next week a poll is going to say it's only 72% of Ontarians that want a party other than Liberals in power. Okay; or maybe it'll be 80%. Who knows? But you do know that most Ontarians, the vast majority of Ontarians—and you don't need a pollster to tell you this; you don't need somebody with the slide show, the graphs and charts and trend lines to tell you this. Go to a church basement; go to a supermarket on a Saturday; go to a fundraiser for your kid's elementary school.

When I was a kid—that was a long time ago, in the 1950s—we had fundraisers too but that's so that kids, as a matter of fact, could take a bus to Queen's Park. Remember? You don't, because that was in the 1950s. That was something exceptional. That was the proverbial, classic end-of-the-school-year class trip. You don't see very many busloads of kids coming to Queen's Park any more, do you? Least of all from places that are more than a few kilometres away, because the fundraising that people are doing in the schools now is for core educational supplies and materials, never mind the notes and letters they constantly get from parents who are just shaking their heads about various user fees and school supply fees that elementary and high school kids are having imposed on them.

What does the Auditor General have to say about casino gaming regulation? Lots. Don't forget, this is the government, the Liberal McGuinty government, that created that wonderful Poker Lotto seven days a week; not Wednesdays and Saturdays any more—seven days a week. You can't win if you don't play. It's a mug's game. The people of Ontario are getting mugged by this government.

We learned today that—I'm going to get back to casino and gaming—the government has imported New Jersey's rules for mixed martial arts. Fine. As I recall, there'll be no biting allowed, no spitting and no groin attacks. I suppose that's good too. It's not that they won't be allowed, but it'll be considered a foul if it happens.

The other thing that was revealed today is that this government, which currently taxes the gross receipts of boxing events 2%, will be taxing mixed martial arts 5%. That's in addition to this government's new HST that

they'll be taxing on the price of admission. Do you understand what is happening? These mixed martial arts are huge, huge events; they'll talk about places, I presume, like Rogers stadium—SkyDome—tens of thousands of people. So the government taxes your ticket when you go in and then taxes another 5% of the gross receipts of the event.

1450

For people who wondered how it was that Premier McGuinty could flip-flop, flip-flop, around mixed martial arts—you'll recall that one day the Premier is saying, "It's not a priority" and the next day he's all excited. He's growing a Hulk Hogan moustache. He's got the Speedo and the tights on, and he's ready to jump in the ring.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It's true. One day the Premier says, "Mixed martial arts isn't on the radar screen; it's not on my agenda." The next day, as I say, he's got the leotards and the cape on, and he's ready to jump in the ring and do, I guess, anything as long as it's not biting, spitting or groin attacks. It's because of the money. Follow the money: HST on the admission ticket plus 5% of gross receipts.

I warn those folks in the boxing world that the 5% rake on MMA take will soon come to the world of boxing. What that means is that it will be even harder, because boxing, in huge parts of Ontario, just doesn't have the audience or market it once had. Mixed martial arts is far more dangerous, I suppose, and the audience it draws is one that wants the more extreme—it's called "extreme."

So, Premier McGuinty followed the money. If he doesn't get it from you, if he doesn't take it from you, if he doesn't doesn't pick your pocket at the mixed martial arts event down at SkyDome or wherever you happen to be in Ontario, he's going to get it from you at the casino or at the corner store checkout counter.

Mr. McGuinty says he's a family man. As a matter of fact, he often talks about his children and his mother. He makes reference to his kids lobbying him for one thing or another—he does. He brings Poker Lotto to Ontario, so you don't just buy your tickets on Wednesday and Saturday; you buy them on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Then he announces Internet gambling. Is that good government?

We learned just recently a shocking report that the rate of gambling problems/addictions among younger people is accelerating. It's not hard to figure out. Young people are being reared on Internet games. I can't remember who it was that told me—it might have been you—that they've done studies on kids who do texting on their BlackBerrys. They ring doorbells with their thumb rather than with their forefinger because they're so used to texting with their thumbs.

Honest, I have not used a BlackBerry yet. I don't know why. I've just never used one. But I see some people with the thumbs just a-goin'. I also see people so incredibly disconnected. I have an apartment here in

Toronto, as most out-of-town member do. I'm on the 22nd floor. The good thing about being on the 22nd floor is that you see more on the way down. If you're on the second floor, you don't see very much, because you're only going down one floor.

I get on at the 22nd floor; there are a lot of young people in the building. Honest, they're in the building—this is 6:30, 7, 7:30 in the morning—and they're already plugged in and texting. Nothing is more irritating—for me, at least; I don't know about you—than when you can hear the booming from earphones. If people want to wire themselves up like that, God bless them, but when you can hear that scratchy booming, it's irritating. They're listening to music plus texting. Again, it's a generational thing, isn't it? Maybe it's a cultural thing. But these people walk out on to the street, and they don't hear anything. They don't hear if there are birds. Mostly there are pigeons in Toronto, but they do coo in the morning—that's right—because they're rock doves. They don't hear the pigeons cooing. They don't hear the sound of the ambulance coming down the street, or the fire truck. They're wired.

The neuroscience of computer gambling is pretty sophisticated stuff, but it's understood quite well. The people who manufacture these games—it's not just Internet poker. It's Internet gambling of all sorts. We're learning that there's a growing rate of young children acquiring gambling habits, gambling addictions. The report talked about 12-, 13-, 14-year-old kids.

Premier McGuinty—used to be Premier Dad; now he's Premier Bad—wanted to protect people from all sorts of things, and New Democrats supported him. We wanted to protect kids from second-hand smoke, for instance, in cars. New Democrats said, "Bang on. Good idea." That was Premier Dad. Now he's Premier Bad, and he wants those kids—rather than inhaling second-hand smoke, he wants them sitting in their bedrooms, 12- and 13-year-olds, just blowing Mommy's credit card, or Daddy's, on an Internet gaming site. We know that that type of gambling is the most addictive type of gambling, because it's all the senses.

I might have told you—I've told you before: When I was a kid, I grew up down in the south end of Welland. At Blackbeard's pool hall on Saturday nights, they'd have an all-night poker game, or in Nick Penkov's room upstairs at Bill's pool hall. I used to go to these and I'd get the guys sandwiches. I was only 15 years old, right? I'd get the guys sandwiches and a pop or a beer. Every once in a while, some big bruiser from Niagara Falls would say, "Hey, kid, play my hand for me. I gotta go to the washroom." Then you're shaking, right, because these guys are big guys, and they're playing pretty big stakes. But that's okay.

But you see, that's a far cry from Internet gaming. First of all, seven card stud has a significant amount of skill attached to it; you go around the table, placing bets and making decisions. Internet gambling requires no thought process. It's as basic and Pavlovian as you could ever get. It's all about bells, bright lights, ringing and the

impression—we do know this from the data. Slots are the best example. Slots are designed to pay out, but never as much as you put in, and to pay out pretty frequently. That's why people are attracted to slots. There are no one-armed bandits. You don't even have to do that anymore. They'll pay out every once in a while. That's why this Poker Lotto and these numbers games that pay out \$2 and \$5 and \$10 are so insidious. Yeah, every once in a while you win two bucks or a free ticket, or you win five bucks or 10 bucks, and that sets you up for another 50 weeks of losing.

Premier McGuinty doesn't think it's enough for people to travel to Niagara Falls or Windsor or Casino Rama to blow their hard-earned money. He now wants people to do it in the privacy and comfort of their own homes.

What that means is that you're going to increase the rate of gambling amongst young people, because there's no way of screening a computer-operated game for age; none whatsoever. You're going to increase the amount of young gambling. Also, because you're putting them in front of a computer screen—bells, whistles, all the razzmatazz—you're going to generate higher and higher rates of gambling addiction amongst 12-, 13-, 14- and 15-year-olds, which means, of course, they're going to become gambling adults.

We have warning signs on packages of tobacco, rightly so; I think we've got warning signs on liquor bottles, rightly so.

1500

If this government was serious about addressing problem gambling or cautioning people—I saw the ad the other day in the paper about “Don't play more than you can afford.” That's like telling a smoker, “Don't smoke more than you should.” I used to smoke; a whole lot of people used to.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Hard to believe.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Hard to believe.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I smoked tobacco, as well.

Interjection: Did you inhale?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Yes, we want to know: Did you inhale?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Of course I inhaled. Why would you bother going to all that trouble if you didn't inhale, Ms. Dombrowsky?

I understand how hard it is to quit smoking, but the whole idea about tobacco and tobacco companies is, if people only smoked one cigarette a day, the tobacco companies would go bankrupt.

In my family, when I was a kid—my parents worked hard—there was a bottle of Black Velvet rye that was in a den closet, and that bottle would last for three years. The liquor companies don't make money off people who drink a shot of rye at Christmastime, and that's why the beer companies cater to young people. The beer companies expect people not just to have a bottle of beer; it's got to be party time, because the beer companies don't make any money off the household that buys a case of beer a year. And casinos don't make any money from the

senior who, God bless his or her soul, shows up on a seniors' bus with \$100 in their pocket. That type of consumer doesn't sustain the industry. It costs far more than that \$100 per customer to maintain the whole operation. The casino needs problem gamblers, just like tobacco companies need addicted smokers.

This government is a party to some of the cruellest and foulest behaviour that one can imagine. This government, with its expansion of gaming—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. McGuinty's bringing Internet gaming to your kid's bedroom. You no longer have to shave and shower and put on maybe a new suit and drive to Casino Rama or Niagara Falls or Windsor. You do it at home.

The casino phenomenon has served only the government of Ontario and has served only the passion that Premier McGuinty has for picking people's pockets and for taking Ontarians, grabbing them by the ankles, turning them upside down and shaking every last nickel and dime out of them. If McGuinty can't empty your pockets with his HST, he'll do it with his not-so-smart, dumb-and-dumber meters. If the McGuinty government can't get it out of you, or enough out of you, with that, he'll get you at the casino. And if the McGuinty government can't get you at the casino, they'll get you at the corner store. And they won't just get you, they'll get your kids.

You know what? My corner store, at the corner of Denistoun and West Main Street, one block from my old house on Bald Street—I'm in there often. I live in a really mixed community. We've got cops living there, factory workers, lawyers, and we also have a whole lot of single moms and people on social assistance and very low-income people. It's a delightful neighbourhood.

I could care less if some high roller goes to Niagara and blows his or her brains out on the roulette wheel. Who cares? But \$2 tickets are just like the cheap cigarettes from the smoke shacks. They're what enable young kids to gamble, and they're what enable low-income people to gamble: people who can least afford it. That's one heck of a practical joke by Mr. McGuinty on the people of Ontario, isn't it?

The Auditor General points out that the electronic gaming branch doesn't meet its goal of inspecting all slot machines annually, that gaming facilities are not assessed individually for risk and that patrons aren't provided with information on the maximum prize payout, which would help in case of machine malfunction.

I talked about the warning labels on liquor and tobacco. If the McGuinty government was really serious about protecting people from the deadly pitfalls of gambling, why isn't there a sign on the machine at the corner store that says, “You are going to lose money when you buy a lottery ticket.” Why isn't there a sign above that Lotto 6/49 screen saying, “Mr. McGuinty is picking your pocket again, and you shouldn't be suckered by him anymore.” Why are there not signs above the slot machines at the casinos saying, “Kiss that toonie goodbye, because you'll never see it again.” Why aren't those signs there?

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Why aren't those signs there?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Order.

Mr. Peter Kormos: We've got a serious problem with gambling addiction here in the province of Ontario, but the real gambling addict is Premier McGuinty. We've learned from the fiasco at Ontario Lottery and Gaming that that operation isn't as shipshape as it could be either. I've had occasion to say before, and I'll say again, that people should watch when they gamble with the province of Ontario. You're safer betting with Tony Soprano.

What does the Auditor General say about government advertising? The Ministry of Revenue ran ads on tax changes before the review was even completed by the auditor's office. This government bragged about legislation it introduced that was going to have the auditor review advertising like that to determine whether or not it was partisan. But it appears that this "good government," I say very sarcastically, couldn't care less what the auditor thought about their tax changes, whether or not the ad about tax changes violated the Government Advertising Act. We just saw—and I know the member for Simcoe–Grey has been on his feet about it—the advertising blitz around the HST and electricity.

One wonders what the Ministry of Consumer Affairs is doing when it comes to consumer protection, because surely we have controls on fraudulent advertising in the province of Ontario, don't we? To distribute a leaflet telling folks that somebody is going to cut their electricity rates by 10% without telling them they're also going to increase them by 46% over the next five years is misleading advertising. I always figured that that's what consumer protection laws were for: to protect people against misleading advertising, because that's fraud.

I'm trying to prioritize here, because I haven't got that much time left. I think I'm going to go with organ donation. Organ donation has been an issue in this Legislature for a good chunk of time. I know that the member for Newmarket–Aurora has been passionate about it, and I know that the member for Brant has been passionate about it. They have had their own private member's bills. I've been a very strong believer in the presumed consent approach, as compared to the presumed denial, which is the style of organ donation process that we have now.

1510

But the Auditor General told us today that although there are 61 hospitals that have the capability to be part of the Trillium Gift of Life Network, only 21 are currently participating in this program. What gives? What's the story here? How is it that we have these huge waiting lists of people who need organs? You have 61 hospitals that have the capability to be part of the Trillium Gift of Life Network—that's salvaging, retrieving organs and then taking them to where they've got to go—yet only 21 are participating in the program. In other words, shocking.

In 40% of the cases reviewed, organs were not allocated to the highest-needs patients. Hmm, you would think that there would be prioritization so that the patient

with the highest need—in other words, the one closest to death—would be getting the organ when there's but one organ available. The Auditor General notes that there is a lack of consistent best practices and monitoring of the network's activities.

Of course, the other problems—and this is one that comes up frequently—are the old health cards, that less than 1% of people with these cards have signed up to be a donor, as compared to 27% of Ontarians with new health cards, and the absence of an online registry. The member for Newmarket raised this in question period earlier today. That card really doesn't mean very much, as is pointed out by the Auditor General. Personal effects of patients are rarely rummaged through to look for something like an organ donor card, even if part of your health card. That's why there are a whole lot of Ontarians, including the member for Parkdale–High Park, who have become enthusiastic about this whole notion of presumed consent, like most of the civilized world.

We have a system now called presumed denial. In other words, it's presumed that you want to be a selfish, miserable, miserly person and not have your organs used to save somebody else's life in the event that you die. I don't think that accurately reflects the perspective of most Ontarians. The organs are of no use to you whatsoever once you're dead—no use whatsoever, Ms. Smith. All they are is dead weight for the pallbearers.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, they are. Geez, I keep telling—and I've got to get it done some day, but I'm going to have a dotted line tattooed up my belly that says, "Upon death, open here."

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Okay, that's too much information.

Mr. Peter Kormos: We've got to change—I'll refer you to my tattoo artist. Although who knows, Ms. Wynne may already have a tattoo.

In any event, I really believe that most Ontarians expect their organs to be used, so why don't we have a presumed consent system? If somebody really, really doesn't want their organs to be used to save a life—for reasons that I can't even begin to imagine—let them say, "No." As a matter of fact, give them a bumper sticker so they can say, "I don't want my organs used after I'm dead and no longer have any use for them." But the lack of the registry is a real problem, and this government has been delinquent and negligent in terms of moving on it.

There, I have managed to spend an hour talking about the title of the bill. I suppose I haven't talked to my colleagues about—we were concerned because the community around French-as-a-second-language education was concerned about schedule 3 of the bill, the amendments to the Education Act. Both the New Democrats and the Conservatives voted against schedule 3 in a recorded vote in committee, but the Liberal majority used its heft to retain schedule 3.

I haven't had the most recent talk with my colleagues about whether we're going to support this bill or not. I suspect we will—because at the end of the day it's really

not much; it's nothing to write home about—but there's nothing in there that makes this government good or even makes it better. This government may well have passed the point where it's redeemable. This government may have reached the Edsel stage in terms of branding such that no matter what it does—and it doesn't happen to seem to do anything particularly well anymore, if it ever did.

Its poverty agenda is impoverished and appalling. The recent publication by ISARC that was released, I believe, at a public event on Thursday night—I saw a copy of it on Wednesday when the people from ISARC had their press conference here—noted that this government has not rolled back the Harris download. Certainly this government has not addressed poverty in any meaningful dollar-and-cent way; it certainly hasn't when it comes to affordable housing. We learned that too just a little while ago, didn't we? The member for Parkdale–High Park, spoke about it: 142,000 on waiting lists for affordable housing; legislation brought by this government that doesn't invest a single new penny in affordable housing of any type; and waiting lists that were just huge.

I know that in the communities I represent that issue comes up with all kinds of families, and you've got different kinds of problems depending upon the kind of family. When you've got a family with kids, they need housing that accommodates kids in a safe and dignified way. When you need seniors' housing, you need housing that accommodates seniors, usually smaller apartments, but ideally apartments that have the support of other seniors in the same building, as part of a community. We have a location, 211 King Street in Welland, that's effectively a seniors' building—a huge waiting list. In terms of public housing, again, smaller-town Ontario is probably far worse off than big-city Ontario, but then big-city Ontario has so much larger populations by its very nature.

Good government is not to be found here at Queen's Park. This government has a few other failings as well. If Diogenes were in here with his lamp, walking past the government benches, he'd spend an awful long time in here and still walk out empty-handed.

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

Mr. Mario Sergio: The member for Welland has never had a problem speaking for about an hour on any topic. The only thing we didn't hear at the end of his one-hour presentation was that he still doesn't know if they are going to support Bill 110 or not. He did say that the bill is perhaps innocuous, so they may be considering supporting it. I hope that, indeed, they will support it.

The last time I checked, we had some 26 or 28 ministries. I think it's part of the responsibility of the government that from time to time the government sees that the various laws and legislation that we introduce and amend and pass on a daily basis in this House here do improve the way we deliver our services to the people in Ontario—

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Excuse me, can you stop the clock for a second. I hear somebody's BlackBerry; I'm sure I'm not the only person who's hearing it. Could you please check and make sure that it's not yours? Thank you.

Member for York West, continue.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Thank you. I only have two minutes, and it's a welcome interference.

1520

Let me add to the comments of the member from Welland that the bill, as it is, has got many technical points. It is aimed at clarifying and simplifying. It amends, it improves, it streamlines much of the legislation that, on a daily basis and on a regular basis, delivers services to the people of Ontario.

When we say, “delivering services to the people of Ontario,” people may expect or some members may expect that this is directly from the Premier or this government. As I said before, we have some 28 ministries with hundreds of thousands of employees. It is the direction that we give to them as to how to deliver the services that the government of Ontario, through the legislation, proposes.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's very timely that the member from Welland raised what ends up being quite a damning indictment of our debate today, to promote good government, when the Auditor General, this afternoon of course, released a very substantial report that raises many concerns over 11 different agencies and ministries on what, in fact, is not at all good government. He raised—and I'm pleased that he was talking about it—out of the community and social services ministry, the problems that people are experiencing with the Family Responsibility Office.

What jumped out at me as I was reviewing the auditor's report from today is that nearly 20,000 individuals who have their support orders enforced by the office—or more accurately, don't have them enforced by the office—also collect social assistance, often because their former partners fail to pay spousal and child support. So we have an indication here: If we actually had some good government and the FRO, the Family Responsibility Office, was doing their job and enforcing the payments that have been justifiably set out by court order, then you would have upwards of 20,000 individuals not having to rely on government support through other means. I'm pleased that the member for Welland raised this issue and raised the Auditor General's report in his comments.

It sort of reinforces to me the problems that we have when the spin doctors behind the magic curtain name acts “to promote good government.” The Auditor General doesn't have to have a fancy name for his annual report. He simply has to show the facts.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: I was able to listen to all of the comments of my colleague, but what I found most telling were his references to today's 2010 annual report of the Auditor General of Ontario. One would think, after seven years in government, that a government that boasts about providing good government would have actually done something about the sorry things that are happening at the Family Responsibility Office.

I was here earlier when a government spokesperson was giving a speech remembering those women who were killed at the massacre in Montreal in 1989, but I'm struck by this: When you read the Auditor General's report, who are the vast majority of people who are living in poverty as a result of the screw-ups at the Family Responsibility Office? Women; women and their children.

One would have thought that, after all the boasting of this government, the Auditor General would be able to make a positive review of home care services, but his comments on the state of home care under this government are almost as critical as his comments on the fiascos at the Family Responsibility Office.

Then there are the hospital emergency departments and the discharge of hospital patients. Again, he points out that there is no evidence of good government.

Then, as my colleague referred to, casino gaming regulation: All you have to do is look at the Auditor General's comments and the conclusion one comes away with is that this is a government, a McGuinty government, that is more interested in how much money they can take from people than providing good government.

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

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I have a duty and responsibility, of course, to rise in support of the Good Government Act.

As many of my colleagues here in the House have noted, it is a housekeeping measure. There are something on the order of 70 amendments, dealing with more than half a dozen ministries, essentially to clean up some of the language, improve clarity and perhaps reinforce not only the spirit but also the letter of the law.

If I might just use this opportunity to speak directly to some of my own constituents in the great riding of Etobicoke North: We've received a number of calls with regard to the unfolding measures on the hydro tax credit rebate that we'll be offering, and I think people are enthused. There is, of course, a little bit of information that still needs to be transferred to them, but as I understand it, our projection is that, on an annual basis, hydro rates are going to be increasing something on the order of perhaps 3.3% to 3.5%. On top of that, the government of Ontario, because we know this is a time of challenge for many families, will be reducing the hydro bill by approximately 10%. That 10% will actually reach families in May, although it will start to count on a monthly basis as of January. We're instituting that for the next five years, which I think is a remarkable initiative and measure. We've heard our constituents; we're out there.

I may just add very briefly, in the closing seconds, that part of it is, of course, the Clean Energy Act. As a doctor, I can tell you that for us to clean up our atmosphere and have fewer hospital admissions due to asthma, chronic obstructive lung disease, smog days or provocations of allergy, and of course the whole burden, both economic as well as human suffering, that that leads to, is something that I'm actually proud to be part of, not only as a physician but also as a parliamentarian and, I would even say, in a personal capacity.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I suppose I should express gratitude to the people in the brain trust who designed the title of the bill: An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It was good to us.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It was a gift. Let's see, how about this: "An Act to promote smart government by amending or repealing certain acts"? That will give us more grist.

Interjection: That's next year.

Mr. Peter Kormos: He notes.

How about "An Act to promote understanding government and caring government"? That will give us another—because we get caught up on the titles. I've never seen an instance where so much debate has focused on a bill's title, as we have with this one. And it's—

Mr. Howard Hampton: An empty title.

Mr. Peter Kormos: He notes.

These are gifts. They're delightful. It's as if it was my birthday, Christmas, Hanukkah and everything all rolled together all at once, and I express my gratitude.

But when I go to the riding on weekends, people aren't telling me about good government at Queen's Park. People are telling me about HST. People are telling me about HST on their electricity bills. People are telling me about not-so-smart, dumb-and-dumber, stupid meters that are jacking up their electricity prices.

Mr. Howard Hampton: At \$1.5 billion.

Mr. Peter Kormos: People are telling me that they resent being dinged over \$1.5 billion to pay for not-so-smart, dumb-and-dumber, stupid meters. They find it even stupider that empty houses in Windsor that were slated for demolition had these same meters installed in them, even though the houses were empty and were about to be done in by the wrecker's ball.

So it's not good government; it's not smart government. It's none of the above.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to have this opportunity this afternoon to participate in this debate on Bill 110, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts. I understand that the bill is before the House now at third reading.

I want to follow up on the member who just spoke, when he thanked those who drafted the bill, in terms of the title, because it gave the opposition something to chew on. The fact is, by calling this government a good

government, or by calling this bill An Act to promote good government, certainly gives us on the opposition side of the House lots and lots to talk about.

Today, as a matter of fact, of course, as has already been pointed out by a couple of the members, the Auditor General has released his 2010 annual report. It's a huge document, about 446 pages. I just received mine this afternoon at 1 o'clock, and I look forward to reviewing it tonight after the Legislature rises.

1530

Unfortunately, for I guess the third year now, this government, or this current mandate rather, but going back to probably 2003—it continues to tell the story of the McGuinty government's unfortunate disregard for taxpayers' money. Page after page of problems have been identified by the Auditor General that need to be addressed by the government.

I would hope that the government would be responding in the appropriate way, to take these issues and the advice of the Auditor General and commit to implementing his recommendations. If you look at the areas that were covered, the Auditor General this year looked at the casino gaming regulations, the discharge of hospital patients, the Family Responsibility Office, home care services, hospital emergency departments, infrastructure asset management at colleges, infrastructure stimulus spending, the Municipal Property Assessment Corp., non-hazardous waste disposal and diversion, organ and tissue donation and transplantation, and school safety. Then there is a big section on the value-for-money audits that were pursued by the Auditor General and his staff. Again, I think it's important that the government recognize that it has an obligation to review those recommendations and commit to doing better.

Bill 110, as we know, is really an omnibus bill that was brought forward in the House by the Attorney General on October 5, 2010, and it opens a significant number of acts under the Ministry of the Attorney General, and of the Ministry of Consumer Services. If we look at the Ministry of the Attorney General, it opens the Justices of the Peace Act, the Provincial Offences Act, the Wine Content and Labelling Act.

In terms of the Ministry of Consumer Services: the Business Corporations Act, the Collection Agencies Act, the Debt Collectors Act, the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services Act, the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, the Payday Loans Act, the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act and the Travel Industry Act.

Under the Ministry of Education, it opens up the Education Act with changes and the Essex County French-language Secondary School Act.

Under the Ministry of Energy, it opens up the Ontario Energy Board Act.

Under the Ministry of Government Services: the Business Corporations Act, the Business Names Act, the Corporations Information Act, the Extra-Provincial Corporations Act, the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, the Limited Partnerships Act and the Vital Statistics Act.

Then, looking at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, it makes changes to the Community Care Access Corporations Act, the Home Care and Community Services Act, the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act, the Ontario Mental Health Foundation Act, the Physician Services Delivery Management Act and various other acts.

Under schedule 7, the Ministry of Labour, it opens up the Employment Standards Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

It is obviously a significant omnibus bill, but as I said earlier, and I think as a number of members have said, the difficulty that most of us have is the government using these many housekeeping provisions to suggest that they are actually providing good government for the people of Ontario.

I have a number of very serious concerns in response to the statement that the government is providing good government for the people of Ontario. I would first point out the out-of-control government spending, some of which I'm sure is reflected in the auditor's report, but the overall increase in spending since this government took power in 2003.

According to published reports, it appears that the spending has gone up on an average basis 7% per year. During most of those years, I suspect inflation was around 2%, 3% at most. So we have seen real increases of at least 4% to 5% per year since this government took office. And as we know, it has established spending patterns that are completely unsustainable and completely unaffordable for the taxpayer of Ontario. As a result of the downturn in the economy and the recession that we have hopefully emerged out of now, we are now experiencing a massive deficit in the many billions of dollars. It's somewhat of a moving target because the government has put out specific projected deficit numbers to try to confuse people, and of course, those numbers change.

But the fact remains that the province of Ontario is currently borrowing more than \$2 million an hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. That should be a troubling concern for all of us. I think that all of us as members of the provincial Legislature would hope to leave succeeding generations, future generations, our children and our grandchildren, a better province than we have today. If we are unable or unwilling to accept responsibility for the financial situation that the province faces such that we make the tough decisions that are going to have to be made to work towards a balanced budget so that we are not borrowing so much money on an annual basis, then we will leave the next generation with an unconscionable debt problem that they may never be able to get out of, and without question we will leave the next generation worse off than our generation has been privileged to enjoy.

We also know that if the current spending patterns hold, by 2013, the McGuinty Liberal government will have doubled the provincial debt from the time it took office—over about a 10-year period doubling the debt.

We also know that currently we spend \$10 billion annually on debt servicing. That's more than many of the budgets of entire ministries. And you think, if we didn't spend \$10 billion a year on interest, where could that money go? Could that go to new hospital construction? Could that go to new road construction? Could that go towards many of the infrastructure needs that our communities continue to have, in spite of whatever efforts the government has put forward in recent years? Could that money go to tax relief for the people of Ontario? You think of all of those other alternative policies that could be pursued if indeed the government wasn't spending \$10 billion per year on interest.

I also want to point out once again that the government is obligated to bring forward a balanced budget plan when it runs a deficit, according to the laws of the province of Ontario, and release that with its annual budget. When it released its budget earlier this year, in March, included in the budget papers was a so-called balanced budget plan where the government claimed to plan to balance the budget by, I believe, 2018. Unfortunately, included in the fine print in the budget papers document was a statement that the only way this can be accomplished and achieved is if the government holds its operating expenditures to below 2% a year; 1.9% is, I believe, the number that's in the budget papers. We know that in the past, the government, as I said earlier, has increased spending on average during its term of office by 7% a year. So you wonder, how can this government possibly hold the line on spending such that it holds spending increases to lessen the rate of inflation, and what would that mean? How would this government, with its propensity to spend money like there's no tomorrow, ever acquire the discipline that would be necessary to hold their spending increases to the rate of inflation?

That question has been raised many times in the Legislature by my colleague the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, who is our party's finance critic, and a number of us continue to raise it. The government was very fortunate that, by and large, the press, on the day of the budget, in the immediate aftermath, reported the government's statement that they planned to balance the budget by 2018 as if it was factual. Unfortunately, it's actually fantasy, not fact, and we will continue to point out that particular issue.

I had an interesting meeting on Friday in my constituency office with members of the Christian Farmers of Wellington county. We had a very interesting and informative meeting. They gave me a number of documents to peruse, and I looked at them over the weekend. I just want to continue to push on their behalf this afternoon to remind the government of the need for risk management programming that works for farmers. We need to ensure that we support our beef producers, our hog producers and our horticulture growers. At the same time, I realize that there are calls upon the federal government to participate, and I would add my voice to those calls, because I think that when farmers are in trouble, all

governments should work together across party lines. Members of the Legislature should work together, across party lines, towards solutions. This government has to recognize that farmers feed cities, and where we can help farm families, we need to step forward when there is a need.

Farmers in my riding continue to tell me about the need for support based on rising input costs and the continued expansion of government regulation, which are causing them difficulty. I would recommend to the government members to look at what the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario are advocating, as well as the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

1540

Shortly, we're going to be engaging in yet another year of pre-budget public hearings through the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, and all of the organizations that have an interest in provincial government policy, hopefully, will have the opportunity to come forward and express their views. Those hearings are very important, and I would hope that the government will monitor them very closely and carefully and endeavour to bring forward policies in the upcoming provincial budget that are reflective of what they hear during the course of those hearings.

Again, I would encourage them to listen to the general farm organizations, as well as the commodity groups—and not just to listen, but to follow up, to support the minister. I hear the Minister of Agriculture is endeavouring to speak on behalf of farm families within the government caucus and within the cabinet, and I hear that, in many cases, she's not being supported by her colleagues. There's a lack of recognition on the part of many of the members on the opposite side. They don't seem to understand the severity of the issue and the importance of immediate action.

I would say again that I believe the federal government needs to participate in the solution. Certainly that has always been my commitment and my statement, that we need to ensure that governments at all levels work together towards solutions when it comes to a crisis in agriculture.

In my own riding of Wellington–Halton Hills that I'm so privileged to represent, we have been asking for years for improvements to Highway 6 south of Guelph, the Morrison bypass, as it's known. This is a project that has been talked about literally for a generation. Some of the locals have told me that it has been a subject of discussion in the local area for some 30 years. In my role and responsibility as the MPP for Wellington–Halton Hills, I will continue to advocate to get this project on the five-year plan so as to ensure that highway safety and improved traffic efficiency is something that we can expect and look forward to.

I'm pleased that the Minister of Transportation is in the House today, and I'm glad she took note of what I said. I note that the member from Guelph is here, and I know she's interested in this issue as the former parliamentary assistant. I'm glad she has taken note. Both of

these members are well aware of the importance of this project.

There are a number of newly elected members of Puslinch township council who I know want me to continue to advocate for this, as the former councillors did. I know that there will be upcoming opportunities for meetings. I anticipate and expect that the Minister of Transportation will be at the ROMA-Good Roads Conference in February, most likely, as the minister normally is. I would hope that if a meeting request comes in from the township of Puslinch and other municipalities in Wellington-Halton Hills, she would set aside some time to listen to their concerns. But I'm quite sure there will be a request for the meeting with the minister coming forward from the township of Puslinch council. Certainly the need has been well documented, the work has been done, and the community is ready to move forward.

I would be remiss if I did not also again talk about the health care needs in our riding, the hospital projects that I've talked about so many times during the course of this fall sitting and going back years—actually going back seven years, since this government was elected. It was just before the change of government that I was first informed that the Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus had an ambitious redevelopment plan, and as that plan has evolved, I've continued to bring it forward in this House to try to nudge it along. There's no one in our community who expects that a new hospital will be built next year, but everyone in our community that I've talked to, or the vast majority, believes that we should be allowed to move forward with the planning. We know there's a multi-stage planning process and there have been a number of twists and turns along the way, but the fact is that our community has raised \$15 million in pledges and contributions, cash in the bank, and we should be allowed to move forward to the next stage of planning, which would allow us to go to the functional program stage. There would be a planning grant that would go with that. I think 15% of the total estimated cost of the project is what we would expect. We would hope that, in the coming months, the government would see fit to allow that to happen.

I realize the government has something like 130 hospital projects—at least 130 that the Ministry of Health knows about—and that they are in communities all across the province. I assume that there are more requests for money than there is money, but certainly we know that the government is expected to be spending \$2 billion this year, as it did last year, on hospital capital projects. In Wellington-Halton Hills, all we want is our fair share. So again I would continue to ask the Minister of Health and the government members to support this need in our community.

I'm also privileged to represent the community of Georgetown in Halton Hills. I was informed in the summertime that the hospital had an idea for a capital project as well, to accommodate the new CT scanner that has been approved for the Georgetown hospital. They were also looking to renovate the emergency department

at this hospital to make it more efficient, because it is currently seeing far more patients attending at the emergency department than it was ever built for.

Halton Hills, of course, being part of Halton region, is in an area of the province that is experiencing considerable growth. Although the town of Halton Hills is trying to ensure that the growth is moderate, growth pressures continue unabated because of the proximity of our community within the GTA as well as close to the city of Toronto.

They have, in fact, informed me that they are looking for a small capital grant, if they could receive one. Again, they're very reasonable, very understanding; they know there is a lot of demand for this kind of program within the Ministry of Health. But at the same time they need answers as to whether or not the provincial government would be prepared to fund it. They need a firm and definitive response to make their own plans and decide to what extent they're going to have to move forward based on local fundraising, and I support their efforts. Given the fact that I was informed of their needs, I certainly wanted to make sure that members of the Legislature were well aware of them. We continue to respectfully request the support of the provincial government for those projects.

I must return to the Auditor General's report, because I think that is the issue of the day, and I would hope that government members will be giving careful review and serious consideration to the various recommendations, because many of these recommendations are very, very important to the people of Ontario.

I look at chapter 3, the Family Responsibility Office. For some time, complaints and concerns about the Family Responsibility Office have probably been the most significant concern in my constituency office, in terms of people calling with a problem with government: not getting an answer, mix-ups with funding. And it's not just the people dependent on receiving the funding. Sometimes it's those who have support obligations and are supporting their family through the Family Responsibility Office.

I would say that obviously there are many, many thousands of real families out here who are dependent on the government to do this job effectively, to ensure they have enough money coming in on a monthly basis to pay their hydro bills, their HST, their property taxes, their grocery bills—all these day-to-day things.

Of course, where there has been a family breakup and there's a single mother trying to raise children on her own, and in some cases, perhaps, a father trying to raise their children—he may have custody—obviously money is tight, budgets are tight and household budgets are challenged and stretched. So, to the extent that the provincial government can do a good job with the Family Responsibility Office and ensure that families are supported the way they should be, the way the courts have ordered and the way that obligations have been determined, that is certainly in the public interest. If the Family Responsibility Office is not being administered the way it should be, all of us should be seriously concerned.

That's just one example, but if you look at the other recommendations in the report, obviously the discharge of hospital patients is very important to the health care system. Going on to home care services, all of us should recognize their importance: to ensure that the health care system is being managed properly in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

My time is winding down, Madam Speaker, but I want to thank you very much for listening to my comments this afternoon. I really do appreciate it.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: I've had the advantage, now, of listening to a couple of speakers this afternoon. I want to just make a few comments regarding the speech of my colleague from the Conservative Party. One is this: I think there is a certain irony today, one that perhaps government members don't enjoy, that at the same time they want to talk about their so-called good government, the Auditor General produces his report, which goes on, page after page, chapter after chapter, about how little good government is being provided by this particular government.

1550

As my honourable colleague has pointed out, the Auditor General starts with the fiasco of casino gaming regulation; discharge of hospital patients while they are still ill; the problems with home care; and hospital emergency departments, the overloading and the long waits, the unbelievable waits. The fact is that infrastructure money is being spent by this government with really, in some cases, no consideration of the merit of the project. Just shovel the money out the door as quickly as you can.

An example of that, of course, is the not-so-smart meters. So far, people in Ontario are paying about \$1.5 billion for the not-so-smart meters, and people who work in the electricity system tell us that they don't work very well. Indeed, as the temperature heads toward 10 below, we find that they don't work at all at temperatures below 30 below. Is that an example of good government?

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I've noticed that we've started to stray a little bit from what actually the bill is all about, which is a whole series of housekeeping amendments that amend various acts to bring them up to date. So in that spirit, and of course being as how it's close to Christmastime, let me add a few thoughts of my own to that.

My home was the very first one in the neighbourhood of Churchill Meadows to have a smart meter installed. Long before our utility—in fact, it still isn't billing on time of use, but we were actually able, at our home, to watch our energy consumption patterns and to think to ourselves, “Whenever this does begin, what are the things that we can do that are actually going to make a difference to us?”

At our home, we figured, “What are the real consumers of electricity?” Well, there's our refrigerator, and

there's not a whole lot we can do about that, except that neither of us are at home during the day so it doesn't really make a big draw during the day.

What are the ones that really consume energy? Well, there's your dishwasher. I showed my lovely other half, Andrea, just where you can find the button that you can hit to delay it for two hours. So we go to bed and at about 12 midnight, it starts up and all the dishes are clean in the morning.

You have the same option on your dryer. You can put a load of clothes in at 7 or 8 o'clock. You can put them in the dryer and you can make all of your settings, and you can set it for delay.

With the lowest-price period starting now at 7 o'clock rather than 9 o'clock, for most people this means that whenever you're finished dinner, you're now on the cheapest electricity that there is. What it has done for us is that it has taught us how we use energy, and it has shown us how we can change our consumption pattern.

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

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I appreciate the opportunity to speak about Bill 110 and comment on the comments of the member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

He spoke about a number of issues, whether it's Highway 6, the Morriston bypass; or the spending habits of the current government and how they relate to good government—or the lack thereof, I guess, in the comments—where over \$2 million was being spent each and every hour, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

He also spoke about health care needs in his riding, how a hospital was needed and how there was limited availability for that.

The member also spoke about the Auditor General's report and how, in relation to good government, this may or may not play out in the best interests of the public at large. When you look at the Auditor General's report, you see that 50%, or a little bit over 50%, of the reports that have come out, that the auditor had to review, effectively deal with health care and/or education.

There was a private member's bill that came forward before that established a new committee that essentially tried to account for just those two specific areas, health care and education. When effectively over 64.8% of the provincial budget goes towards health care and education, certainly I would think that we would need a committee that focuses solely on health care and education so that we can get regular updates in this House.

Realistically, all governments try to do the best that they can in various aspects and everybody has a different perspective, but the auditor, in his great work, comes forward and reviews a lot of these. This would be an opportunity for that as well.

Also, the member spoke about the paying of HST and the impact on energy bills, and how single mothers may have difficulty with a lot of those aspects. Quite frankly, there needs to be a lot of adjustment done towards that issue, particularly in areas like mine, where individuals who are on salary or get laid off become defiant or

delinquent in their payments because they don't have funds coming in.

These are all small sorts of things that will make good government and move forward. When we have such a wide range, we need to look at many of them.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Apparently, the members on the government side not only don't want to speak, they don't even want to make comments on the speech by my colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills. Well, I know there was one member, but I guess the rest of them have drifted off early for the Christmas recess.

Or perhaps they really are actually ashamed. They are ashamed of the bill and the audacity, but also, I might say, as the member for Welland says, the creativity of the Liberal spin doctors who came up with the name for this bill, calling it “good government.” It's kind of the oxymoron of all oxymorons, when they're going to call a bill after good government, knowing that for seven years they have delivered the exact opposite. For the last seven years, people have been yearning for good government in the province of Ontario, because that's actually why they elected Dalton McGuinty and his party. You see, they promised the people in Ontario that that's exactly what they would deliver: good government.

When we look at this bill, it's kind of shallow and kind of hollow. There's not much there. A lot of pages; a lot of ink. They've used a lot of ink, but it's not really doing a whole lot to help the people in the province of Ontario who are suffering so much.

As my colleague from Halton Hills has indicated, when you travel across this province, everywhere you go there are stories of difficulty, and it's not difficulty brought on by the individual themselves, it's difficulty that has been brought on by the policies of this government. We could talk about energy, and I'm not going to be able to get into it because I'm going to run out of time, but there will be another time. But this bill is a bit of a farce.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Wellington–Halton Hills has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to thank the member for Kenora–Rainy River, the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, the member for Oshawa and the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, all of whom commented on my remarks.

I also, as I said earlier, want to continue to focus on the Auditor General's report. I would commend the reading of it to all members of the Legislature. I would hope that everyone will take the opportunity, this evening and over the next few days, to look at it, because I think it is certainly important that this Legislature discharges, really, its most important function, which is to carefully monitor the expenditures in the ministries. That is one where I think we've, to some degree as a Legislature, and perhaps it's the case across Canada with other Legislatures—I'm not sure; maybe the House of Commons.

But the fact is, one of our most important responsibilities is to carefully monitor the expenditures of ministries, and I think that we need to collectively do a better job of it.

Certainly, I know that the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, who chairs the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, understands the importance of that even though he accused me of putting the government members to sleep with my remarks earlier in the afternoon. I do want to compliment him on the outstanding work that he does as the chairman of the public accounts committee. For approximately a year, I had the opportunity to serve with him. He does his job in a non-partisan fashion. I think that every member of the public accounts committee over the course of the last number of years would certainly confirm that. The committee works together in a relatively non-partisan fashion to do its job and to do its responsibility.

The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills has been here for 33 years. He is a pillar of this Legislature and I certainly wish him well in all of his future endeavours. I enjoy working with him, I admire him a great deal, and I want to congratulate him for the work that he does in this Legislature, and again to suggest to all members of this House how important it is that we review the auditor's report, that we take those comments and concerns seriously and that we work together to ensure the expenditure of taxpayers' money is done in a better way in the future.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'm pleased to be able to participate in this debate today. As I said in my comments a few minutes ago, there is a certain irony about this bill being debated on this day and the auditor bringing down his 2010 annual report. The title of this bill—or shall I say the mistle of this bill?—is An Act to promote good government. The auditor's report could easily have the title “The failure to provide good government.” That is one of the ironies of today.

The other irony we note is that government members, perhaps because they're embarrassed, don't want to stand and speak about this bill. There's been an hour of speech from my colleague Mr. Kormos from the NDP and then a speech by one of my colleagues from the Conservative caucus, yet we've failed to hear from any member of the government on this issue. There's always a certain irony when the government puts forward a bill they call good government, and yet government members refuse to get on their feet to speak about the bill. As I say, I think I know why.

The auditor's report provides us chapter and verse of what is going on here, so I want to refer at length to the auditor's report, because it is, after all, 447 pages of critique and description of how this government is failing to provide good government.

There's probably no better place to start than with the Family Responsibility Office. The reason that the Family Responsibility Office is a good place to start is because

the Auditor General examined what was happening at the Family Responsibility Office in 2003, when this government assumed office. In his report in 2003, the auditor identified serious problems at the Family Responsibility Office. Now he comes back after seven years of the McGuinty government and he looks at it again, and his conclusions are oh, so telling.

He says, first of all, that the problems that he identified in 2003, when the McGuinty Liberals became the government of Ontario, continue to exist today. In fact, there's much evidence that the problem has grown worse.

Let me give you some examples. About \$1.6 billion of payments that should be made, mostly to women and children living in poverty, are not being made. When those women contact the Family Responsibility Office to say to them, "What are we to do?" only one in four of those cases is acted upon in each year. Imagine, only one in four—and these are women and children in dire need. For many, if the support payment doesn't arrive, you can't pay the hydro bill; you can't pay the heating bill; you can't pay the rent; you can't put food on the table; you can't ensure that the kids have clothes to go to school in. But under this government, only one in four of those calls is responded to, as the Auditor General has found. Indeed, over 80% of the calls that are made by people never get through to the government's call centre. Imagine being in that kind of need: one day, two days, three days away from not being able to pay the bill. You're told to call the government's 1-800 number, and 80% of the calls don't get through.

There are 91,000 action memos outstanding, the Auditor General found. Let's just think about that: 91,000 cases where nothing's happening.

The Auditor General finds that \$21 million has been spent on a new information technology system, and in his words, it has been wasted—\$21 million out the door; there's nothing to show for it, while women and children who are in dire need face evermore difficult circumstances.

The Auditor General calls for more aggressive enforcement; better case management; yes, improved information technology, after a \$21-million failure; and the need to communicate with those people who need these services. This is after seven years—seven years, and the situation has not gotten better; it has gotten worse.

Over 100,000 Ontario families, mainly sole-support women and their children, are waiting for support payments and being forced to survive without the billions of dollars they are owed and have a right to receive. And, as the Auditor General reports, everyone in the province is being forced to pay for this government's failure because over 20,000 of these families have been forced on to social assistance because of this failure. I don't think a clearer comparison could be attained anywhere else.

The Auditor General reviewed this organization in 2003 when the McGuinty Liberals assumed office, and here he is in 2010 saying, "It hasn't gotten any better; it has gotten worse." These are amongst the most vulnerable women and children in this province. As he points

out, 100,000 Ontario families are waiting for support payments, and 20,000 of those families have been forced to social assistance because of this government's failure to provide good government.

But the Auditor General does not rest there. He goes on to look at the discharge of hospital patients, and let me tell you, this is an important issue virtually everywhere in Ontario. He points out that 50,000 Ontario patients were waiting in hospital in 2009 to be discharged because of delays in arranging post-discharge health care: problems with communicating discharge plans to family and caregivers; failures of the community care access centres; improper management of post-discharge care, like medication management plans; and lack of oversight to ensure that the needs of patients are met. I think most people would find that absolutely astounding. Yet, as the Auditor General points out, this is an issue that is not being resolved; it's a serious issue that seems to be growing more serious.

He goes on: hospital emergency departments. Since April 2008, emergency room wait times have not significantly improved or met so-called provincial targets. What are the problems? One of the problems is about ensuring adequate nursing staff in emergency rooms, and he points out huge costs because of overtime pay that has to be paid because of the inadequate nursing supply. He points out that lower-acuity patients make up about 30% of emergency room visits and could and should be treated elsewhere.

I suspect that I, like other MPPs, have some insight into this because I hear from people all the time who say, "I would like to be able to go to the family doctor, I would like to be able to go to the clinic, but I'm told I have to wait three months to get an appointment." Imagine being ill today and being told, "Well, if you want an appointment with the nurse practitioner or your family physician, I'm sorry, the best we can do is three months from now." So what happens? Those people go to the emergency room. It's their only option in many cases.

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This is not, by any definition, good government. This is not, by any definition, an example of what a good government would do.

The Auditor General goes on and says that this government's much-boasted about pay-for-results program has been a failure. As he points out, the hospital that received the most money from this government's boasted-of pay-for-results program in year two hasn't shown any positive results. He points out that there are huge problems with inconsistent clinical practice; huge problems with coordination between departments; and little coordination between ambulances, emergency response systems and the emergency room. The government has been asked many times to streamline the system, but nothing has been done since 2003.

Again, how could any government boast about good government when these kinds of situations are happening?

Then, there is the very serious issue of home care services. Some community care access centres have patients waiting on lists for care for as long as 262 days. Imagine you're discharged from the hospital, your physician says you need home care and you're told, "Well, you have to wait for 262 days." Some patients are waiting as long as 15 months for an assessment—15 months. Home care services are still not being provided based on need. In many cases, they're based upon something called historical allocation—huge inconsistencies across the province and a lack of service guidelines.

Again, how could any government come to the Legislature today and boast about good government and boast about a bill called "An Act to promote good government" when these are the kind of things that the Auditor General notes in his report?

Then, there is the issue of organ donation. We've heard a lot about organ donation in the news lately. We've heard a lot because there are many people who need the donation of an organ—a heart, a liver, a lung—if they are to continue to be able to live. We know that there are many who want or are willing to donate their organs should something unfortunate happen to them, but what the Auditor General notes is that this government has completely dropped the ball. He reports there are 61 hospitals that have the capability to be part of the Trillium Gift of Life Network—in other words, the capability to help with organ donor challenges. However, while there are 61 that have the capability, only 21 are currently participating in the Trillium Gift of Life Network. The Auditor General reports that in over 40% of the cases reviewed, organs were not allocated to the highest-needs patients. Imagine that.

The science, the medicine, tells us who the highest-needs patients are, but this government seemingly, while it boasts that it spends billions, can't organize the system so that that precious organ, whether it be a heart, a lung, a liver, can go to the patient who all the evidence says needs it the most.

There are problems with old health cards, and that less than 1% of the people with those cards have signed up to be a donor, as opposed to the 27% of Ontarians with new health cards who have signed up to be a donor.

This is not rocket science. These are practical, specific, concrete things that could be done to improve the situation, that could be done to provide good government. But what does the Auditor General point out? It's simply not being done; it's not happening.

The Auditor General goes on and points out that there are huge variations in the wait-lists for organ donations, and there are huge variations in care, depending on the region. I know, as many people from northern Ontario have said, it depends on what region of Ontario you're from. What region of Ontario you're from determines, to a large degree, the quality of the health care that you may or may not receive.

The Auditor General concludes it is well known that an online registry for organ donation would vastly improve the participation of Ontarians in this important program, yet this government has made absolutely no

movement on this. I wonder if this is one of the things that's being saved for a pre-election announcement. But, as the Auditor General points out, this has been shouting out. This is something that is so obvious and so practical and concrete and specific to do, yet this government has done nothing.

The Auditor General points out that Ontario is lagging far behind other jurisdictions. In Ontario, only 17% of Ontarians over the age of 16 are registered as organ donors or potential organ donors. In the United Kingdom, this number is 30%, and in the United States, it is 37%.

These are practical, specific, concrete things that could be done, should be done, need to be done, that would be a part of good government, but it's not happening under this government—a government that has the audacity to bring a bill before the Legislature and claim that it is about providing good government.

The Auditor General then moves on to waste diversion and points out that Ontario families are doing their part to recycle and reduce. In fact, what he finds is that Ontario families want to do more. But he also finds that the corporate sector is getting off virtually scot-free—another indication of the failure of the McGuinty government's self-regulation approach with industry, and another example of a failure to provide good government.

As he says, Ontario needs clear waste diversion targets backed up with fines—not a wish list, hoping that the corporate sector might do something right, but clear targets, backed up by fines and enforcement. What is the result of that? Only one quarter of the non-hazardous waste is being diverted from landfills, way below this government's much-boasted-about target of 60% by 2008. Residential waste diversion has improved, but there's a drop in industrial waste diversion to 12%.

What are the main problems? Inadequate funding for municipal blue box programs, government failure to enforce regulations, lack of landfill capacity, and a lack of organic waste composting programs.

Once again, the Auditor General goes out of his way to point out the specific, concrete, practical things that could be done in this area to provide good government, but then also points out this is a government that's not doing any of those things.

As he says, many of these solutions would not cost a lot of money. What's involved, what's needed, is the will on the part of the government to do something about it, particularly with the corporate sector; a government that is prepared to set aggressive targets and then a government that is prepared to set aggressive targets and then a government that is prepared to enforce those aggressive targets. The failure to provide those things is another example of the failure of good government. So it's no surprise that government members don't want to get up on their feet today and talk about their act to provide good government. The Auditor General tells us there is a failure to provide good government under this particular government.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: Let's talk about what good government does in western Mississauga. Seven years ago, we had some real, fundamental problems in delivering health care. Our government worked with me and my colleagues in Mississauga and Brampton, and we were able to open up the William Osler centre, a building that had some real structural problems. We got the job done. We got it opened on time; we got it opened on budget. We were able to begin work on Credit Valley's phase 2 project, which is coming to fruition ahead of schedule and under budget this winter. We were able to complete work on a major capital expansion at the Trillium Health Centre, which was completed ahead of schedule and within budget. We've been able to provide more facilities for Mississauga people, in probably the fastest-growing area of Ontario to receive health care, because of measures of good government such as our government has brought forth and which are elaborated in this particular bill.

We are hoping, in years to come, to be building an ambulatory surgery centre at Credit Valley Hospital. Indeed, the feasibility study money has been approved for this facility. This means that the some 80% of hospital surgical procedures that at the moment don't need to be done in a facility that has access to intensive care, where you really don't need a lot of pre-op or post-op, can be done in a separate facility where you walk in and have your surgery done; procedures that take some 15 to maybe 45 minutes today, that at the time when we grew up you'd be planning to stay at the hospital overnight.

This is the type of thing that good government brings to growing cities like Mississauga and Brampton, like York and Durham regions and like Toronto. That's a good reason why this bill needs the support of this House. It's a good reason to get it passed.

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

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Just to follow up on the member from Mississauga–Streetsville's comments about day surgery: There are a lot of problems in the health care sector. What I'm hearing from the clinics is that they would like to provide a lot of this service, yet the hospitals are saying the difficulty is, yes, it's a service that can be provided there, unless there are difficulties during the operation. That's where a hospital all of a sudden has to drop whatever it's doing in order to accommodate individuals who are coming in for those simple, out-patient services for those clinical aspects.

It's a large and a complicated field, and we have to hear from all sides on this. As we all know, there are three sides to every story. Quite frankly, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville spoke about one aspect: providing that service elsewhere. But when you hear the other side of the story, what are you going to do when a surgery doesn't go quite right? You don't have the facilities there, and you're not prepared for all aspects of it.

We, as individuals, have to make sure, as in the members' motto, that we listen to the other side. With that, I

look forward to more debate and to hearing about good government and the wide range of issues they talk about here.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: The member spoke about the foul-up of organ donation by this government, the failure of the McGuinty Liberal government to create a registry, the failure of the Liberal McGuinty government to create a meaningful way of giving people the choices, as they're currently required in this ridiculous presumed denial regime that the McGuinty government persists in maintaining, notwithstanding that most of the world recognizes that people want their organs to be used after they're dead and they no longer have any use for them.

One can only wonder how many people died: how many people on those lengthy waiting lists for organs died, how many children died. All of us, probably—I know I certainly have; I know you have—have worked with people in need of an organ or people on a waiting list and their families, these kids, where they carry pagers with them, beeper-style pagers, because they have to be available at a minute's notice. Every day they wake up wondering whether today's going to be the day, because every day that they wake up is one day closer to dying—not like it's one day closer to dying for you and me; it's one day measured in terms of months or even weeks. Just imagine—never mind an adult—a kid who puts that pager on, makes sure the batteries are good, because you wouldn't want to miss a page, makes sure that it's turned on, hoping, because I suppose that's all you can do. Some of these kids are incredibly brave, just inspirational. What have we done to those kids, and how many kids died in the course of the last year or two years or three years because we didn't have the registry and we didn't have a presumed consent regime?

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I've heard a lot of bashing about FRO in the House this afternoon, so let me say this: I appreciate very much the work that the auditor has done and his good recommendations on how to improve the service at FRO. Let me say what we have done to take action. Every time the auditor comes up with a report, I have to say, we have taken action. We have hired 101 new staff at FRO since 2003, contrary to the Conservatives, where they cut staff by 41% when they were in power. We have increased funding at FRO by 55% since 2003; they cut funding by 30% in one year alone when they were in power.

We have introduced strict financial oversight with the time frame. We have modernized the computer system. I know that they are developing a new computer system. The AG repeated that many, many times in the past. What did the Conservatives do after the Auditor General recommended to replace the computer system twice? They did nothing. We are replacing it, but it takes time to be put in place.

We have also adopted a one-on-one case management approach with clients. We have modernized the tele-

phone system, which is an improvement. The best test is that I monitor on a monthly basis the complaints coming to your constituency offices, the MPPs' constituency offices, and they have reduced drastically in the past two years.

We will continue to improve the system.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member for Kenora–Rainy River—the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I was just recognizing the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, who stood up.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I just want to—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Might I stop you? We've already had our four questions and comments. I thought you were standing on a point of privilege or order. Sorry.

The member from Kenora–Rainy River has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I think we should all be thankful for the Auditor General's work, because he goes into chapter and verse about how good government is not being provided. I recited a few examples here today.

I could have dealt with the sorry situation of what's happening in terms of school safety, because the Auditor General delves into that. Or I could have also mentioned the \$500-million backlog of repairs and refurbishing of our college system. Or I could have dealt with the shocking things that are happening at MPAC, where literally hundreds of thousands of Ontarians have the experience that their property is being overassessed by MPAC, and the refusal of that government agency to do anything about it. Or I could have spoken at length about the sorry situation in terms of casino gaming regulation and the degree to which, again, some of the most vulnerable Ontarians are being taken advantage of in terms of online gaming.

I could have also addressed the review of government advertising, which again is something that the Auditor General criticizes at length.

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But I think the point here is this: that rather than patting itself on the back and bringing in a piece of empty legislation called "An Act to promote good government," this government should be doing what the Auditor General recommends. He provides practical, concrete and specific things that could be done to provide good government and that don't cost a lot of money.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure for me to join in the debate this afternoon about Bill 110. I think the previous speaker, the member for Kenora–Rainy River, talked about a very interesting point: the fact that today we're getting the Auditor General's report and we're sitting here in the House having a debate about good government.

I was on the general government committee for the one-day hearing, and this is the binder that I got on the day of the clause-by-clause debate. It was funny; when I opened it up in committee one thing struck me, and it was the compendium at the very front of the binder that says, "This bill proposes to amend a number of statutes in the interest of making Ontario more attractive to business while protecting the public interest." Isn't that just lovely?

When you go through this binder, it goes through the seven schedules and talks about some of the bills and some of the acts that are going to be amended. Really, for the average person to look at this bill, especially when it's named "An Act to promote good government"—I guess many would scratch their heads. I remember when I first looked at the bill in committee. I just picked one of the clauses out, and I think the member for Willowdale touched on it when he was speaking at the very start. You look at some of these sections and they're real head-scratchers.

One of the ones that came back to me, because I used to work in a constituency office for my predecessor, now Senator Runciman: I can remember every year, when the ads came out for the justice of the peace—I'm a newspaper guy, right? I worked for a newspaper for 13 years. I remember seeing these ads, and I know that they're not cheap. You look at ads in every region of the province advertising for JPs. I could run the numbers, Mr. Speaker—and welcome to the chair. You start looking at thousands of dollars, and invariably you get phone calls. You get phone calls asking for more information, what the jurisdiction is, where you are going, and then you find out that there wasn't a vacancy. You start to think, how many thousands of dollars? What was the money, the taxpayers' money, that was spent to advertise positions, supposed vacancies, that didn't exist? Closing that loophole, does that constitute good government? To me there was waste for seven years, or whenever the bill was put forward. You'd get phone calls, and you'd sit there and you'd say, "Why are we spending this money when we don't need to?" That was just one.

I guess what really took me aback was when we had the discussion at committee for the hearing that took place on November 22. We had a number of deputations from people in the restaurant business. They were restaurant owners, but there were also a number of workers. I was pretty surprised. The very first group that came to speak to us at committee, some of them did travel a long distance. Some of them were from eastern Ontario and were close to my riding. They represented members like the member for Ottawa Centre and the Minister of Community and Social Services; some of her constituents came to committee. The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: There were some people from London who came and visited us that day, workers in the restaurant industry; as well, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo and also the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

There were people who came right at the very start of the committee, and they weren't necessarily owners of

businesses, although we did speak to a number of restaurateurs. These were workers who felt that they needed to come to address Bill 110 as it is related to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. They represented an extremely vulnerable group whose consequences, because of actions by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, were fairly significant. They looked at and they brought forward issues of the closure of establishments by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission and the fact that many of these innocent employees were left scrambling to pay their bills, and the fear on sort of a day-to-day basis of having no job. These were hard-working taxpayers, many of whom make minimum wage, who work long hours, who work weekends, who work late nights, who were basically at the mercy of bureaucrats at the Alcohol and Gaming Commission.

It was unbelievable, some of the stories. We heard from people who would definitely have difficulty putting their children in daycare because the licensed establishments that they worked at would be closed and shut down. There was no opportunity to deal with fines. The closure would result in them basically not having any income.

We heard from students. There was one student from the University of Waterloo—I'm proud to say that that was my university, and I can remember at a young age being a dishwasher and a busboy. I told them the story that if I dropped a tray of glasses, I went from being a busboy back to dishwasher, and then I'd have to get back in the restaurant's good graces to allow me to go back on the floor.

The issue became that some of these people, some of these students who worked long hours and weekends—at minimum wage, many of them—would have no way to be able to pay their tuition because of a closure. So we looked at the fact that this Bill 110 didn't deal with the fact that by closing establishments, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission was throwing mothers, students and employees of all ages out on the street.

It was interesting. One of the people, Bill Seigfried, quoted a 2006 study by the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council that found the following statistics:

"Food and beverage services employed the youngest labour force, with 48.1% of all employees being between the ages of 15 and 24. Over 60% of those workers were part-time, and a full 28.4% of those workers were pursuing higher education while working part-time in the industry."

We heard from a lot of restaurants that day. We heard many from the city of Ottawa, very close to my riding of Leeds-Grenville, talking about the fact that this Alcohol and Gaming Commission could shut them down at any moment. There were no issues to negotiate, there was no education that was involved, but there was a lot of enforcement. When we brought those recommendations forward at committee, the government said, "Well, we'll take them under advisement. We'll sit there and we'll have a look at them at some future point down the road." Yet delegation after delegation talked about the issues. It

really gave the government an opportunity to provide good government, to take what was said to us that day in committee and apply it to make the act better, to address the issues of those restaurant owners, to address the issues of those vulnerable workers. But the government made no effort at committee to take those deputations and put them in print. It was a sad thing that day. I really couldn't believe it.

If you look at the name of the Good Government Act, it's far from being good government and it's far from providing good government for Ontarians. Many people have shown this Auditor General's report that we put forward today. The timing couldn't be better, because we're sitting here talking about good government, and yet there are so many issues in this province, so many issues. I hear from the other side all the time, "Well, we're putting things in place."

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I sat at the estimates committee and talked to the Minister of Health that day about how we could let something like eHealth happen twice. The answer was, "We've put things in place so it wouldn't happen." But that's what you said the first time that it happened. That's what you said when there was \$1 billion wasted that could have gone to front-line health care.

So now we have the Auditor General's report today, and you look at things like MPAC, which I know some other members have mentioned today. I can't believe that even after the government said they were going to stop those practices, that they were never going to happen again, we're seeing another agency where untendered contracts and outrageous expenses are being incurred. In fact, the AG characterized that it's just like eHealth. But again, I'm sure that the answers from the members opposite are going to be, "But, you know, we're glad that the AG told us, and it's never going to happen again." I'm sure that's going to be the speech that we hear over and over again in days to come.

I especially look at some of the issues with MPAC. You look at the fact that there were items—I'm seeing TaylorMade golf clubs, Nintendo Wii consoles and iPod touch models as promotional gifts that appear without any documentation as to who got them or why, as part of their mandate, they were provided. It makes no sense.

The auditor found that contracts for just under \$100,000 were awarded to three different contractors with little or no supporting documentation. Does that sound familiar to anybody? Does that sound familiar based on the scandals that we've seen from this government to date? It's shameful.

Another area that the Auditor General talked about was the discharge of patients. I could go on and on about local health integration networks, and I'm going to give you an example in a few moments of some of the things that go on in my own riding. But again, discharge of hospital patients: One in six patients in hospitals shouldn't even be there. The total days for ALC patients has increased 75% over the last five years, and it's now about 16% of the total days patients are hospitalized in Ontario.

The Auditor General talks about hospital emergency departments and the fact that half of ER visits were made by patients with less-urgent needs. Some patients were waiting 26 hours. That's disgraceful. That's not good government. You should be ashamed.

Home care services: 10,000 people are currently on waiting lists of up to 262 days for home care services. I've met with the LHINs in my constituency office, and I've challenged them because there's this perception in my riding of Leeds–Grenville that some of the home care services, some of the respite services, just aren't there and that our area has fewer services than other areas within our own LHINs, and we're covered by two LHINs. I don't think that's lucky that we've got two LHINs covering Leeds–Grenville. It's bad enough to have one, let alone two.

I remember meeting with them. Specifically, I talked to both the Champlain and the South East. I remember saying in a number of sessions with the South East LHIN, "Prove to me that our services are just as good as those in Kingston or those in Belleville," and, you know, they've never come back to me. These are issues like home care, that the Auditor General has talked about, and hospital emergency departments. I'd love finally, at some point, to get an answer to compare services in my riding to others in the LHIN's jurisdiction. I'm sick and tired of asking and getting no response.

Another area in the Auditor General's report is certainly near and dear to my heart because of my former background in municipal government, and that's infrastructure stimulus funding. First of all, the actual level of job creation is interesting. It's not surprising that it's not anywhere near what the government first said it would be. The Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure promised about 44,000 jobs, and in this program it only shows about 7,000, so there you go. There's the creative accounting from the other side.

The other thing was that there seems to be no limit on some applications. At the time, facing tight deadlines, there were a number of bids that were put forward, and the rush to the March 2011 deadline was difficult for a number of municipalities. So it's not surprising that there were some with this government—because they seem to be fast and loose—where projects were approved with no documentation. In some cases, even their own experts have ignored some of their comments. In the days and weeks ahead—I appreciate we're getting close to Christmas—I'd like that the government and the minister account for some of these issues.

Again, on the municipal side, waste disposal and diversion is something where the government talks the talk, but when you look at the numbers and what the Auditor General says, there are certainly some issues. In 2004 the government set a goal of diverting 60% of Ontario's waste from being disposed of in landfills by the end of 2008, and as we can see today, the combined diversion rate is a dismal 24%. In fact, today it took the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills to present a bill regarding organic waste, given that the Auditor General

has counted the fact that this government has been so far off in meeting their targets.

Again, when you look at this Auditor General's report, it's not good government. You're not providing the citizens of Ontario with good government. People who came to the general government committee said that to you and you ignored them. People are telling people on this side of the House every single day that there are issues, and now the Auditor General's report on a variety of issues—again, the minister stood up earlier about the Family Responsibility Office. I know there are a number of members on this side of the House who deal on a daily basis with the FRO. The deficiencies that the Auditor General talked about in 2003 he is bringing to the floor again today.

The government seems to have an interesting way of naming bills. This bill, as we said earlier, is An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts. It really is an act that amends a number of acts through seven schedules, but it could very easily have the name "Good Government" removed. I think it was the member for Welland who said we should throw out the name altogether; he brought that up at committee, and I supported him on his amendment. Really, this government is great at naming bills, but certainly they're sadly lacking at putting them into practice.

I can't wait for them to talk about MPAC. I know that our leader, Tim Hudak, brought a number of questions forward this morning that remain unanswered. I mentioned the issues we've got with LHINs just in my own riding.

I'm the newest MPP in this place, but I tried to hit the ground running when I was elected in March and I've tried to travel around my riding extensively to listen to what people are saying. When I was at a couple of Santa Claus parades on the weekend, one in particular on Saturday in Athens, a small village that I know the member for Peterborough loves—I know he loves Athens—they were aware of my private member's motion that the government shot down in flames this morning. I got an extremely great response from people that we on this side, in our PC caucus, are trying to fight to lower those energy bills, to try to make life more affordable for constituents in the province of Ontario. That's what people want. That's good government, not some flowery name.

I think it's appropriate at this time for me—I give out a lot of scrolls, and I've got a scroll prepared that I'm going to ask one of the pages to come up and hand over; you can give it to the government House leader or the Minister of Education or the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care or the Minister of Community and Social Services—

1650

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Excuse me. If I could just let the member know that that is a prop.

Mr. Steve Clark: Madam Speaker, I go to events all over my riding—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): No, I'm hearing you, but you are breaking one of the standing orders of the House. If you could just leave it—send it with a page, by all means, but—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Actually, if you could stop the clock just for a second. Thank you.

If you could wrap up. Thank you, member.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm going to send this scroll down, because it is in recognition of this government's ridiculous naming of Bill 110, An Act to promote good government. In the next provincial election, Ontario families will have a clear choice between this out-of-touch McGuinty government and the Ontario PC government—

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: Needless to say, I enjoyed the member's clever use of a quasi-prop, because, of course, we're always sending things across the way to each other. Sometimes they're friendly and affectionate; sometimes they're hostile and critical.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you, page. It is a delightful scroll. It's not very inclusive, because in the next election, in October, Ontario families will be able to choose Conservative or New Democratic Party candidates to represent them here in the Legislative Assembly. I know that Andrea Horwath is working very, very hard travelling the province, and I'm confident that New Democrats will do well in the upcoming provincial election because I'm confident that the sorts of things that New Democrats have been telling folks are the sorts of things that folks are interested in hearing.

What they're hearing from the government is nothing but more bad news: Premier Dad, now Premier Bad—Premier McGuinty—wanting to protect children from second-hand smoke in cars, but now wanting 12- and 13-year-olds to blow mommy's credit card out of the sky playing Internet gambling in their bedroom; again, not-so-smart, stupid, dumb-and-dumber meters that are jacking up people's hydro rates; HST that has already compounded a hydroelectricity price increase that's going to be at least 46%—the government data says it's going to be 46%, and that means that it's going to be at least 46% over the next five years, or it could be 50%, 55%, 60%; and the government with its misleading advertising brochures that talk about cutting electricity rates by 10%, but not telling people that they're jacking them up by darn near 50%. If a retailer did that, they'd be in court quick as a boo and be penalized appropriately.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I listened to the member from Leeds–Grenville speaking for almost 20 minutes about many different things. I understand his position. He doesn't like us as a government, which I understand, but we try our best as a government to clean up all the regulations and legislation to make them fit and flexible to serve the people of Ontario.

I know this Government Good Act, 2010, is intended to clean up many different legislations which involve several ministries to make them fit and flexible for the people of Ontario to use. I know he mentioned many different things about the auditor's report and he mentioned many different items; whatever he wanted to mention, he mentioned in his speech, but that's fine. In the end, this housekeeping bill is intended to serve the people of Ontario. It's not about political issues; it's not about how we want to score a point against the opposition. It's about cleaning up the whole legislation in order to make it fit and flexible for the people of Ontario to use on an ongoing basis.

We acknowledge that when you're in government, you're not safe. We do our best to fix many different things that we see don't fit and are not benefiting the people of Ontario. That's why we come every once in a while with a bill and laws to make sure it benefits the people of Ontario.

If the member from Leeds–Grenville thinks we're not good, then in October 2011, people will either keep us in office or elect a different government. I'm very confident when I go to talk to my constituents, when I talk to the people of Ontario, that they're happy with us for many different things because we are honest and clear. We don't hide from things; we face them, and we're trying to fix them.

Again, thank you for allowing me to speak in response to my colleague.

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: It's amazing that the member from Leeds–Grenville, who has been here for such a short period of time, puts himself and expresses himself with such maturity, in terms of knowing the issues, understanding what this place is about and trying to improve the lot of not only his constituents in Leeds–Grenville but also trying to improve the lot of all Ontario citizens.

Notwithstanding what the previous member said from the Liberal backbenches, I was at a Santa Claus parade in Pakenham on Saturday afternoon and in Almonte on Sunday afternoon, and we had a lot of fun talking to the people, the kids in particular. I just love Santa Claus parades. I walk along beside the truck and hand the kids candy and talk briefly with them, and I can't tell you—there's not a better time of the year, in terms of having fun as an MPP in this place.

When we're talking in those terms, people are happy, but in behind that are the mothers and dads who have to pay the bills at the end of the month, and I think that's what the member for Leeds–Grenville is talking about: the difficulty they are having with rising energy costs, rising taxes and rising fuel costs, particularly in the constituency that he represents, in Leeds–Grenville, where people have to drive from place to place. This government has felt that it's their municipalities, those rural municipalities, that do not receive the kinds of rebates that organized municipalities do, and I'm talking about the gas tax rebate program.

The member for Leeds–Grenville certainly has put forward his constituents’ concerns in his speech today on Bill 110.

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

Mr. David Zimmer: We’ve heard time and time again about this good government bill, and the point’s been made that it’s essentially a cleanup on a lot of technical matters that all governments do over a number of years. We’ve heard that there are some 70 amendments covering some seven ministries.

I suppose one of the things that I’m very proud of in this piece of legislation is, in addition to the technical changes—and I say this as a lawyer who is trained to struggle with this legal language in some of these statutes—the great effort that’s been taken in drafting these 70 amendments covering the seven ministries to keep the language as clear, as contemporary and as current as possible, because so often people go into the statute books reading a piece of law, and the language doesn’t connect with their experience in the use of everyday language on the street or in the newspapers.

Now, we have to have some very technical pieces of language in the statutes and so on, but wherever possible, we should try to make the language connect with the real way that people use the language in media, in the streets and in their ordinary conversation. In fact, there’s a whole movement throughout the legal community, especially in North America and in England, to recraft, to redraft, as many statutes as they can, always keeping in mind what they call “the plain use language.” Because, to the extent that people can easily and plainly understand what a statute says, that’s good for democracy.

As a lawyer who has a lot of experience, who has had a lot of experience, in drafting statutes and other legal documents, I just wanted to say that’s one of the things that I’m most pleased about in Bill 110.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I’d like to thank the member for Welland, the member for London–Fanshawe, the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills and the member for Willowdale. I think there certainly was a wide-ranging discussion in the comments and questions.

1700

Again, I just want to go back to the words that I heard in committee. Over and over again, we heard deputations questioning this government and their commitment on this bill. There were a number of suggestions that, while the government said they would take them under advisement, they really were just bound to make the amendments they were going to make and end the process.

We’re sitting here today, looking at the Auditor General’s report, with some of the same issues that have hurt Ontario families—untendered contracts, lavish spending, not meeting their targets—issues that were addressed by the Auditor General years before and are still not acted upon. That’s not good government. That’s not what people expect in the province of Ontario.

I’ll tell you, when I stood here on Thursday with my private member’s motion and tried to provide some protection to Ontario families on their energy bill, I was shocked at the number of members opposite who showed up to vote it down. I’ll tell you, we’re all having our own little Christmas parties over the next few weeks. I have one on Sunday from 3 to 5 at the Royal Brock Hotel. Taking a page from what the member for London–Fanshawe says, come on over and listen to my constituents. They’ll give you an earful.

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I wanted to speak to Bill 110 because it gives me an opportunity to talk about a number of issues that we have in front of us in this Legislature, and the government of Ontario has those challenges as well. And—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Government House leader.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Is the government House leader going to speak? I mean, they passed their opportunity to speak up.

Interjection.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker.

Interjection.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: What I wanted to talk about today was, in addition to the matters that are brought forward in this bill—I believe that the Legislature could be spending its time in a lot more productive way if we actually took certain particular parts of either the auditor’s report or areas where we recognize there is a real program deficiency or program problem.

The Auditor General has very clearly pointed out one that seems to recur time after time after time, and that is the Family Responsibility Office. One of the first tasks that I undertook as the chair of the public accounts committee, way back in 2004, after the Dalton McGuinty government got into place, was the first review of the 2003 report on the Family Responsibility Office. I just want to paint this picture so that we understand how long the problems like the Family Responsibility Office go on and on and on, and it seems to be out of the capacity of the government to solve the problem.

In 2004, when we had the hearing, it was interesting because IT, their information system, was a real problem. They were still using paper files at that time. We had the deputy minister in front of us, and the deputy minister said to us at that time, “We’re going to spend”—I believe the number was \$16 million—“\$16 million to remedy the situation.” We were going to get an IT system that was that costly.

Members of the committee from all the parties talked about the fact that British Columbia seemed to have a much better-functioning equivalent of the Family Responsibility Office, and that they were able to respond on the phone within four or five minutes, whereas we

were 70 or 80 minutes. We heard that that problem of lengthy response or no response is still with us today.

Interjections.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I hear the crowing from the government benches about how hard and difficult this problem is, but really nothing has succeeded from then to now with regard to what has happened. In fact, it may indeed have gotten worse than it was in 2003. But all we know is that it's a mess. It is a mess. The IT: They started to work on the information system in 2003 and 2004, and in 2006 they abandoned it. They abandoned their initial—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Government House leader.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: They abandoned their initial go at it, and now they're back at it, planning to spend \$50 million. The suggestion of the committee was, "Why don't you go out to BC and buy their system off them. It's got all the bugs out of it. You may have to modify your program slightly in order to do that, but it may be more worthwhile to make some minor policy adjustments and have a system that actually works than stick with our unique legislative requirements."

Why I'm telling this story is, I understand how difficult the Family Responsibility Office operation is, and I understand how difficult it sometimes is to extract payment from somebody who doesn't want to pay that money and is avoiding it like the plague. But what I think this Legislature has to do instead of spending afternoons talking about a bill that is rather innocuous—it has a few changes that perhaps are important, but generally speaking, it's housekeeping—why don't we as a group, as members of the Legislature, try to bring back on the plate of a select committee, for instance, the Family Responsibility Office? Let's talk about how it has failed in the past. And listen, it hasn't only failed under the Liberal government. It failed under the Conservative government, it failed under the NDP government, it failed under the previous Liberal government and it failed, actually, under the previous Conservative government. Nobody has got it right, because it's a very difficult problem.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: That was an admission.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Well, sure it's an admission. I don't mind admitting that it didn't work under our government. But it hasn't worked under your government as well. And so—

Interjection.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: No, it's not. It's not working much better. That's the problem. And you see—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Please speak through the Chair.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Stop the clock for a minute.

Could you please direct your comments through the Chair, and also please do not engage in cross-aisle

debate. If you'd like to debate with members other than the one speaking, you're welcome to take it out to the lounge.

The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The purpose of using this particular problem, the Family Responsibility Office, is because it is a difficult task to undertake. The Auditor General, when we did the previous report in 2004, said to the committee that this was not the first time—he was talking about 2003—that he had reviewed it. He had reviewed in it the 1990s; he had reviewed in it the 1980s. Now he has reviewed it in 2010, and we're getting the same result time after time, and the people who need the help are not getting the help.

I don't know how you can argue against that particular supposition when 80% of calls are not being answered by the Family Responsibility Office.

Interjection.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Eighty per cent: That's the auditor's number. It's a recognition that the structure or the policy is failing, and all I am saying is—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: It's a technology problem.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: They tried to remedy the technology. The minister says it's a technology problem. It was a technology problem seven years ago, and they haven't solved it. I understand that technology contracts are difficult, but why don't we as a group or as a select committee get together and say, "Why is this continuing to fail?" We should address this problem. Governments in the past have tried to address the problem and they've all failed. So why don't we use the collective wisdom of all or some of the members here who are interested in this issue, have a select committee and say, "Okay, let's call in the workers. Let's call in some people who are involved in this. Let's call in the employers who are transferring the cheques. Let's call in some people from British Columbia, where it seems to work better than it does here. And as a group, let's make some recommendations to the government as to whether we need to move some policies, we need to make it simpler or we need to redefine it. Let's put in some measures so that we know that, with any changes that occur, whether or not it's succeeding better than it has before."

1710

Let's not wait another seven years for another auditor's report, in 2017 or 2018, to tell us that the IT system hasn't been developed; that we're still waiting; that 60%, 70% or 80% of the calls are not getting through; that the wait times on the phone are 40 or 50 minutes, where I remember in 2004 in BC they were three or four minutes. Why don't we just get together our collective heads and say, "Look, this isn't a Liberal thing, this is not a Conservative thing, this is not an NDP thing. This is about trying to improve the service to people who are in desperate need of a service to help them get money to feed their kids and to maintain their homes." So I say that as an example of the way that our government is continuing to govern and this Legislature is continuing to act.

We need to get together on another subject as well, and that is waste diversion. Waste diversion is in another chapter of today's auditor's report: section 3.09, "Non-hazardous Waste Disposal and Diversion." This is very much of importance to me because I have a very large proposal to expand a landfill site which is essentially adjacent to a 26,000-person residential area in the village of Stittsville, which has had serious problems with the existing landfill. They're very concerned about another expansion and the detrimental effects to their community. I might add that it's a gateway to our capital, and you can see this mountain of garbage as you drive into the city of Ottawa from the west.

While that is a local problem for my constituents—and I am fighting tooth and nail in order to avoid that—why don't we have a select committee on non-hazardous waste disposal and diversion?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Is that the second or third select committee you've suggested?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: That's the second one. I'd like to suggest—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Government House leader.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: The government House leader says that this is the second or third select committee. You know what? I'd rather have 20 select committees with members who are genuinely interested in a particular area of policy working together with their counterparts and their counterparts from other parties to try to solve problems, because we know these problems have not only existed during this government, but they've existed over time. There's no sense in blaming each other for this or for that. We've got to solve the problems going forward. And who better than members of the Legislature to be involved in solving these problems?

What we've had in the past, and what has led to non-action, or very little action, has been the fact that we have entrusted this to the bureaucracy—to bring forward the solutions. The bureaucracy doesn't interface with the average constituent; they're interfacing with the interest groups. They're meeting with the waste disposal companies. They're meeting with industry, which produces the waste. They're meeting with municipalities, who are doing a much better job in waste diversion than business is. But nobody is meeting with or representing the average joe on the street who is concerned about what happens to their solid waste disposal.

What I would suggest, again, in this particular situation is that we have a group from this Legislature that is interested in the waste diversion issue—I would be very much interested in this particular one—sit down and say, "Okay, let's call the experts forward." I know that everybody has their own solution to waste diversion and waste reduction and dealing with this issue, but let's really call the experts, the people who know. Let's cross-examine the experts on what their expertise is and talk about costs and possible solutions: whether or not incineration is a real, possible solution; whether putting

organic waste through digesters and spreading it on fields is good or bad and what the risks associated with it are.

At least you have an intelligent conversation. You have an intelligent bringing together of ideas. Eventually, hopefully, it will lead to a result which all parties can have their say in, and then you have actually attacked and dealt with the problem.

What I have seen over a long period of time is that we continue to have the normal approach to these problems, and that is the government bureaucrats bring forward a suggestion for legislation to cabinet, and usually that legislation is in a framework, so there are these over-arching ideas but nothing is filled in. And by the time it's filled in and we see it hit the ground as MPPs and we talk to people in our constituency offices, it's a very different thing than we ever imagined when we passed the legislation in here.

So I would say to the government, why don't we use the forces and the knowledge of MPPs to say that if a program goes off the rails or is difficult and it hasn't been successfully dealt with, why not try to solve it? Solve it with the collective wisdom of everybody in here. We're all going to have different views. We may not come to 100% agreement on all issues, but at least they will be addressed, MPPs will understand what the costs are, what the risks are associated with whatever the problem is, and we just won't hear rhetoric and talk in here which doesn't really mean anything in the end, and the problem continues on.

You see that time over time over time in terms of dealing with issues in front of the public accounts committee. I could name you 10 particular problems we have here with regard to ODSP. The process that one has to go through in order to obtain Ontario disability payments and help is a process that the auditor pointed out in last year's report is not working. We have to have an adult discussion about how we can make that process work better. That's a \$3-billion program.

We had last year a report from the committee on assistive devices—that's wheelchairs and oxygen supplies for people who need them. The Auditor General clearly pointed out that the structure of that program is not working. Why not have an adult discussion with members of the Legislature and say, "Let's call in the people who are supplying this. Let's look at what Quebec and Alberta are doing with regard to assistive devices," because in Alberta and Quebec they're actually recycling some of those assistive devices, those motorized wheelchairs and those kinds of things. Here, there's no recycling going on because everybody buys a new one.

1720

I guess the overall thrust of what I am saying is, here we are dealing with Bill 110, which deals with an amendment here, an amendment there, an amendment here, an amendment there with regard to a whole number of acts, but doesn't have any real impact on what's going on. I say let's forget about dealing with these kinds of things in three or four days. Let's use our time, recognize a problem, get some of the members of the Legislature

together, get some expertise in, get some help from the legislative library or legislative research, and find out what the real information is about what we're doing and try to address the problem.

We have to change how we do business here in order to provide the taxpayer with a better value for dollar. The auditor does a very good job in looking back at whether we got value for money there, but going forward is another story. We haven't got our act together as to how we can advise the government—because MPPs have more time than cabinet ministers, MPPs have more time than deputy ministers to actually look down into the problem and try to provide a reasonable, logical and moderate approach to solving problems that continue on there. This is so evident with regard to the Family Responsibility Office that we have to do something to do it better rather than have a report in 2017 and 2018. I'm going to be here in 2017 and 2018, and I don't want to see this again.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I listened very carefully to the comments by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills and I found his to be a very valuable contribution to this debate. I was disturbed by the disruptive interjections and heckling by government members because they would have served themselves far better by listening.

The member has had this to say about committees before; he's been here a long time. He's been here such a long time that he's witnessed the decline of committees, the diminishment of committees. He's witnessed committees turning into rather irrelevant bodies. They used to be, not only in his time but in my time as well, a very effective way for members of the public to provide some incredibly valuable counsel to the government and to the Parliament, and almost inevitably for free. They would come forward and produce very serious submissions on some very serious matters.

There was also a level of collegiality and collaboration on committees. Not that they weren't partisan, but when it came down to committees that were discussing the various sorts of things that the member talked about—the Family Responsibility Office; again, his model of bringing in the workers, bringing in management, bringing in people from other jurisdictions is an ideal proposal, one that the minister seems to mock and deride very regrettably.

Every time the government gets involved with IT, the government gets its pocket picked, and the FRO in this government is an example of that again.

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills gave very good advice. I wish that he would have taken this advice when they were in power instead of cutting staff by 41%.

Let me tell you a little bit about FRO—and I want to correct him. He's saying that complaints are increasing. No, that's not so. I am monitoring, on a monthly basis,

the calls from recipients to MPPs' offices and there is a major, major reduction in calls.

Interjection.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: If it's not, you just need to talk to me and I will check on it, because we are receiving on a monthly basis.

Let's talk about the information technology system. It was suggested that there was a good one in BC and that it was working well. That's the contract that we have given to that company, and it didn't work at all, so we had to cancel the contract; we had to control our costs. We have a new company now that is working, and there is oversight from the chief information officer. Let's hope that we will have this in place as soon as possible, because without this technology, we are dealing with 150,000 support payments on a monthly basis. There are 150,000 cases. Some are being resolved, or the parents are not entitled, the children are not entitled, to the support payments. There is, on a monthly basis, about 150,000 coming in and 150,000 going out. And the—

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My colleague the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills has made some really interesting and, I think, innovative comments this afternoon with respect to Bill 110, the unfortunately named Good Government Act.

In the context of the auditor's report, which was just released today—it's quite thick, as you can see—the member commented on the report specifically with respect to the Family Responsibility Office.

I can say, despite the comments made by the minister, that the Family Responsibility Office remains a significant problem for many of us as members. I would say probably at least 25% of the questions and comments I get into my office deal with the Family Responsibility Office, from the antique accounting system, to the lack of answers to the phone calls, to their inability to deal with anything other than really just standard collection issues. Any time you have a situation where you have a payor who is outside of the jurisdiction, you can pretty much count on not getting paid, as the recipient.

The auditor noted that some 20,000 individuals have been forced into accepting social assistance because they have been unable to collect the support payments through the Family Responsibility Office.

I really respect the comments that were made by my colleague to the extent that it's not a situation that is the responsibility of any one government. There are problems with the system, and we need to get people around the table to talk about it. I happen to believe that select committees are a very good idea. We had a very positive experience with the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions.

We always have a situation here where members of the opposition and, frankly, members of the government backbench are underutilized. They have lots to contribute. Using that in the context of a select committee is a way to really deal with the problem.

I think there's a massive disconnect between what we do here and what our constituents actually expect that we do here, which is to work together for their best interests. We need to get back to that, and the select committee is a good way to approach it.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I did listen to the comments of my good friend from Carleton–Mississippi Mills. He does sit as the Chair of the public accounts committee. From time to time, I've had the opportunity to sub on that committee and I've always enjoyed that, because I think by being on the public accounts committee, you get to learn a lot, particularly when you're going through a series of reports that Mr. McCarter, the Auditor General, has zeroed in on. He goes through them, looks at the historical perspective and then, indeed, looks at how things can be improved.

I must say, from my own personal experience, that in my office, we get significant inquiries regarding the Family Responsibility Office. I think in my case it has improved somewhat since my experience in 2003 and 2004 to what we have now in 2010. But I do think—and this is just a personal perspective of someone who has now been here seven years—there's an opportunity.

We should have, in any given parliamentary year—or session, I should say, or Parliament—four or five select committees looking at a variety of topics. I had a wonderful experience with two of my colleagues opposite on the select committee on mental health services in the province of Ontario. But my understanding is that, before this select committee, the last one was a select committee on alternative fuels that toured the province of Ontario and that came up with several recommendations.

From my personal perspective, this would be one way to significantly improve what goes on in this place, by having four or five select committees out there operating, selecting topics, doing the appropriate research and then canvassing the broad perspective of opinion in the province of Ontario. Indeed, those recommendations could help the government of the day bring forward legislation in those specific areas.

1730

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I want to thank the member from Peterborough, to lead in into my response. The public accounts committee does a good job of looking back and making recommendations and that kind of thing, but where we're hampered is that we can't make recommendations with regard to change of policy. We can see situations where the policies that a government has set forward—and in the case of the Family Responsibility Office, I think that most of those policies were made in the 1980s. We don't really look at them and say, "Are these practical? And can any administration function well under the policies and rules that are there now?"

That's what I'm trying to say here. I'm not trying to say to the minister that you've done better or worse,

slightly better or slightly worse or whatever it is. All I know is that from this report, there are still huge, significant problems dealing with the Family Responsibility Office. What I would really like is, rather than saying that the BC IT is wrong or doesn't work—it didn't work because the ministry was not willing to look at policy changes to fit the policy to the IT. In this case, the IT is probably more important than sticking to 100% of your policy.

That's what business does now. Business alters their business practices to fit the IT sometimes. We have to think that way here in order to have functioning units of government to serve our people. I think that we have to be open-minded about that, and we have to be very inclusive of all MPPs here and use their knowledge, use their resource in order to solve problems as we go forward.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I had to go do some other things in my office today, and I always thought that debates in this House were on a rotational basis. I recognize that the member for Welland has already spoken to the debate. As you know, the standing orders do not provide for a member to speak twice to the bill on the same reading, so that precludes the member from Welland from speaking to the bill, but all of these government members on the other side of the House are not speaking. I'm concerned.

One of two things could have happened here, and neither is good. One is that the members on the government side are so embarrassed by what's been going on here, this bill included, but more in a general way the record of the government over this past year in particular, that they don't even want to speak to this bill; or, as has happened so many times in the past, they've just been told to sit down: "Don't say a word. Don't debate."

It's interesting, because the people across the province of Ontario expect that when we come to this Legislature, we come here to debate the legislation that is put before this chamber. That is, in fact, what we are elected to do—part of what we are elected to do. Much of what we are elected to do, Madam Speaker, as you know, is more localized, ensuring that the constituents we represent have a connection to government. We are their connection as individual MPPs. We are their connection not only to Queen's Park here but the provincial government in general. Good government: It makes sense. That's why each one of us, as an individual member, tries to provide service to our constituents, to ensure that, in the best way possible, whether we sit on the opposition side or the government side, we are representing them and bringing good government back to our ridings.

I'm always interested in what my colleague from Carleton–Mississippi Mills has to say. When you've been here as long as he has been serving in this chamber—I think he's served about five different ridings in the province. Because of redistributions, the boundaries of my friend Mr. Sterling's riding have changed over the

years, but the one constant is the personal connection he offers to his people up in his part of eastern Ontario, which currently, of course, is the riding of Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

I know he's talking about committees. Now, he is the Chair of the public accounts committee, which I have said on more than one occasion is probably the most important committee that functions in this chamber, because part of the work it does is reflected, many times, in the decisions of the auditor as to which parts of the government he's going to dissect in his latest report, analyze and report back to the House on.

The auditor, Jim McCarter, does a tremendous job and provides a tremendous service to the people of Ontario, and by extension, I guess, to the government, then by extension to the people, and also so that we, as members, know where the government has fallen down on the job with respect to its failure to properly account for and manage the finances of the province and treat the money with respect. Each and every year, when the auditor brings out his report—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: It's always interesting.

Mr. John Yakabuski: My friend the Minister of Community and Social Services says, "It's always interesting." No question: It is always interesting. Sometimes there are ministers who are ducking when the auditor's report comes out, and sometimes there are ministers who just want to run away and hide for a while. There's ducking, and then there's hiding.

But each and every year, there are issues brought forward in the auditor's report that cause us to pause and ask ourselves, "Is the government actually following through on the commitments it has made from day one with respect to accountability, transparency and diligence in taking care of the finances of the province, in various ministries—in all ministries? Are they actually following through on that?" Each and every year, when the auditor's report comes out, it casts doubt on whether the government is actually doing that.

As I said, my friend from Carleton–Mississippi Mills is the Chair of the public accounts committee. I have had the opportunity to sit in on a few sessions. I'm not a member of the committee, but from time to time there are issues brought before the committee, and all members of this House, for people out there who don't know that, have the opportunity to sit in on hearings of the committee and, on most occasions, are allowed to ask questions if there are any witnesses or deponents before the committee, whether they're members of the committee or not. Each and every one of the members of the House wants to ensure that they're aware of how issues brought before that committee, or any other committee, may or may not affect their constituents or their respective roles as critics on the opposition side or, obviously, as ministers on the government side.

I remember when my dad was a member here—that's a long time ago—and there were so many select committees then that were given specific duties and roles in specific areas. There may have been a select committee

on workers' compensation at the time or a Select Committee on Automobile Insurance. They actually studied different systems and how they worked. There was a lot of work done by those committees. It would appear today that the government really doesn't want committees to have that kind of work.

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You know what the committees do today? They do what they're told. It's really a bad system. You've got six government members on a committee and three opposition members. Now, six and three: I don't think you have to think too hard to know what side is going to get their way every time, should they choose to. It's very hard, even when there are vitally important and pertinent and valuable pieces of advice and suggestions, really relevant things brought forward to committee by members of the opposition side. Members on the government side simply do as they've been told, the directions they've received from the minister's office, and then they just nod in unison, vote in favour or, if it's an opposition amendment, they vote against it. If you want to talk about good government, there's a place we could really start.

In the federal House, the committees have a different composition. The opposition actually has some say. The opposition actually can effect change at the committee level—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Stop the clock, please. I know it's late in the day—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Excuse me, the Speaker is standing. I know it's late in the day, and I know people are getting antsy, but, however, there is a speaker speaking, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I would ask that others keep the heckling down to a minimum so that we can at least hear what he has to say.

Mr. John Yakabuski: If committees could be made to be more realistic and effective, not just extensions of the government so that they can say, "Well, we dealt with that in committee," or whatever, but for the untrained as to what the parliamentary procedures are here in this House—because it doesn't get seen much on television. Bell ExpressVu, the satellite provider, and Star Choice, the satellite provider, don't even broadcast the legislative channel anymore, which to me is a disgrace. I'm not suggesting that it would be way up there on the Nielsen ratings—some days would be better than others—but at the same time, I think every person in this country who wants to have an opportunity to view the proceedings of their respective Legislature should be able to do so. I'll come back to that. That's a good point; I'll come back to that.

For those people out there who don't know how the committee system works or how the procedures work here, they might think, "Oh, boy, that's great. The government is sending this bill or that bill off to committee." But the reality is that unless the government wants to make changes to that bill at committee, there will be no

changes made. If the government wants amendments to be passed, amendments will be passed. If the minister says, "Oh, let Yakabuski yap on for a little bit at the committee, but as soon as he brings forth a motion, snap him. Done. We will not allow anything that he or the member from the New Democratic Party wants to put forward." You have to ask yourself, how valuable is that process sometimes? Or is it just a way of being able to say that our Legislature requires that bills go from here to the committee? Unless they're passed in the House by unanimous consent through second and third reading, it requires them to go through the committee process. Sometimes it's just a little bit of window dressing.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's just a bit of window dressing, but it provides good fodder for the members of the government and for the ministers to put into their speaking notes as they're travelling throughout the province in their fancy limousines.

It is nice that we're getting close to the Christmas recess as well, because I know each and every one of us looks forward to that time with our families, to get home and spend some time in the ridings, but also to be able to maybe spend a little bit of an extended time with our families as well through the Christmas season.

Of course, tonight at 6 o'clock we'll be beginning the Lights Across Canada. Speaker Peters is the initiator in our Legislature, but all across the country we'll be joining other legislative chambers in a simultaneous celebration. I guess not exactly simultaneous, because BC is on a different clock than we are, but you know what I mean.

Interjection: No. What do you mean, John?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm closer to being right than the government is on this committee business sometimes. But anyway, let's talk about good government again. Let's talk about that television issue.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: That's important, Bell ExpressVu?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I think it is important, and I caution the government House leader not to dismiss things out of hand sometimes, because they are important to people. You know, in the rural areas, people don't have cable television. What they have is generally a satellite system, and all of the satellite providers have taken—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Some might even have rabbit ears.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, yes. My friend the Minister of Community and Social Services says some might even have rabbit ears. I don't know if there are too many rabbit ears left out there, but there are on the rabbits, I will say to her. I have seen many of the rabbits and they still have ears, certainly the ones that I see crossing the road and in walks through the woods as well.

But back to the television: The satellite providers no longer broadcast the legislative proceedings from Ontario. You see, I think that the government of Ontario

should be acting in the strongest way possible to influence the CRTC, the Canadian radio and television commission, or whatever they call it. I might not have the words exactly right, but the CRTC; you know what I'm talking about. I would think that it would be prudent, because on the satellite feed that comes into Ontario homes, if I'm not mistaken, you can get either the Saskatchewan or the British Columbia legislative proceedings. Now, they'd be really, really important to the people of Ontario, I would think. Right.

I would think it would be prudent for anyone who provides a satellite signal throughout Ontario, or any other province, that it become part of the mandated service requirements of the CRTC that they must broadcast the proceedings of the respective Legislature of the customer getting the satellite feed, so that if you are broadcasting in Ontario, you must provide a channel. There are all kinds of channels that are required.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Member for Peterborough. Order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You don't ask for them; you don't buy them. It's considered mandatory by the CRTC that you broadcast that feed, and there are a number of them on all television satellite providers' signals. They could add to that a requirement that the broadcasting of the legislative chamber of the respective jurisdiction be part of that mandatory service. To me, that's something that this government—it's during their term that they pulled it. It's during this government's term that both Bell ExpressVu and Star Choice have pulled that service. It's a disservice to rural Ontarians because a lot of them would like to know what is going on at the Ontario Legislature. Some of them would possibly be tuning in right now to hear what's being said about the television feed, but, oh, no, they can't tune in because they don't have that feed.

Anyway, on the good government bill, it clearly is—

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Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm sorry, Madam Speaker. Did I do something wrong?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I'd just ask to stop the clock for a second.

We can miss the performance on the stairs if the government House leader would like us to. Otherwise, I would ask her to please come to order, and let's listen to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I only have a couple of minutes left. I'm sure that the members on the government side will allow me an uninterrupted opportunity to finish up my part of the debate.

You really have to ask yourself about this bill, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts. I have a suggestion for an act to promote good government. In fact, we already have it as part of our constitution. In fact, we already have a day scheduled for an act to promote good government. We have that

date scheduled. It's October 6, 2011. It's called the democratic process; it's called the election. I would hope that that is what Ontarians see as their opportunity to pass judgment on this government or any government. It's part of our democratic process.

I know that people across Ontario are looking forward to it, and they're looking forward to analyzing and evaluating just what the McGuinty government has been up to for seven years. They would certainly, I'm sure, much more hope that the government was actually doing something to make their lives better and not doing things to burden them in such a terrible way.

My goodness, we're going to have to get more time, because I was just going to get into the hydro situation now, and how this government has literally crucified ratepayers and businesses, seniors and families across this province with the price of electricity, and that's something that—I know the people want to have their chance to vote on good government on October 6, 2011.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: Today, of course, we received the Auditor General's annual report for 2010. That, obviously, is rife with revelations about this government's incompetence and its indifference to the people of Ontario.

Tomorrow at 1 o'clock, I believe, our Ombudsman, André Marin, will be releasing his report on this government's botch-up of—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Merry Christmas.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The minister says.

This government's botch-up of and their role in the fake G20 regulation may well have some light shone on it. It remains to be seen. I'm sure Marin did his usual competent best. I'm sure government members are as excited as I am about that event tomorrow.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: He's my buddy in Ottawa.

Mr. Peter Kormos: She notes.

I'm sure the government House leader will be enthused. Indeed, I'm sure she has that time slot marked in her diary, 1 o'clock, because of course we all know Mr. Marin; we all have a great deal of respect and affection for him, and we are just so pleased that he earned a second term as Ombudsman in the province of Ontario. I'm sure that his assistance—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Order.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Yakabuski notes. Did you get that heckle? Because I acknowledged Mr. Yakabuski. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): If the member from Welland could mention the person's riding, not their name.

Mr. Peter Kormos: We're looking forward to it, with excitement, and we'll be speaking about that in due course, too, I'm sure.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: Well, will wonders ever cease? The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke actually said something of substance that I agree with.

The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke obviously, dimly in his memory, will recall a private member's resolution that I did about two years ago which his entire party supported; in fact, the resolution was passed unanimously by the House. You know what it called for? It said that we called upon the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, the CRTC, to insist that, as a condition of being able to carry content, that one channel be dedicated to the Ontario Legislature, or indeed to the provincial Legislature in any province that the entity proposes carrying a signal, and one channel be dedicated to the federal Parliament.

It's nice to see the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke reach back and bring what I thought at the time, and his party fully supported, was a really enlightened view to regulation of broadcast programming. Now, I would be absolutely delighted if he took my private member's resolution—where executing it is beyond the scope of this House because, of course, as a provincial Legislature, we don't regulate broadcasting; that's done by the federal government. I would be delighted in joining with him and his party in working with our federal government to bring forth exactly, precisely that resolution at the federal level. Why don't we each—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Order.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I didn't realize it was all that contentious. I thought this was kind of a motherhood issue.

Why don't we each get on the cases of our overlapping federal members and kick them to do exactly that? Thank you for bringing it up.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's a pleasure to comment on the comments made by the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

It was a breath of fresh air to hear so much discussion and debate this afternoon about the benefit of select committees. I've only had the opportunity to participate in one; that was, of course, the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. It was a very positive experience from both the side of listening to people, hearing from individuals directly affected by the issue, but as valuable, of course, were the actual discussions afterwards where we were able to come together as members from the NDP, the Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals and bring forward 23 recommendations.

I will say, as positive as the experience was, and the feedback on the report that was ultimately tabled in August was also very positive, we are now at the waiting stage. So the government has had the select committee's recommendations since the end of August, and there has been very little action.

As much as I appreciate the importance and the value of what select committees can do and how we can incorporate them into our work as legislators, I would hate to see that this becomes yet another bookend in our work in this legislative session. So the other half of allowing more select committees to be part of our process also means that there has to be some credibility and some follow-up when there has been that much time, energy, commitment and consensus brought forward on the issues.

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

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to thank the members for Welland, Mississauga–Streetsville and Dufferin–Caledon for their comments on my speaking today on Bill 110.

I'm just going to touch on the member for Mississauga–Streetsville for the time being—I know I don't have a lot of time. He talks about his resolution with respect to what I talked about, the CRTC and carrying the feed from the respective Legislatures. I remember when he brought in that resolution, but the point is, I say to the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, the resolution that you brought forward really doesn't carry the weight. What you need is for your party, your government, the

McGuinty ministers to actually do something about it and put some pressure on the CRTC.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Federal jurisdiction.

Mr. John Yakabuski: If they want to do it through the federal government, so be it. Talk to the federal government. But passing a resolution in this chamber is simply not effective enough. Madam Speaker, you know that and the member for Mississauga–Streetsville knows that. It just doesn't do it. You've got to put some meat on the bone here and you've got to put some action behind the words; put some pressure on the CRTC to actually do something about it and follow through, not a resolution.

The resolution is something that he can take back to his stakeholders and say, "Look what I did." Well, that's not enough. This government needs to act. That's the problem with this government: a whole lot of talk, not a lot of actual substance, not a lot of action. It's the same thing about this bill: There's not much in it. They're doing a little housekeeping, but we've been debating it for five weeks now because the government's got no good stuff to actually talk about.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): It being slightly past 6 of the clock, I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
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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
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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
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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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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Leeanna Pendergast, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Steve Clark, Helena Jaczek
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, M. Aileen Carroll
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Joe Dickson
Sylvia Jones, Amrit Mangat
Norm Miller, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
Wayne Arthurs, M. Aileen Carroll
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craiton
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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