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**Official Report
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**Journal
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Wednesday 23 February 2011

Mercredi 23 février 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Wednesday 23 February 2011

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mercredi 23 février 2011

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments relating to the legislative offices pending the voting of supply for the period commencing February 23, 2011, and ending on March 31, 2011, such payments to be charged to the proper appropriation for the 2010-11 fiscal year following the voting of supply.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 52. Debate?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Today we are debating our motion on interim supply. It's not typical that we would actually debate the motion. However, it would seem that my friends in the third party are feeling a lack of practice, having just come back from the break, so for the member for Timmins–James Bay and possibly the member for Welland, we will give them an opportunity to wind themselves up this morning.

An interim supply motion can authorize spending for up to six months. This motion is specific to the Legislative Assembly offices and covers a period of less than two months, from February 23 to March 31, 2011.

Spending authority is required from February 23, 2011, until the passage of the Supply Act. Without spending authority, most scheduled and unscheduled payments, such as salaries and wages or suppliers' accounts, cannot be paid. This motion would give government continuous legislative authority to make payments for the legislative offices. It does not authorize any additional expenditures beyond the 2010 budget and the 2010-11 estimates.

I want to assure the House that the motion before the Legislature does not authorize any additional expenditures—the maximum amount of expenditures under the motion of interim supply as set out and authorized in the Supply Act.

It is also important to note that the legislative offices' expenditures are not over their budget. The current spending is actually under the amount of the 2010 Ontario bud-

get. Current spending of the legislative offices is covered by the Interim Appropriation for 2010-2011 Act, 2009, and the Supplementary Interim Appropriation Act, 2010. This authority, however, is not sufficient to cover the legislative offices' required expenditures until the end of the fiscal year, and that is why we're here this morning debating this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak to this motion and to set the table for the ongoing debate.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that accommodation as well.

I've been wishing to speak on the supply motion, which allows the government to pay the bills. I'm not surprised that I'm a bit concerned whether they have the resources to pay the bills. I'm actually waiting for the budget; that Mr. Duncan, the Minister of Finance, will come in and tell us we have a deficit in the order of \$20 billion. So I am concerned.

But I'm more specifically concerned—Mr. Speaker, you would know as well—that they made a commitment, a promise, to hold the line on spending. Now, not to say that the public sector is not deserving of the pay and remuneration they get. They are. I don't in fact have any dispute with that. But when you have a boss, which would be the McGuinty government, that is spending money faster than there is revenue coming in, they're putting everyone at risk; not just the civil servants of Ontario but the people of Ontario, the families. They've got to learn to be fair with everyone.

If I look around at what causes these collapses in the economy, it's mismanagement, squarely on the shoulders of the Premier and his cabinet—not so much on some of the members here this morning. They're not in cabinet; what do they know? They get the notes to read, and that's as far as it goes.

I will say this: One of the major policy areas where they have completely failed is the energy file. You see it in its evidence when you open up that energy bill in your house. You open up that bill, and you're shocked. Not only that, you're frightened and you feel abused—because Premier McGuinty's energy plan for Ontario is simple.

We—Tim Hudak—say that conservation is the first and most important policy step they can take. Conservation would give consumers and families the right tools, like Energy Star appliances. They should get a tax credit

on those. That was Tim Hudak's plan. Premier McGuinty cancelled it.

Their conservation plan is that they make electricity so expensive that you'll have to conserve; you'll actually have to turn off appliances. That's the plan. It's a very simple plan: They charge you so much that you can't afford to watch television or dry your clothes during the week; you have to do it on the weekend, on Sunday when the rates are lower.

Here's the other one: The Green Energy Act is the biggest misguided—we're in favour of renewable energy. First, conservation; second, renewable resources, and third, making the system more intelligent. Now, I'm going to talk a bit about the energy file because—Mr. Speaker, you would know this—in an economy the most important input cost is energy. Ontario was founded on a policy from way back 100 years ago. Sir Adam Beck's policy was safe, reliable and—here's the key word—affordable power. In fact, his phrase was “power at cost.” “Power at any cost” is what he meant, because they actually supported industry by having a cheap energy policy. That is kind of how it ran. Whether it's steel, forestry, the pulp and paper industry, the auto sector, the petrochemical sector—all those sectors rely on safe, reliable, affordable power.

What have we got today? We've got safe. I think OPG and Hydro One generally do a safe job; that's not the question. Reliable? We saw a couple of schools in Toronto closed yesterday—supply of energy. Affordable? We saw the big Beck tunnel in Niagara Falls, almost a \$1-billion boondoggle. We see the whole thing on solar power: the microFIT program, paying 80 cents per kilowatt hour and then selling it for 5 or 6 cents. Who in their right mind would have done that? Since you're paying 80 cents and selling it for 5 or 6 cents, who is paying for it? Who is paying for that? The taxpayer is paying for it.

Interjection.

0910

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Northumberland is barking over there. He's saying right here in the House that he's in support of wind energy. That's what he's saying. He's in support of that. That will be another large problem for the province of Ontario, especially in Northumberland—Quinte West. I think that he's listening to the wrong people, because—even in the city of Kawartha Lakes, I would say the member from up in that area isn't listening to the people as well. He would know that—I'm just looking up his name. Rick Johnson, the member from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, isn't listening to his constituents on this whole issue around industrial wind turbines of two and three megawatts, 200 or 300 feet from someone's house. There is medical evidence that—Dr. McMurtry, the dean of medicine from the University of Western Ontario, says that it constitutes a health hazard.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: Now they're saying over there that it doesn't matter. People matter. Stop and get it right.

That's all I'm saying to you on this file. Take your time. What's the rush here?

Everyone's in favour of replacing the coal plant. In fact, I was there when the Lakeview plant was closed. It was the first and only coal plant closed in Ontario. They have shut down some of the furnaces at Nanticoke, but they have not closed the plant, and they're not going to close it. Mr. Speaker, you would know that, and you know how much trouble you got into from wind energy down in your area.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: Yes; it's offshore. They backtracked on that. They knew it was a problem. Freshwater, offshore wind power—they knew it was a problem. What did they do? They cancelled them. Now they're in court, and they're going to pay all kinds of liability costs on that file.

Ever since Brad Duguid took over this file, it has been completely—he's in Scarborough somewhere in his riding, and he's in trouble, too. He's from Scarborough Centre. I think that's why they cancelled the offshore wind. It's like with Kevin Flynn; they cancelled the gas plant. I understand that. It's called “save cabinet at any price.” That's the plan.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Not at all.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, no, he's priceless. He's a very decent person. I think the world of Kevin, but he may not be here in a few months. But that's another—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a risky game that we're in. But they did their best to save his seat by moving that Oakville gas generator. They moved it.

Here's the issue: This thing is just unravelling on them. When you look at it, they move it from Oakville. Where are they moving it? They're moving it to my good friend Mr. Martiniuk's—Cambridge is where they're moving it to.

Who got the contract? When you cancelled the one in Oakville—they have made a secret deal, I believe. I'm on my own on this. I'm saying this on my own, but I'm quite intuitive. It's a secret deal of cancelling the plant, and the company that's going to build it is TransCanada Pipelines. TransCanada Pipelines, without any RFP or RFQ being done—a secret single source, another broken promise by Premier McGuinty, who promised not to have any of these sole-source searching—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: I know I've touched a nerve, and I know they're upset because we've uncovered some of the secret, questionable transactions. I can only tell you this: The evidence is clear that this file is in complete dishevelment, or whatever the word would be. He has completely ruined the energy file.

I would say that the next and most important thing in the limited time I have—I wish I had a full hour, but they've cut it to 40 minutes. I've been following the important change of heart in transit. Transit is a very important file, and the reason this all ties back to this interim supply motion is because they have to approve

the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments relating to the legislative offices pending the voting of supply for the period commencing today, February 23, and ending on March 31, such payments to be charged to the proper appropriation for the 2010-11 fiscal year following the vote of supply. And that just brings them through the fiscal year.

That's fine, but one of the largest single areas of the economy being in such a devastating condition here—they've lost 300,000 jobs. They keep saying that they've created jobs; they haven't created any jobs. These guys who are building the solar panels and the wind turbines—when the wind turbines are up and the solar panels are up, there are no jobs there. These people will be in the unemployment line.

The Second Career program is another example of a failed plan. They're training people and there are no jobs. If you read any of the stuff, less than half of the people who have spent all this money and put their families at risk haven't got jobs. The most important thing for dignity in this society is to give a person an opportunity and the right to work to earn their legitimacy in life, if you will.

I see in my own riding people afraid to turn on the lights because of the cost of electricity. They're unable to go to the simplest kind of entertainment because the HST is charged on everything. Even if you had an accident and you're taking physiotherapy, there's tax on that now. Everything that moves or breathes is taxed at 13%. And they've got other taxes in mind. The energy file is actually a tax, because it's non-discretionary consumption—in other words, you have to have electricity, and now it's taxed, so it's non-discretionary consumption; it's taxed at 13%. Every service—even when you do your income tax this year, it's going to be taxed. That's a fact. To get your income tax done, it's going to be taxed, because it is a service; it's going to be taxed 13%. Everything you do in the family—you register the children in sports, it's taxed; in recreation programs, taxed; physical fitness programs, taxed—unbelievable, the greed of that one tax. The HST is a symptom that they have a spending problem.

What they have to have—a good start would be to have a little respect for the taxpayer, for the hard-working families. They feel the grip around their necks, it's that bad. They feel impaled, crippled, impugned, whatever. They feel helpless under the pressure of unrelenting tax, getting into every pocket and opening in their body that might have money in it. They just can't wait to get their hands on your money.

I can understand—I want to go back to first principles here. I appreciate the work that's done. My wife was a teacher; my daughter is a teacher; I have two sisters who are nurses. These are critically important functions in society that are highly respected and highly valued. I was at a clinic in Port Perry last week, Medical Associates of Port Perry, for the commissioning of a new CT scanner. Doctors there work collaboratively as a team and the health care system is working. But here's the problem: Every hospital in my riding, including the member from

Peterborough—every single hospital in this province has a deficit.

Mr. Jeff Leal: No—

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Peterborough is yelling. They've had to lay off some 66 nurses.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: You can get up in your rebuttal.

They've laid off 60-some nurses and they paid about \$3 million in severance—and they already had about a \$6-million deficit.

Mr. Jeff Leal: We're in a surplus position, John.

Mr. John O'Toole: I would say you should stand and put that on the record, because clearly, from everything I know, people on the foundation and everything else, there are signs all over town: "Jeff Leal, stand up for your hospital." That makes me worry. The signs are down—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Durham, I've been a little lax this morning. There have been some names used. We don't use the names of members; we only use their ridings, please.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With the member from Peterborough, I respect what he's trying to do there, but I still believe that all hospitals in the province of Ontario are in debt. All children's aids are in deficit. Every function in this province of Ontario is in deficit. Not some, all. They're all in deficit.

I'm going to look at one more thing. I know they don't want to hear it. I'm using this from the *Globe and Mail*, an article on revisiting the transit blueprint. This is worth reading. This is a recent article. First of all, Metrolinx is kind of a manager, if you will, an unelected board. I've met with—Rob MacIsaac was there for a while, and now they have Dr. Rob Prichard. He was the president of U of T., a nice fellow. I went to U of T some time ago.

0920

The key here is that Rob Prichard and the president—what's his name—did a deal with a Japanese company, Sumitomo Corp.—I think it's a division of Samsung—and spent \$53 million buying these low-particulate-matter diesel trains, with a commitment to buy more of them.

The issue here is electrification of the transit system—these are diesel. So they've made this commitment, and now they've agreed that they are going to electrify that. Bruce McCuaig is the other fellow; he's the president of Metrolinx. The government has intervened and interfered with—not a competitive bid, no RFP, no RFQ, nothing. They just did a deal with this Japanese company. Why wouldn't they use Bombardier, Siemens—one of our companies where our constituents work? No, they always go to Samsung: \$7 billion to help us with our renewable energy. Get a life. We've got some of the best universities in the world right here: UOIT, Trent University. I can't believe it.

Anyway, I met this morning with a few people at AUTO21, and they were concerned about the economy as well. I don't know that the ministry even met with them. How is that? We've got the innovation community, AUTO21—these are the innovators for the auto sector—

and a lot of the manufacturing sector. I had a few names I wanted to mention, but I've only got one card here, for some reason or other. This is Peter Frise, a Ph.D. in engineering, with AUTO21, and another couple of young engineers that I met.

Here's my point: I don't believe they are not working strongly enough with our Ontario industries. In this particular case, they are going to electrify each of these diesel rail cars they are going to buy. The reason for this quick sale and electrification issue is that they want to get it in before the Pan American Games in 2015. That's the deal. That's why this artificial date—this two-week event, the Pan American Games—so this train that goes to the airport would be electrified. Well, they are going to waste, I would say, \$200 or \$300 million—I'm putting that on the record here—more than that, actually, absolutely wasted.

We had the eHealth example of \$1 billion. Can you now go to a medical clinic and give them your card and get your record or the tests you've had pulled up on the screen? No, you can't. Where is the money going?

Now, in the energy file we have an even deeper, more troubling problem: the debt retirement charge. When they restructured Ontario Hydro, the debt retirement charge was set to be about \$21 billion.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: The House leader on the other side is squawking away, and that's fine. I know she's not running again because she probably realizes that time is up.

Here is the issue, though: \$7.8 billion was set aside as residual stranded debt, and it's reported in the public accounts on the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: What year?

Mr. John O'Toole: It was done in 2002-03. Now, this is important—she's engaged, she's listening; this is good. Each year on your electricity bill, you pay .07 cents per kilowatt hour. Look it up. It's on there; it's a line. It's the debt retirement charge: .07 cents per kilowatt hour. Each person—your family pays about \$10 to \$15 a month, roughly \$100 a year. It could be more, but \$100 a year is good—plus HST; they get the HST on top. So it's a little over \$100 a month that you're paying on that.

Since 2002 to the end of 2009-2010, you had paid back \$7.8 billion collectively. She may have a different point of view; she's entitled to get up and speak. So \$7.8 billion has been paid off. But now, surprisingly, they've extended this debt retirement charge to 2018. They may dispute whether it's paid off or not paid off. This is a more complex issue. The remaining portion of the debt after the restructuring was basically set aside because it was going to be paid back by Hydro One and the other utilities, because this was the spreading out of how much the assets could create revenue. Some of the assets with Hydro One, the transmission system and the distribution system, as well as with OPG, the generation system, were assets that could generate capital; revenue to pay off the debt. This was the residual stranded debt.

What we're calling for? Our leader, Tim Hudak, is calling for a forensic audit. It's a fair compromise. We're not trying to—I just think it's one more example on this file and the finances of Ontario. They've increased spending beyond the rate of growth in the economy. They have almost destroyed the energy system completely, because these 20-year contracts on the feed-in tariffs are future debt. Don't ever, by any means—that's future debt. It's a commitment by the taxpayers of Ontario. And what are the taxpayers telling me in my riding? They can't take it anymore.

All the laudable objectives are one thing. The deception of all this is, how are they going to pay for it? The only choice here to pay off this accumulated debt and squandering of resources is to increase taxes. Well, they've already hit the tax ceiling, in my view, whether it's taxes when you drive your car, auto insurance, tuition for students, registering kids in fitness programs. Everything is taxed to the max.

Now there's a new tax hiding until after the next election; it's called the eco tax. Every battery that you've ever used, every electronic appliance you've ever used, is going to be taxed, either at consumption or at disposal. Probably both. So if you have any old television stuff sitting around, get rid of it now, because I'll tell you: Right after the election, if they happen to be elected, it's going to be taxed. It will be taxed on disposal and on purchase of your new one.

There's nothing that they won't tax. In fact, if I look at it, they have raised taxes in health care. They called it the health tax. It's about \$1,200 a year—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Oh, but you're keeping it.

Mr. John O'Toole: They don't know—don't even bother listening anymore. Now they're saying different things.

Mr. Jeff Leal: No, you are.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I asked Sylvia Jones about that one.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order. The member for Peterborough.

Mr. John O'Toole: They have delisted a number of services. That means you're paying for it out of your pocket. Not only that, this is—it's quite tragic, really.

They have a war going on with the pharmacists. The Ministry of Health says, "Oh, it's all resolved." No, no; it's not resolved at all. Now either you can't get drugs or you have to buy the patent drug, which is twice as expensive. Some of the drugs you can't get.

I think one of the areas that they've done quite well on—they've invested a lot—is the whole idea of full-day learning. I would say this on the full-day learning: It's universally taxed. We're all paying for it. It's about a billion and a half a year. When fully implemented, it'll be over \$3 billion. That's just the operating side, plus they've got to build more classroom space.

Now what is doing it? The wrong people are delivering the program. Not only that; not everybody in Ontario can avail themselves of it. Some of these three- and four-year-olds cannot ride on a bus when they live in Timmins

or some other area that's not Toronto. It's fine, probably great, for Toronto.

In fact, I have two daughters that have children; our grandchildren. We have five now. We're going to have seven here by October, I guess. I'm getting busier all the time—at least certainly my wife is. I'm great at playing games with them, I guess. I take them skiing; I do say that. Two of them are old enough now, four and seven: Meghan and Daniel. I've taken them a few times.

But the point I'm saying is, this idea of the full-day learning isn't fairly or equitably distributed. Some families cannot get this service. In fact, it's going to be after the next election before some of them will be able to get it. That's simply not fair. This is all I want. Families in Ontario want to be treated fairly. That's all we're asking. Take the foot off their throat or off their chest, ease off on the spending a bit, quit making all these reckless promises. Treat people with respect, as opposed to assuming that they're just another function of your tax policy: Get them working so you can tax them.

0930

Young people today, in the future of Ontario—I'm questioning what the jobs of the future are. Not everyone can be a university professor or a highly qualified nurse; not everyone can do that. We need to have jobs for families and jobs for the young people. I look at these pages here today who are new; they'll be introduced today, I think. That is the most exciting opportunity for them.

I think it's people first. That's the function of government. We are elected at the will of our constituents, and the Premier at the will of the province. People just want to be treated respectfully and with dignity.

That means quit taking every measly cent you can out of their pockets. Give them some of the choices in life, whether they want to have daycare or they want to have another—give them tax relief for certain expenditures, for child care. Some people work shift work. Some of these programs are designed for everybody who works for the government. How about the people who are working in a steel plant who are on shift work? They may want daycare at a different time of the day. They may even have it on the weekends or in the summer.

These programs aren't designed for today's economy; it's sort of 7-24. And a lot of the economy of the future—I have a couple of children who are lawyers and have a master's degree and all these kinds of things. Some of them actually have quite good jobs here in Toronto, and they actually work at home a day or two a week. My son is legal counsel for Procter and Gamble Canada. He does pretrial discovery hearings and that online.

So your future won't be getting on some GO Transit bus, riding for an hour and a half to get to some bank tower in Toronto to do financial transactions. That's baloney. In 20 years, you'll be doing it from some remote office, probably in your home. All that transit stuff we're talking about, I don't see a vision, and I don't see a plan where they put people first, and the changes in the economy.

I worked for the auto sector for 31 years, mostly on the computer side, personnel side and production. That's the three different types of careers I had: a computer programmer at the beginning; personnel is the labour relations area; and my last 10 years basically was in production. Those jobs, unfortunately, may not exist in the future. Countries like Mexico and China and Brazil and those kinds of economies will probably have a lower wage factor—for the short term, mind you—and we have to be innovative about the economy of the future. For young people, my children—we have five children, and we have seven grandchildren coming up—it's a knowledge-based economy, a global economy.

One of the best books that I've read recently is Friedman's book called *Hot, Flat and Crowded*. It's Friedman's book, absolutely mandatory reading about the future economy.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He's a right-wing nut.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, it's true. It's talking about the globalization of the economy, "hot" meaning global warming, "flat" meaning the technology, and "crowded" meaning the population. Right now there are about 5.5 billion people in the world. When there's about seven billion, there's not going to be enough stuff—water and air. That's the number the demographers use: At about seven billion there are going to be shortages of all the resources we use. Water will be scarce. Gas, we're almost at peak oil now. If you read the book on peak oil, it will tell you that those things will become more and more expensive as more and more people want them.

The emerging economies need that chance. They need that chance to grow their economies. We can't be greedy and take all the resources for North Americans' consumption. I think it is important that we have a globalized approach to resolving these resource-sharing issues. In fact, they are big issues.

But what troubles me most of all, when I look at this interim supply motion and why the House leaders had to come up with some way of paying the bills, or at least to be debated—we felt it was a good time to reflect. Our House leader, John Yakabuski, the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, made it clear to us—and our leader, Tim Hudak—that we've got to make everything focus back on the family's ability to pay. I support that. Being a person of average means myself, and my family and my constituents in Durham, I feel very much the same.

Let's put it in perspective. We shouldn't be making a lot of cuts, but we shouldn't be making promises about more because that's future debt on these children. In fairness, any fool can promise you anything, but "is it being disingenuous" is the question that should be asked. I question those who promise things. It's like someone who has a drug problem or something. They're impaired in their thinking of what they can do. It's unfair to be dishonest with our youth, because if you're spending more than you're earning, pretty soon you're going to be bankrupt. And what's that doing for our collective future?

I'm concerned now—the evidence is pretty well together; we had a briefing last week—that they will have doubled the public debt. I think the debt is around \$15,000 or \$20,000 per person. Now, some investments are worthwhile. Investments in knowledge and the economy and that kind of thing are very important investments. Health care, of course, is about 40% of the budget.

Here's how I look at it, in summary. I'm trying to summarize this a bit because this is about paying the bills and the interim supply motion. Right now, the government's budget is about \$115 billion. This is important. That's our own purpose spending, health care being about 41% of that. Education and post-secondary education: Remember, we have the highest tuition already so there's not a lot more room to move there. The students can hardly afford to get the education they need to get the job—the lawyer, the accountant, the scientist.

The OMA is advertising on the radio and television now. Why? The Ontario Medical Association is afraid. Their budget numbers for the last—this is true, as well; I was assistant to the Minister of Health for, I think, four years. The average spending increases annually in health care are 6% to 7%. Their last financial statement was 3%. Health care spending—doctors, nurses and front-line health care workers—is 78% of their total payroll in a hospital, wages and benefits, so if you don't give them the money they're going to have to lay people off. I want that on the record, and I want people to hold me accountable because that's what they're doing.

This is a postdated cheque till after the election, and then they'll say, "Oh, we've got this problem, Houston. We've got to raise taxes."

The whole budget is \$115 billion. Listen up, here: That doesn't include the off-book debt. WSIB, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, has—listen up—\$12 billion in debt over and above the \$20 billion.

Winding up here, I'm just going to wrap it all up: You take the electricity debt, the WSIB debt, their own debt, the budget is about \$120 billion. About 25% of all spending is debt. This is not sustainable. The families of Ontario should know it and be worried about it because Premier McGuinty has taken this province down the wrong path.

I'd love to be able to promise more but I should not deceive the people. I should at least tell them how I'm going to pay for it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time I have left.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm going to use this time to do a couple of things, one of them to actually speak to the motion on interim supply to the Legislative Assembly and speak to that in some degree. Before I go there, I want to speak to a couple of things that I think need to be addressed by the board, and some members may take some exception to it but nonetheless I just want to put some of that on the record. I also want to speak in the broader terms of what interim supply allows us to do.

First of all, just so people understand what we're talking about, this is the estimates to be approved for the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly is run by an organization called the Board of Internal Economy and that Board of Internal Economy is made up of, I believe, three or four government members and a member from each of the opposition parties and the Speaker. The thing that you have to glean out of what I just said is that the board is actually controlled by the government.

0940

I just want to say that one of the reasons that we find ourselves here today, very late in the process of the estimates, because the estimates, as far as interim supply—this should have been dealt with a long time ago. The reason that we're here today is that I believe the board is somewhat dysfunctional. I think what happens is that every government, in this case the Liberal government, tries to micromanage the board. They think that there is some kind of conspiracy to everything that comes before the board, so therefore it has to meet with much, much scrutiny. We have these big long processes of discussion, of meetings, of briefings, of more meetings and more briefings and more meetings in order to try to deal with things that are pretty straightforward.

I would not argue for a second that the board should not take its responsibility seriously when it comes to scrutinizing the expenses of the Legislative Assembly and making sure that we get the best value per dollar. That is not my argument. I think that is a given. I think all members of the board, New Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals, all have that in mind. But I think where it falls dysfunctional is in the way that the board is structured.

If you look at our friends in Ottawa—and you have some friends in Ottawa, I'm sure, Speaker, as I do—they have a much different process when it comes to how their Board of Internal Economy functions. What they do there, which I think is very smart, is they have a Board of Internal Economy that is made up of one representative from each of the recognized parties. That allows every caucus, Conservative, NDP, Bloc, Liberal, in the federal House of Commons—and Reform when they were there—to take ownership and responsibility for decisions taken at the board. Because the structure that we have now is that the government is afraid that, no matter what happens at the board, they'll wear it, because they have the majority on the board, and I think I understand. What I would say up front is I understand why the government feels that way, because in fact they are the majority on the board and if something passes that is controversial, even if the opposition voted for the motion with the government, it's the government that's going to wear it because they're the people who have a majority on the board. Therefore, they could have stopped or allowed to have happen whatever it was proposed at the board.

So I just want to put on the record that I think there needs to be reform to how the board is actually structured. I've always suggested at the board itself, and I suggest it here in the Legislature today, that I think we need

to amend the act. I think we need to change how the board is structured so that you really can have decision-making in which all of the three parties are engaged and have ownership of when it comes to the decisions made at the board. That way, if you make a decision, whatever it might be: about members' budgets as far as how much money you've got to run your constituency office; if we decide to do renovations in the building, as we have done before; or we decide to deal with the security budgets in regard to how security is maintained here at the Legislature, all of those issues, then each of the caucuses would have to look very specifically at what it means and understand that if they vote yea or nay—it doesn't matter which way they would vote—they would own ownership of that vote and would be accountable, I think, much more than they are today.

Therefore, I propose—and I'm not doing it as far as a motion today, but I propose as we come back after the next election, those of us who are fortunate enough to come back, we should really seriously look at changing how the board is structured so that really, you have a board that is there for the benefit of members and benefit of the assembly; so that we can make some rational decisions and not political decisions about how this place operates.

I've sat on the board longer than anybody else in this assembly. I've been sitting on the board since about 1993. That makes me the veteran in this assembly on the board. I can tell you, I've seen boards run by the government under New Democrats, I've seen it under Conservatives and I've seen it under Liberals. There's been some difference about how the board is operated between all three governments, but that underlying fear that the government has that whatever decision they make, pro or con, is going to come back to haunt them is what really drives decisions at the board, and I don't think that's the way that we should do business.

For example, one of the things that the Board of Internal Economy does and one of the things that we're approving in the estimates today, through this interim supply motion, is constituency budgets. There are some legitimate arguments that have been put forward by members of this assembly. Conservatives, Liberals and New Democrats have spoken to me or have sent letters to board members to deal with issues within their constituencies. I'm not going to get into discussions we had at the board, because that would not be the right thing to do, as far as who said what, but I want to speak to some of those issues so that members of the assembly understand why it is that we need to do this particular reform.

Members of this assembly have constituency offices. Some of them find themselves in a very difficult spot. Their rents have gone up because of rents just normally going up and their budgets have not kept the pace. Yes, there's been an adjustment for CPI on rents. I think the CPI adjustment, if I remember correctly, is about 1.1%. But members over the years have been trying to make do in constituency offices where the rents have gone up way beyond the CPI. Therefore, they're having a hard time

trying to make ends meet. Then they have to pay their heat and their hydro, and the heat and the hydro have gone up and there's not been an increase for that. Added on to all of that, there's an HST.

The point is, many members find themselves in a position of not really having the amount of money that they need to properly serve their constituents, so they're having to make decisions such as I had to make, which is to lay off a staff member. It really came down to that in my budget where I come from, where I run, in Kapuskasing and Timmins: I had to lay off my halftime person because I can't afford to pay her. She left my employ sometime early in the fall. It is at the point where rents have gone up, wages have gone up, everything has gone up and the budgets have not kept pace with that. As a result, you're having to lay off staff.

Some people will say, "Too bad, so sad, Bisson. That's just the decisions you got to make when you're a manager." I understand that, and I'm not asking for any treatment for any member in this assembly that would be different from what our friends in the private sector or our friends in the public sector would have to deal with. But they at least live in a system that is a bit more rational than what we live in under the Board of Internal Economy. For years, members have been going to the board, under New Democrats, under Conservatives and under Liberals, to properly address the issue of constituency budgets so that when the constituent walks into our offices, the lights are on, the heat has been paid, the computers are plugged in and you have adequate staffing to be able to respond to the needs of your constituent. In some cases it's more expensive to run those services because of the geography of those ridings. There are ridings in southern Ontario, and certainly there are those in northern Ontario, where it is almost impossible to provide the services that one needs to do, as a result of the budget.

I'll give you an example. I'll give you three ridings that I know well. One is mine, Timmins–James Bay. To be able to do the work that has to be done in that riding as far as properly staffing it and being able to have a presence in the communities where constituents have particular things to do, there is not enough money to do that. Is it fair to those constituents, compared to somebody who lives in a downtown Toronto riding or a downtown Sudbury riding? If I was in the riding of Sudbury, I would get essentially about \$20,000 less than what I get in Timmins–James Bay. But you can go anywhere in that riding in the same day, you have only one constituency office that you have to maintain and you get essentially the same budget as somebody who has a large geographical riding such as Timmins–James Bay, Algoma–Manitoulin, Thunder Bay–Superior North or Kenora–Rainy River. Is that right?

Yes, I know the members of the government will come and say, "There's a geographic adjustment in your budget already," and they're right; it's about \$20,000 a year. But certainly to God, we have to have a rational discussion at the board about what is adequate when it

comes to supporting the needs of constituents in those ridings—Liberal, Conservative or NDP. It's not the issue of partisan politics. The issue is, does a resident living in a large geographic riding have the same right to be able to see his or her MPP and deal with their constituency staff on issues that are important to them that somebody has who lives in an urban riding? I think the answer is yes. But we have not had and have been able to have, a rational decision at the board about how we deal with that.

Oh, yes, they all come to me, and I'm sure they go to the Liberal members of the board and the Conservative members of the board and they say, "Oh, God, can you do something for me? I'm with you, Gilles. I'm with you, Elizabeth" or Monique or whoever. "We're with you to make changes." But the reality is, government members aren't about to stand up and become a target within their own caucus on issues around the board when the Premier and the cabinet and people at the Board of Internal Economy say, "No, don't stand up and don't talk about these things, because at the end of the day these are losers for us politically."

I think, hence, there's the problem. You need to have a board that is structured so there is a representative from each party that is recognized in this House, that we have a rational discussion so that a member of the assembly, be it an independent member or a member from any of the caucuses, can bring an issue to the board and have a fair hearing so that the issue is at least dealt with and it's not dismissed out of hand.

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One of the issues that came to the board and has been coming to the board for some time is that members have to travel to neighbouring ridings to attend meetings. For example, for me it's not an issue. In my riding, if there's a meeting it's somewhere in my riding, because it's big enough that you're not going to go anywhere else. If there is a CCAC meeting or a meeting of the health unit or a meeting of some sort of regional organization that provides funding to the communities that I represent, it's either based in Timmins, Kap or Hearst. Those are all in my riding, so it's not an issue for me. But imagine you are the member in downtown Toronto and you hold a riding such as my friend Mr. Murray, who is in—what riding is yours?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Toronto Centre.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Toronto Centre. Somebody calls and says, "Listen, I really want my MPP to come to a meeting that has to do with health services in my community," and the meeting is, let's say, for some reason five ridings over, which is, quite frankly, what normally happens. He cannot expense that as a travel allotment for mileage, or if he has to pay a fee to get into a particular conference five ridings over he cannot expense that, and I don't think that's right. I think the member should be allowed to do what has to be done to represent his riding. If the meeting is five or seven ridings over or one riding over, it's up to him to justify to his constituents every four years if he was doing his job right. If he went to

represent a health interest or an economic development issue in his riding at some conference or some meeting that took place outside his riding, he should be allowed to expense that.

We've been trying to deal with this at the board for, God, it's got to be at least two years. Each and every time this issue comes up before the board, the government basically digs in its heels and gets into all kinds of discussions about how that is somehow giving some member an advantage. Tell me how it's an advantage when you get called to a meeting five ridings over at 7 o'clock at night on a Thursday. You'd rather be at home with your family if you had a choice, so don't tell me it's some sort of great advantage. When you go to these things, people actually expect you to do some work and they actually expect you to do some follow-up. The member is not benefiting financially in any kind of way; the member is going to do their job.

Another example is the members down in the south-western region of the province or the eastern parts of the province. If I was in a riding somewhere north of Kingston, the CCAC services I believe are in Kingston, or some of them may be overlapping into Ottawa. You may have to go to the regional capital in order to go meet with the regional organization that provides services in your riding and you're not a regional capital member. I would think that would be the case for Mr. Clark when it comes to Leeds–Grenville, I believe his riding is. I'm sure there are meetings about services in his riding that are taking place in Kingston or in Ottawa. He is not allowed, as the member for Leeds–Grenville, to get in his car and drive there, expense it at the 42 or 43 cents that we get for mileage, and if he has to pay a fee to get into the meeting because there's a fee charged, and sometimes those things happen—it's like a conference that they ask us to come to in order to find out what's going on on a particular issue that's important in your riding—he could not expense it. I don't think that's right. I think he should be allowed to expense it. But again, why can't we deal with this? Because the structure of the board is completely dysfunctional as far as serving the needs of the members.

I just say, here are two examples—constituency budgets, and here's another example in regard to members' travel—that are really issues we've tried to deal with at the board and can't because of the way the board is structured. I would say, just as I end on this particular issue, that I believe that the solution to the problem is to change the board's structure. To do that we need a change in the act that would say that we will change the structure so that one member from each of the recognized parties be named to the Board of Internal Economy and approved by this House so that we then, as members, can sit down collectively and figure out how to deal with this. Because then I'll tell you what's going to happen: If, let's say, a Conservative, NDP or Liberal member comes to me as the NDP member of the board and says, "I want you to deal with an issue," I had better do my homework and make sure that first of all, I understand what the issues are, but I'm going to have to own the decision.

Therefore, there's going to be some discussion with the Conservatives and Liberals about how should we deal with this particular issue? With a mind to the public purse, is this money that we can afford to spend, yes or no? With a mind to the politics of the issue—because maybe all three political parties are going to think, “Well, that's not a very good idea. If we do that, we'll be seen as self-serving, so maybe we shouldn't do it.” But we would at least be able to start having some rational decisions.

On the board issue—I'll just end on this particular issue and that is that of members' pensions. You all know in this Legislature that we have a huge pension—

Laughter.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They're all laughing. Exactly.

Back in 1996, one Mike Harris came to the assembly with a piece of legislation that stripped what they called the gold-plated members' pension. Here's what the pension was—it was a very good pension, a very rich pension; I admit that freely. We had a pension that was similar to that of our federal counterparts. The reason that was put in place was that if somebody decides to quit their career—let's say they're in a law office or they have their own business or whatever—and run for Parliament, and they do it for five, 10, 15 years, they would continue accruing some type of pension so that when they go to retire they're not penalized for those years they've left where they were at, where they were getting a real pension.

So at the time, some years ago, a pension was devised for the assembly, and yes, it was richer than what you would get in the private or public sector. There's no question about that. Under our pension plan, I think you were allowed to make—I think it was 75% of your best five is what it came out to if you were fully vested in the pension after about 15 years. Some people thought that was too rich. Rather than Mike Harris coming in and saying, “It's too rich. Let's change it and let's make sure people don't retire at age 42,” he decided to scrap it altogether.

So ever since then, we've been without a pension in this Legislature, since 1996. Nobody in my riding believes me. Who in this assembly thinks that in their constituency, if you went out and said that you don't have a pension, you would actually be believed? Stand up, please. I don't see one of you getting up, because you get the same thing I do. They all think we're getting a pension. So my thing is, we can't have a rational discussion at the board about this, let alone in this assembly.

I don't argue that you bring back a gold-plated pension at Queen's Park—I don't argue that for two seconds—but I should at least get the pension of a civil servant. To me, it's weird that I'm employed by the Ontario Legislative Assembly and not at least entitled to an OPS pension. We can't even have that discussion. If we were able to have some mechanism to have those discussions in a more rational way, maybe then members could actually be treated a little bit more fairly and we could have things that are more reflective of what our counterparts get in either the private or the public sector.

I know I'm going to get e-mails stirred up by Liberals and Conservatives as I give this speech, that Bisson is advocating pensions. That's not my point. I want to be really, really clear. I'm not advocating that we have a gold-plated pension. I'm just advocating that we have a process where we talk about members' services and benefits in a way that makes some sense. At the end of the day, we're all responsible and we understand that we're accountable for our decisions. I trust that I'm not stupid enough and other people around this assembly aren't stupid enough to do things that would be completely offside with the public, but I think most of the public would say, “Well, you know what? Why shouldn't you get what the Ontario public sector gets?”

It's a small pension. You work there for 30 years and you get basically a pension of around—I think it would work out to about 60% or 65% of your best five. Now, very few people will be here for 30 years, so it wouldn't amount to much of a pension, but at least there would be something. And when people decide to run for public office and to come to the Ontario Legislature, they can say, “I'm working someplace where there's a pension and there's some mechanism so that I can continue paying into my pension plan for the four years that I'm here,” or eight, 12, whatever number of years, “so that as I leave my private sector or my public sector employer, I continue pension contributions for the time that I'm in the Legislature.” That at least would be fair. I don't argue that we make some super-duper pension that makes people rich but, at the very least, that people who come here don't lose it.

I was listening yesterday and Mr. Clark said he was CAO of a municipality and he was a member of OMERS. Wouldn't it make sense that there would be some mechanism that he could continue paying what would be equivalent to his OMERS pension? It's not a lot of money as far as cost, and it's certainly not a lot of money as far as the benefit he would get at the end, but at least it would be fairer, so that he and his family are not put in a position where after five, 10 or 15 years of service here there is a five-, 10- or 15-year hole in the contributions to his pension, which may make a difference in a person's ability to retire. Those conversations you can't have unless, I believe, you have some reasonable way to structure how decisions are made here.

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On the broader issue of the interim supply motion, a lot of interim supply motions—and yes, Madame Smith was right when she said I was one of the people who wanted to have a debate on this, because I wanted to put on the record a couple of things: some stuff around the Board of Internal Economy, but also some of the general issues that affect the economy of Ontario, and specifically the place that I come from, Timmins–James Bay.

There is, I've got to say, a real sense of anger out there on the part of the public. It's really an anger that's directed at the McGuinty government. The anger is on the basis, I believe, of a couple of things. One is, people

are feeling that they're getting hit in their pocketbook each and every day.

I was just talking to one of the members from the Conservative caucus before I got up to speak. I asked him unprompted, "What top two issues are you getting in your riding?" He said the same thing I did, and some of the Liberal members I've asked this have told me the same thing: hydro bills and HST. They are still today the top issues why people contact us in our constituency offices when it comes to complaints. I'm not talking about workers' compensation questions or trying to get a birth certificate; those things always happen. But when people contact their elected official to complain, those are the top two issues.

I've been getting, and I'm sure you're getting, phone calls and people walking into my office who have all kinds of horror stories of where they're at. I got an email and I called this woman back I guess on Thursday or Friday last week. She has a house on the same lake where I've got a cottage, out in Kamiskotia. Her hydro bill in the last two years—she's electrically heated, uses wood as a primary source of heat but when she's not there the backup system is electricity. There's no natural gas out there so it means the heating of your hot water, your oven, your dryer, all of that stuff, is all electric. She went from having to pay on average about \$300 a month a couple of years ago to where now she's paying 700 bucks a month. She's saying, "My God, this is getting ridiculous." So I gave her a call and had a chat with her. She is mad as heck and she wanted me to pass on to the government, why is it that you think it's right that she pays all this extra money for electricity that puts her in a position of not being able to make ends meet at the end of the month? She is typical of the many phone calls and emails I get in my constituency office.

I had another gentleman, whom I called yesterday. A Mr. MacDonald, I think it was Joey MacDonald; he gave me a call. I believe he lives in Schumacher. I may have the town wrong. But Joey gives me a call and he says, "Gilles, this is really getting ridiculous. My wife and I do everything we can in order to live within the rules the government has established around when you should use your hydro meter. We don't do our washing and drying in peak hours. We do that in off-peak hours. We do all the things that we've been asked to do. My hydro bill has gone up about \$100 a month since last year. My God, they want me to conserve. At the very least, the conservation rate should have been less than what they have on the bill now." Because all the government did with these smart meters is that they took the going rate and they made that the base non-peak rate and then charge extra above that when you're in the peak.

He said, "Listen, I'm having to pay more than I ever had to before because they brought in the HST in July on the hydro bill, the hydro rate itself has gone up and the government has brought in the smart meters. We find ourselves having to pay almost \$100 a month more than we did before. My wife and I are still working but we're getting close to retirement. My wife's about to retire, I'm

shortly behind her, and we're having to make some decisions about when we're going to retire and what we're going to do. The cost of maintaining our home is going up because not only has my hydro gone up when it comes to rate of hydro and the HST, but so has my gas bill because of the HST, so is the gas that I put in my truck because of the HST."

He just wanted me to pass on to the Liberal government that he, as a constituent of mine, is very angry, is obviously not going to be voting Liberal in the next election; I think he's voting for me. I hope; I didn't ask him, but I would imagine.

I think it is indicative of where the public is at. They're saying, "You know, governments are elected in order to make decisions on behalf of citizens, and we trust that those governments are going to keep that trust in mind when it comes to what you're going to do when it comes to dealing with the everyday issues."

So Joey MacDonald and others who have emailed me or called me or stopped into my offices about hydro are mad as heck, because they're saying, "This government broke that trust. You were supposed to watch out on my behalf, and all I know is I'm working harder today than I ever have before and I'm having to pay far more than I ever had in the past." And the hydro story is just the one.

It doesn't matter where I go in my riding; if it's in Moonbeam, Kapuskasing, Moosonee, Attawapiskat or Timmins. The number one issue I hear about when it comes to complaints is around both the hydro bill and the HST. I think that is true for most members in this assembly who want to honestly say what it is that they're getting at their const offices. This government, quite frankly, has created a royal mess. They have made some decisions around electricity policy that have driven the price of electricity through the roof.

I find it very amusing when I come into the House and I listen to question period, because if you listen to the Conservatives talk, they would say this is all a Liberal doing. Well, you know, I've been around here long enough to know where this all started: It started with Ernie Eves. Do you remember that guy? He was Premier of Ontario. He was a Conservative, right? I think we all agree. He is the one who started this: the whole dismantling of Ontario Hydro into the seven corporations that it is now—or the nine, whatever it is; I've lost count—OPA and the rest of them. He basically started the dismantling, the deregulation and the privatization of hydro. That was an initiative that was started by the Conservatives.

I remember Dalton McGuinty, in opposition, was opposed to it. He said, "Oh, my God, this is terrible. We're like the New Democrats: We believe that hydro was set up as a crown corporation to deliver power at cost in order to be an economic development tool for the industry that is established in Ontario. One of the main driving forces behind the economic success that we have in Ontario is our electricity rates." I remember those speeches that the now-Premier gave when he was Leader of the Opposition.

Well, my God; a funny thing happened when they got elected. They found the Tory playbook in the cabinet room and they said, "Let's keep on playing the same game." So now the Liberals have embraced it as a Liberal policy—well, to my point, what's a Liberal? It's just a Conservative in a hurry. That's always been my definition of a Liberal. They basically, in essence, have taken the Conservative policy and run with it. So now you've got this pillow fight between the Liberals and Conservatives about electrical policy in Ontario, and I hear the Tories go on about how terrible it is, what the Liberals are doing. My God, they're salivating that they can't do it themselves. This is exactly what the Conservatives wanted in the first place.

When I speak to constituents in my riding—and I speak to people around Ontario who send me emails that I respond to, or phone calls, or when I run across them, wherever I might be—I always try to point out, "Hey, listen, don't give the Tories a free pass on your hydro bill, because a large part of what happens here was set up by way of the initial policies of the Conservative government."

We've now got this mess, and what are we going to do with it? We know, for example, that one of the things that recently happened was—Cliffs Natural Resources was one of the three companies in the Ring of Fire. It's out there, recognizing that people in northern Ontario are saying, "If any ore comes out of the Ring of Fire, that ore has got to be processed in Ontario. That means the refinery, the smelter—everything has got to happen in Ontario. These are our natural resources, and we should benefit by way of jobs and investments when it comes to minerals that come out of the Ring of Fire."

I think Cliffs Natural Resources understood the political mood, not only in Ontario but specifically in northern Ontario, that if they tried to develop those ore bodies up in the Ring of Fire they would not be able to sustain the displeasure, on the part of northern Ontarians, if they tried to move that ore out of Ontario. We saw what happened to Xstrata in the city of Timmins.

So here we go: Cliffs Natural Resources says, "We have four preferred sites where we can build a refinery and a smelter. We've got Timmins, Sudbury, Greenstone and Thunder Bay." They're saying, "Those are the four sites that we're prepared to look at." Further, Cliffs Natural Resources says, in a press release a couple of weeks ago, "We think that Sudbury is probably the preferred site." So of course, myself, as a representative from Timmins, and the representatives from Greenstone and Thunder Bay were advocating for our communities, too. God bless. That's what should happen in this system.

But Cliffs Natural Resources said, "It ain't going to be built in any of these communities if we don't deal with the electricity policy. The hydro rates in this province are beyond what's sustainable to be able to build and sustain that type of production. If the hydro rates are not adjusted to some form of industrial hydro rate, the refinery and the smelter will be outside of Ontario." Do you know where I think it's going to land? It'll probably land in Canada:

Manitoba or Quebec. Why? Because their electricity is less.

My colleague Mr. Hampton raised yesterday a really important point when he talked about this whole issue around Cliffs resources and the Ring of Fire. He made the point that if you compare what Cliffs resources will have to pay in electricity and the difference of what they would pay if they established a refinery or a smelter in Ontario versus Manitoba over a 30-year period, do you know how much money it is? It's a \$1-billion savings. By the way, how much does it cost to build a refinery smelter? It's about a billion bucks. The company is saying, "We can capitalize the entire cost of a refinery smelter being built in Canada if we put it in Manitoba compared to Ontario or Quebec."

If we're trying to compete for these types of investments, and we should be, the Ontario government has got to realize it has a responsibility to ensure that we do what is right for Ontarians, and that is, these are our natural resources, and we need to make it attractive for those mining companies to establish their processes here in Ontario.

There are some in the environmental movement that say, "Maybe it's a good thing that we move it somewhere else because then, that's pollution we don't have to worry about in Ontario." I would say to my environmental friends that it's just moving the footprint somewhere else. I would rather have the footprint in Ontario where I have a say about what the emissions are going to be.

The other part of the story is that Ontario, when it comes to emissions into the air, has the MISA regulations, which are amongst the toughest in the world, to the chagrin of many in the mining industry, forest industry and other industries that are affected. So I say to my friends in the environmental movement, you got what you wanted under MISA, and now some of you are out there saying it would be a good thing if we didn't do those types of activities such as the development of the Ring of Fire.

All I'm saying is that if we don't do it here, it's going to be done somewhere else, and the footprint will be a lot larger because regulations around discharges into the environment are a lot weaker in other jurisdictions compared to Ontario. So I think we should take our responsibility if we have the ability to develop it here.

I just say to my friends, there is an anger out there, a huge anger when it comes to what's going on in Ontario, when it comes to the issue of electricity prices, from both individuals and those people who are worried about their jobs and what happens in industry.

I've only got a couple of minutes left, and I guess at this point it would be hard to get into a whole other subject, so at this point, I will wrap up my debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 52. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 8, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent for everyone to wear Elect More Women: Equal Voice buttons.

I also have the pleasure of introducing Rosemary Speirs, who's the founder and chair of Equal Voice in Canada. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We'll deal with the unanimous consent first. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'd like to introduce the friends from OPSEU. That includes Warren "Smokey" Thomas, the president of Ontario Public Service Employees Union—he's right there—along with many other colleagues: Benoit Dupuis, Florry Foster, Roxanne Barnes, Dan Sidsworth, Jamie Ramage, Greg Hamara, Brenda Wall, Marnie Niemi, Gord Hamilton and Rod Bemister. Thank you for coming today.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to introduce the family of page Amanda Belzowski: Lisa, Dan and Joshua Belzowski, who are in the gallery. Amanda is the Amanda of Amanda's Lemonade Stand fame. Welcome.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to introduce in the west members' gallery Bart Millson, the father of Tyler Millson, my legislative page from Leeds–Grenville. Tyler goes to Kemptville Public School, and we're pleased to have Bart with us in the assembly today.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to introduce two of my constituents visiting us today. In the east members' gallery, we have Brian and Lee McPhail.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Joining us in the west members' gallery today is Phil Gillies, former member of the Legislature from 1981 to 1987, who served in the riding of Brantford and served in the Parliament at the same time that my father, Paul Yakabuski, did.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Il me fait plaisir d'introduire aujourd'hui Maureen Hasinoff, who used to work in my constituency office and is a student at Ottawa U, and her better half, Ted Horton.

Mr. Frank Klees: Visiting with us today will be students from Charles Howitt Public School in Richmond Hill. Their teacher, Mrs. Janice Bainbridge, is with them, as well as Mrs. Bainbridge's daughter Sarah Bainbridge. We welcome them to the Legislature today.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: One of our fine pages is from my area, Scarborough–Agincourt, Lakshman Thayaparam, and his proud mother and father are with us today behind us in the gallery, Usha Thayaparam and Selva Thayaparam. I welcome them to the Legislature.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'd like to welcome today Mr. Mitch Stein, who is the father of Erik Stein, a page from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Dave Levac: I know he has been introduced but I thought it important that I indicate my support for a fellow colleague and a friend, Mr. Phil Gillies, who worked very tirelessly in our community and did good work. He's one of my favourite Tories.

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

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Canada, His Excellency, Mr. Junsai Zhang, accompanied by the consul general of the People's Republic of China at Toronto, Mr. Ligang Chen. Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature today.

Also in the Speaker's gallery, I'd like all members to warmly welcome the Honourable Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House of Commons and member of Parliament for Kingston and the Islands. Welcome to Queen's Park, Mr. Speaker. I trust that all members are going to show Speaker Milliken how to run a question period.

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

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

I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 39th Parliament: Amanda Belzowski, Don Valley West; Beau Bouliane, Sault Ste. Marie; Oliver Campbell, Chatham–Kent–Essex; Michael Church Carson, Beaches–East York; Simon Cook, Oakville; Madeline Diab, Essex; Julian Dusko-Bernyck, London West; Benjamin Hillier-Weltman, Ottawa West–Nepean; Sadie Honderich, Parry Sound–Muskoka; Emily Hutchings, Niagara Falls; Braden Leal, Peterborough; Holly Rose Lorenzon, Vaughan; Brittany McCorrison, Oak Ridges–Markham; Alexandra McLaughlin, Huron–Bruce; Nicolas Meilleur, Sudbury; Tyler Millson, Leeds–Grenville; Ira Sharma, Etobicoke North; Erik Stein, Kingston and the Islands; Lakshman Thayaparam, Scarborough–Agincourt; and not from the riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex but from the great riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, Maria van Bommel; and Hailey Weller, Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Welcome to all of our pages.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Minister of Energy.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would remind the honourable member from Halton that we do not make reference to attendance of members.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, as you are aware, hydro utilities have been fined for charging illegal rates of

interest for late payments, but in a decision released yesterday your Ontario Energy Board said that hydro utilities will be allowed to pass on the \$18 million in illegal fines to Ontario families. Why are you making Ontario families pay the price for illegal activities?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member does raise an interesting question that I think deserves some explanation. This was a lawsuit that started in 1998 under the Harris government in the Ontario courts applying to a practice that, frankly, began back in 1981 when the Davis government was here.

In 2010, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled on the terms of settlement. As part of the ruling from the court, local distribution companies were directed to go to the Ontario Energy Board, an independent regulator, for direction on the recovery of these settlement costs. Yesterday, the Ontario Energy Board did in fact rule that local distribution companies are allowed to recover the settlement costs from the rate base.

While local distribution companies may recover the settlement costs from the rate base, we've directed Hydro One to not do that, to recover the costs from within, and we'd encourage other local distribution companies to do the same.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: With all due respect, this is not an interesting question; it's a scam, what you're doing to consumers across the province. You've made an expensive mess out of our hydro system, and you don't respect the fact that Ontario families pay the bills at the end of the day for your bungling. Ontario families were overcharged for late payments with punitive interest rates. They won a victory when the Superior Court ruled that the utilities were in the wrong and that the interest rates were illegal. But Minister, I ask you again: Why is it, when Ontario families even win in the courts, you still make them pay the price of illegal activity?

Hon. Brad Duguid: There's no question that Ontario ratepayers are paying the price for a lot of the things that you did when you were in office. They're paying a lot of the bills that you left in this energy system. Why do you think we've had to invest so much to improve our energy system? Why do you think we've had to do so much to improve our generation in this province? Because you left our energy system in a mess. This, frankly, is just another example of that.

We have to respect the laws of this land and we have to respect the courts, but I've made it very clear. Hydro One will be finding these costs from within; they will not be putting these costs to ratepayers across the province. I encourage other local distribution companies to take a similar approach to this.

It's pretty rich when the member from the government that put our energy system into the ground is standing up and suggesting somehow or another—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Come on, Minister. As the expression goes, you know that dog won't hunt. Ontario families want to see a minister who's going to get on his feet and stand up for Ontario families, a minister who will show them the respect they deserve.

So, Minister, to put it back to you: Ontario families were charged exorbitant rates of interest—upwards of 60% annually. Section 347 of the Criminal Code makes it a criminal offence to charge that level of interest. Ontario families, under Dalton McGuinty, who are working hard, who are—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Sorry to interrupt, but I'd remind the honourable member that we don't make reference to members' names.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Ontario families, under the McGuinty government, who are working hard, who are playing by the rules, should not be on the hook for the illegal activities of the utilities. Minister, what will you do to set this right and let Ontario families get the respect they deserve?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It is a little rich that the member is talking about activities that took place while he was in cabinet. This goes back to 1981, and frankly, I can't just blame them for this; governments of all stripes were in power when this was taking place.

The courts have ruled. I would think the member would expect that we would want to respect those rulings. I've indicated what our direction to Hydro One has been and that's that Hydro One should recover these costs from within. I think that's a fair approach. He can support that or he can not support that. Maybe he should share with people what his position would be on this issue.

I would encourage other local distribution companies across the province to follow our lead. I think it's responsible. I think it's fair, in the circumstances. That's what we're going to do. Maybe he should share with Ontario families what his approach would be.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Minister of Energy: This decision happened yesterday, where the OEB—your OEB that you've gerrymandered and turned into another McGuinty tax collection agency—is now passing on illegal fines to consumers. So families who have played by the rules, families who have worked hard, families who have paid their bills are now going to face a jacking of their hydro rates to pay for illegal activity.

What do I see from the minister? He shrugs it off. He says, "There's nothing we can do. We're going to let it happen." Why don't you restore the OEB to its core mandate as a consumer protection agency and say that this outrageous decision will not stand in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think the Leader of the Opposition has a short memory. I would suggest, before he gets up on these issues, that he might want to do a little bit of research into his past history, because the OEB was

following a ruling that took place under his previous government with Enbridge that ruled in the exact same way. What was good then, for some reason, isn't good today.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Sorry to interrupt. The honourable member from Renfrew—I warn him, and he starts to heckle. I just ask that you come to order. I don't need help from the other side.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The Ontario Energy Board was following precedents set when he was in office. You know what? I respect the ruling of the Ontario Energy Board, and I respect the courts of this land as well on this. But I've said to Hydro One that they should not pass on these costs to their consumers, and I would recommend the same for other local distribution companies. What does he think—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, you know that your government has turned the Ontario Energy Board, which should at its core mandate be for consumer protection, into another tax collection agency for the McGuinty government. Now we find out that families who played by the rules, who paid their bills on time, are going to face \$18 million in fines because you don't stand up and fight for them.

You allow these things to happen. You pass them on down; you say, "What's a couple more bucks?" Well, it's adding up for Ontario families, who are saying enough is enough. They want change in our province and a government that respects the fact that families pay the bills at the end of the day. So Minister, I'm going to ask you: Stand up your in place and say this decision is wrong and it will not stand. It is outrageous to pass on these costs to families who played by the rules and paid their bills. Will you do that, Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think I've been very, very clear, and I'll repeat it again so the member can understand. We've directed Hydro One to recover these costs from within, so they'll not be passing them on to their ratepayers, and we recommend to other local distribution companies and their municipal boards that they do the same thing. It will be up to them what they do. You didn't do that with Enbridge. You had the opportunity to do that when that happened, and you chose not to. We've dealt with this in the most responsible way, with ratepayers front and centre in our decision. Perhaps it could be said this is just another piece of that Tory legacy that we've had to clean up: an energy system that was left in a mess; an energy system that was relying on dirty coal; an energy system that was outdated. We're cleaning up their mess every single day, and maybe it can be said that this is just another example of that.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: My goodness. This minister, like his Premier, is so out of touch with what's happening on

the ground, at kitchen tables and in businesses in our province.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Withdrawn.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Quite frankly, a shrug and a wink and a nod is not leadership in the province of Ontario. Families who played by the rules, who paid their bills on time, are now being dinged because of your mismanagement and the fact that you've corrupted the OEB and turned it away from consumer protection and into a tax collection agency. Restore the OEB as a consumer protection agency. Put in place, as we described, a consumer advocate to fight for Ontario families each and every day. Minister, say this is wrong for all utilities in the province of Ontario. Ontario families should not be stuck with the bill for your mismanagement of the system.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Once again, I've been very, very clear. We're the shareholder for Hydro One, and under these circumstances we've directed Hydro One to indeed take these costs on and cover them from within so that they don't pass them on to Ontario consumers. I think the member would know—but then again, he really didn't understand the energy system when he was in office. Maybe he should know that local distribution companies are generally owned by municipalities. They're the shareholders of local distribution companies. I've said very clearly that I would recommend that they go by our example, that indeed they go by the example that's being set by Hydro One: recover their costs from within, not pass them on to the ratepayers. But I think the member knows, or should know, that we don't have the authority to rule that they do that. Indeed, they're independent bodies that are run by municipal boards, by and large.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. For over a year now, I've been asking the Premier to tell families just how much the HST on gasoline, hydro and home heating was going to add to their household budgets. He refused to answer that question, and so did his ministers. Are the McGuinty Liberals prepared now? Are they ready to share that information today with the people who are footing those bills?

1050

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Actually, we shared that a few weeks ago, and you know what we found out? When you factor in our tax credits, when you factor in the personal tax cuts, when you factor in the one-time payments, Ontario families are further ahead. Why is that?

I say to my friends in the official opposition, their expert witness from two years ago is going to be speaking this morning at 11:30. Their expert, Mr. Jack Mintz, is coming to Toronto and will be speaking about the most competitive tax regime in North America for new investment, new jobs, a better future for our kids and fewer taxes for working Ontarians.

Tell us what you'll do differently. Are you going to take it off or are you going to continue to play games with the future of this province's economy?

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: According to documents obtained through freedom of information, the McGuinty Liberals' HST on gasoline, home heating and hydro takes \$1.6 billion out of already-stretched family budgets. Why did the McGuinty Liberals hide from families the true cost of the HST on these essentials?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The documents that I was pleased to release to the opposition show clearly and unequivocally that in fact Ontarians are further ahead as a result of our tax package.

But I think what Ontarians really want to know is, what will the NDP do with the HST? Let me give you an example.

Mr. Paul Miller: That's a great document. They're all blanked out.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Hamilton East. Stop the clock.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What will the NDP do? Will they do what the NDP government in Nova Scotia did and raise the HST? Will they do what they suggested we do and raise the old PST? They used to talk about repealing the HST. Now they're promising to amend it and leave it in place.

The only thing Ontarians want to know is, what is that leader's position, what is her party's position and why is she playing games with the future of this economy and jobs for the people in our province who need those jobs?

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, \$1.6 billion is \$350 a year from every single household in this province. That calculation does not include this government's 50% rate increase in hydro rates; OPG's proposed 6.2% rate increase; the \$18 million that utility companies will soon be collecting from customers that they've been overcharging on their late fees; or gas prices that are now at their all-time high in two years.

How much more is the HST costing Ontario families as a result of the increases in hydro and gas rates?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'd really like to know what the leader of the NDP believes with the HST. She's trying to have it every which way. They said they'd get rid of it; now they're keeping it.

We have laid out a tax plan for jobs and growth—the numbers she's referencing are two years old and incomplete—\$10.6 billion over four years in personal income tax cuts, which will leave 93% of Ontarians ahead of the game, which will leave our tax system more competitive, which will create jobs in places like Windsor, Hamilton, London and right across the north, areas that were hurt

badly during the great downturn. We stand by that package.

We will continue to make the kinds of investments we need to, to build the jobs of the future, to ensure that our kids have a better future and that we have the most competitive tax system for all Ontarians anywhere.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Back to the Acting Premier: While the McGuinty Liberals were hiding their own estimates about the real impact of the HST on family budgets, they rejected our analysis of the HST and kept insisting that customers would feel no pain, that consumers wouldn't feel any pain at all. But they were actually sitting on nearly identical estimates the entire time.

Why did the McGuinty Liberals keep basic information about the HST from the public while rejecting figures that were similar to their very own?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We've actually published these numbers over and over again. What's amazing is that that member is ignoring the work done by the Centre for Policy Alternatives. A chap named Hugh Mackenzie, who would be familiar to many of the members of the NDP, says that this is a net neutral for all Ontarians. That's why every anti-poverty group in this city and many across the province endorse the tax cuts we've done for low- and moderate-income Ontarians.

Difficult times call for real leadership. Leadership is absent on that side of the House. First they say they'll repeal it; then they say they'll keep it. We're building a better future for Ontarians—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Where's your leader? Oh, he's absent too.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the honourable members—I remind them again about making reference to attendance.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: We were just listening to the presentation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Oxford, the Speaker would like to listen and be able to hear as well.

Minister, 10 seconds.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: My colleagues remind me: What Ontarians want to know reminds us of the old song with the NDP on the HST, "Will it stay or will it go?"

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Today the Premier is back on the road chatting with a friendly audience in Vaughan, but who he won't hear from are people like Celine Russell, who writes this: "I live alone, have a small house, and I have been keeping my thermostat at 61 all winter so far. I'm still paying about \$340 per month on my gas bill and \$40 of it is HST tax."

Were the McGuinty Liberals unwilling to tell families the true impact of their HST because they knew just how hated their unfair tax has become?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What Ontarians want to know is, why is the NDP unwilling to say what they'll do about it? Are you going to repeal it? You said that last year. Then this year, they're starting to make amendments to it. Will it stay or will it go?

They ignore the advice of anti-poverty groups and what they have said about the positive impact our tax plan has had on low-income Ontarians. So I ask them again, will it stay or will it go? Just what is the position of the NDP? Do they support the Nova Scotia NDP and believe in raising the HST? I don't know. All I know is, Ontarians want to know, will it stay or will it go?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The finance minister has got a career in the music field.

Carole Barry is a senior living in Terrace Bay, and she writes, "I am a widow who has to live on less than \$1,500 per month. My last heating oil fill-up for the month of January was a whopping \$486."

Do the McGuinty Liberals think that women like Carole won't notice that their government keeps making their lives more and more expensive, or do they simply not care?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think Carole probably should ask the NDP, "What are you going to do with it?" Why did you vote against the northern Ontario energy credit? Why did you vote against every initiative we have done to help consumers, especially northern consumers? So Carole should probably, in her next letter, ask the leader of the third party, "Will it stay or will it go?" And if it's going to go, what are you going to do instead? Are you going to go back to the old provincial sales tax? And remember, they wanted us to raise the old provincial sales tax.

Difficult times require strong leaders. Dalton McGuinty has taken the right decisions to move—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the honourable member that we don't make references to members' names.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Premier of Ontario is a leader who has taken the tough decisions to move Ontario forward, to build a better future for our children, more jobs, a steady hand at the till. That's what Ontarians—

Interjections: Will it stay or will it go?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I think we're all doing a real disservice to The Clash. The Clash sing that much better.

New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. I'm asking you today to act on a matter of serious concern to Ontario families. Today Ontario families are waking up to discover the impact of Premier McGuinty's gutting the Ontario Energy Board of its historic consumer protection mandate. Now Ontario families will pay \$18 million more for compensation to utilities that charge their criminal interest rates. Someone

has to look out for families. Today, will you appoint a consumer protection advocate to protect Ontario families from the McGuinty Liberals?

1100

Hon. John Gerretsen: I refer this to the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I appreciate the question, but it's very, very obvious that the member opposite—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Free Gerretsen.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I can free the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's very obvious that the member opposite didn't listen to the first six questions in this question period, because I stated very unequivocally that we've given Hydro One direction not to pass on these increases to their consumers. They'll have to deal with these costs from within. We're recommending that other local distribution companies do the same.

But it's a little ironic: One minute the Conservatives are calling for us to interfere with OEB decisions; now they're calling for us to not do that. You can't have it both ways, and they're trying to do it. Which is it? Do you want us to interfere with the OEB? Or do you want us to leave them independent?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: The latest hit to the pocket-book is just another in a long list of hydro hikes by the McGuinty Liberals, including the regulated price increase, the HST tax grab, the so-called smart meters, the so-called green subsidy, secret backroom taxes, the Samsung deal and OPG and Hydro One rate increases. A few bucks here, a few bucks there: It all adds up to Ontario families not being able to afford the Dalton McGuinty Liberals any longer.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would remind the honourable member—and I'm going to start passing on questions—about making reference to members' names.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I apologize.

When will the McGuinty Liberals show some respect for Ontario families, stop the assault on their pocket-books and give them some needed relief that they need so badly in this province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member opposite, obviously, and his party have lots of opinions about the efforts we've been making over the last seven years to turn around their ugly energy legacy. We remember that legacy. It was dirty, it was unreliable and it is outdated, and we're turning that system into a clean, reliable and modern system that Ontario families can count on.

He's doing a lot of chirping over there today, but what they don't want to talk about is their plans for energy. Maybe that's because they don't support our clean energy benefit that's taking 10% off the bills of Ontario families over the next five years. How are you going to

explain that to Ontario families? Maybe it's because he'd have to explain to Ontario families why he continues to oppose our efforts to get out of coal and build a healthier future for our kids and grandkids. Maybe it's because they don't have the courage to look workers across this province in the eye and tell them that they don't support their jobs and their plan would put them right out of work. Mr. Speaker—

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

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Yesterday, the Minister of Health called the hundreds of dollars in fees that hospitals are charging patients who refuse the first available long-term-care bed “completely inappropriate and unacceptable,” and I agree with her. Yet hospitals throughout Ontario have had these policies for years. This practice has been out in the open and the McGuinty Liberals have simply turned a blind eye to this despicable policy. Why, for so many years, did the minister stand by and allow hospitals to threaten to charge distraught families exorbitant amounts of money?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I was very clear yesterday in the House, and I will be clear again today, that it is completely unacceptable for a patient in our Ontario hospitals to be charged in excess of \$53.23 per day if they are waiting for long-term care. I am communicating with the LHINs to ensure that the hospitals are aware of this policy.

Today I am happy to reiterate that it is completely unacceptable to charge anything in excess of \$53.23 per day for a patient who is waiting for long-term care.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Metroland's news investigation documented the illegal fees and the bureaucratic mess that families encounter when they try to place their loved one in a long-term-care bed. The article told the story of the Barger family in Cambridge, who resisted the hospital trap of \$871 per day. To do this, they had to hire a lawyer. But there are countless other families who did not receive legal advice or representation, and they paid these fees in order to protect their loved ones because they felt they had no choice.

Does the minister know, first of all, how many families have paid those exorbitant amounts of money? What is her plan to reimburse them?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would definitely recommend that, if someone has paid the fee, they be in touch with the hospital that charged them that fee to clarify whether that fee was a legitimate fee or not.

As I said, there is no reason why someone waiting for long-term care should be charged that fee. If someone is in a hospital and is discharged and ready to go home, then, yes, there are unregulated fees that are available.

We are working very hard to improve health care in this province. We are working hard to improve long-term

care, community care and hospital care. The Tories tell us, “Let's cut health care.” The NDP are saying, “Let's fund everything.” We are determined to continue to improve health care in the province of Ontario.

TAXATION

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. Minister, critics say that the HST is bad for Ontario. People in my riding of Guelph have asked me why we are implementing the HST and our comprehensive tax package. That being said, Statistics Canada paints a different picture. It shows that Ontario's economy has turned the corner on the recession and is emerging stronger than before.

Minister, can you explain to the House some of the benefits of the HST that we're now seeing?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: That is a very important question. The parties opposite seem to talk down the HST and our full, comprehensive tax package, but a number of studies, including one by Jack Mintz, have said that the HST will create jobs. He says that the HST will create approximately 600,000 net new jobs in the province of Ontario as well as \$47 billion in capital investments.

We have recovered 95% of the jobs lost during the recession, due, in large part, to the initiatives of the McGuinty government such as investing in infrastructure to stimulate the economy, lowering personal income taxes and bringing in measures like the HST.

We will continue to invest in this province to make it stronger and more competitive.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: The minister says that the HST will help create jobs in the province and increase investment. We've also heard that 95% of the jobs lost before the recession have been recovered. In fact, in my riding of Guelph, we can clearly see these benefits emerging. Guelph is a manufacturing town and was hard hit by the recession. But local business operators tell me that the HST and our comprehensive tax package is exactly what they've needed to help them weather the storm and now recover the jobs for my constituents.

If we are hearing that the HST and the McGuinty government's tax package are working, can you explain why the Leader of the Opposition is so adamantly opposed?

1110

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'm not sure why the parties opposite are against this. One day, they're for it; one day, they're against it, so we don't know where they stand.

But in the hopes that they would like to learn more about how the HST is creating jobs in the province of Ontario—we know that Jack Mintz is in town today. In fact, he will be speaking at the Economic Club of Canada on the tax competitiveness of 83 different countries around the world. I am confident that he will speak about Canada in a very, very positive way.

I have a little suggestion. I think that some members may want to go to the speech, so I brought some tickets. Just in case anybody wants to go—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member knows that props should not be used in the Legislature.

New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question as well is to the Minister of Revenue. Since 2003, the McGuinty Liberals have hit the pocketbooks of Ontario families with the HST, eco taxes, secret hydro taxes and more. Yesterday, the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex showed just how out of touch this McGuinty Liberal government is with Ontario families when she cited a 2003 promise not to raise taxes when she tweeted, “Promise made, promise kept.” This is a slap in the face to Ontario families who are struggling to pay for all your hits to the pocketbook.

Minister, why are Liberal MPPs saying you haven’t raised taxes when you have?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I appreciate the question from the member. You know, there’s a really important speech today. It’s happening at 11:30. Jack Mintz is in town. He’s going to be talking about how competitive we are as a province.

Interjection: Do you have tickets?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Yes, I have some tickets.

It’s important for the member to look at our record and to see what the HST and our full, comprehensive tax package is all about. It’s about up to \$12 billion in tax cuts and credits for families. It’s about helping families. It’s about helping low-income Ontarians.

We want to make sure that we grow a stronger province, because that’s what families are asking us to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: If Jack Mintz had a nickel for every single time that minister mentioned his name, he’d be as rich as the Samsung guys with their new agreement.

If the Premier and this minister had spent the last 75 days listening to Ontario families, they would have heard how they can no longer afford his HST, his eco fee tax increases and the skyrocketing hydro bills.

But this out-of-touch Premier and this out-of-touch minister choose to spend their time lecturing Ontarians on their tax increases. On February 8, the Premier gave his one-hour-long lecture in London. How I do know how long it was? Because I had to sit through it in Ottawa. It is very long and tedious.

The question that I do have for this minister is, was the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex a no-show for the Premier’s lecture in London, or did she fall asleep before he got to the important part where he lauded his tax increases?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Again, I don’t think I got an answer about whether or not she’d like to go to Jack Mintz’s speech today, but if she does, I have some tickets.

Let me just share some of the numbers of the comprehensive tax package: Nine out of 10 Ontarians have already received a permanent tax cut; 90,000 low-income Ontarians have been taken off the tax roll; 83% of everything we buy has seen no changes at all; and the average family will see about \$355 in income tax cuts this year alone. In fact, we have the lowest provincial tax rate in Canada on the first \$37,000. Some transition cheques have already gone out to families, either \$1,000 or \$300. We have the permanent Ontario sales tax credit, which will help families by about \$260 per month.

It’s about building a stronger Ontario. That’s what we’re doing, and we’re moving—

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

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Colleges and Universities. Minister, in October 2008, you passed Bill 90. I remember praising you for doing that because it was a bill that allowed the part-time faculty and support staff at community colleges to be able to bargain collectively, to have a union.

I think, two and a half years later, this bill is still great on paper, but there’s a little problem: 10,000 of these workers have cast votes on union representation, and after two and a half years these ballots remain sealed and workers continue to be denied the right to unionize. Are you not embarrassed?

Hon. John Milloy: I know the Minister of Labour will want to comment in the supplementary, but I’d like to begin by welcoming the representatives of OPSEU and the college sector who are with us here today at Queen’s Park.

I am very, very proud of Bill 90, which extended the right to bargain collectively to part-time and sessional workers in our college system. It was based on the best advice that came from noted labour expert Kevin Whitaker, who is now a respected member of the bench. The bill outlined a process. That process has been put under way and there are issues arising from it which are in front of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. I think that the honourable member would recognize, himself a former cabinet minister, that it would be totally inappropriate for a minister to speak about a matter or to comment on a matter in front of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, which is a quasi-judicial body of this government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Three years later and you’re talking about a process—a process that you could intervene in, a process that you, if you’re proud of Bill 90, could change today. But you and the Minister of Labour and the Premier refuse to take action on a bill that’s yours. The McGuinty government has allowed the management at colleges and their high-priced lawyers to flout the community colleges bargaining act and to block the Ontario labour review board from opening and counting the ballots that workers have cast. The McGuinty govern-

ment still refuses to take action. If you're proud of Bill 90, do something about it. When will this government intervene and deliver on its promise to allow part-time college workers the right to unionize?

Hon. John Milloy: To the Minister of Labour, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We recognize that fair and balanced labour laws have been the foundation for our province's prosperity for decades. That's why our government did introduce a Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008, granting bargaining rights to part-time and sessional college workers for the first time and to better serve the needs of students and college systems. The Ministry of Labour promotes a stable and constructive labour relations climate and fosters productive workplace relationships in Ontario. Productive labour relations are the key to economic growth and give Ontario a competitive advantage. The Ontario Public Service Employees Union is seeking to be certified as a bargaining agent for a unit of part-time and sessional college instructors and a unit of part-time college support workers—which process is now before the board. The Ontario Labour Relations Board is an independent adjudicative tribunal, and as the matter is before the Ontario Labour Relations Board—

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

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. On December 1 of last year the minister and I visited an infrastructure stimulus project in my riding in Cobourg, the Cobourg Community Centre, or the CCC as we like to call it. This is an extraordinarily exciting project. The CCC will have a 2,000-plus-seat arena plus a smaller 400-seat arena. There will also be two gyms and change rooms and 1,000 square feet dedicated for a youth centre and three multi-purpose meeting rooms.

The CCC is on track for a grand opening this spring. However, Cobourg council still applied for an extension to the March 31, 2011, deadline to make sure that the workers have time to get the finishing touches done. My question to the minister is, will the deadline extension be granted?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'd like to thank the member for the question. First, I'd like to congratulate the people of Cobourg for coming together to create this project in partnership with the federal and provincial governments and for becoming part of the largest and most successful infrastructure program in the history of the province of Ontario. Born out of the worst recession since the Great Depression, stimulus is creating 700 jobs in the Northumberland area and 300,000 across Ontario for Ontario families. Indeed, Ontario has recovered 95% of the jobs lost during the recession, compared to only 11% in the US. The federal and provincial governments have worked

together to create over 9,500 projects to improve our quality of life and to improve the economy of Ontario.

I'll deal with the deadline in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

1120

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Minister, your comments about the community coming together are exactly right. In the case of the Cobourg Community Centre project, that's happening in all sorts of ways. For example, with the help of Alice Vander Vennen, one of our local artists, members of the community are working together to help design 100 brightly coloured fish that will become a giant floating sculpture for the great hall entrance to the community centre. Plus, we're not relying on just federal and provincial funds for this project. The local community is raising more than \$3 million to put toward the capital costs.

Again, Minister: Will the extension request for this project be approved?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Again, congratulations to the residents of Cobourg, a town of only 19,000, for raising \$3 million towards this project. In general, we expect to approve almost every one of the extension applications we received.

For months our government urged the federal government to join us in extending the stimulus deadline. Not once did the Leader of the Opposition join us in our call for an extension. In fact, he argued against the most successful job-creating program in the history of the province, calling it "too much," and he also voted against it. He voted against 300,000 jobs for Ontario families. He voted and argued against 4,100 jobs for families in his own Niagara region and he voted against the YMCA project in Grimsby. He was a no-plan man for the recession. When will he start standing up for jobs for Ontario families?

DIALYSIS

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Health. The waiting list for dialysis services at Collingwood General and Marine Hospital is growing to a crisis level for families and seniors in my riding. There are six dialysis machines that operate six days a week, Monday to Saturday, and three evenings a week, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. At all other times, the machines sit empty while patients are forced to drive long distances to Barrie and Orillia.

People like Margaret Khull are appalled by the idea of having to travel three times a week outside of the local area for dialysis. She told the Blue Mountains Courier-Herald last week, "I live alone, I don't have family to help with the driving and I live on Canada pension so I can't afford the \$500 a month in travel costs."

Minister, why haven't you responded to the hospital's request to alleviate the backlog?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this. There is no question that dialysis is something that, whenever possible, we should

be able to provide as close to home as possible. When someone is on dialysis, they are having to go to wherever they get that treatment three times a week. It is a very onerous lifestyle challenge for people on dialysis. That's why the Ontario Renal Network is looking very closely at expanding dialysis to more communities: so that people don't have to travel as much as they could. We're very committed to increasing the number of people with home dialysis and increasing dialysis opportunities outside some of the major hospitals.

But what's frustrating for me is how a member from that party, a party that is advocating cuts to health care, could stand up and advocate for more.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: The minister knows that what she just said isn't factual at all. We're not going to cut health care one penny.

I set up the dialysis clinic in Collingwood to prevent patients from having to travel long—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: It's not my plan to close hospitals.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: It's not my plan to raise taxes.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo, Minister of Economic Development, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Minister of Agriculture.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Community Safety, Minister of Finance, Minister of the Environment.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Economic Development for the second time.

Please continue.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I set up the clinic in Collingwood to prevent exactly this: to prevent people from having to drive long distances and to force services closer to home.

For Bob and Shirley McCombie, the long drives to Orillia and Barrie are taking their toll. They told the local paper that they have to drive to Barrie the night before her dialysis appointment, stay at their daughter's house, then drive to the hospital for 7 a.m. and home to Collingwood after the session is over. Mr. McCombie told the paper, "We've had some pretty tough drives, this winter has been terrible for driving." In fact, winter road conditions have caused many dialysis patients to cancel their appointments for this life-saving treatment, which in essence will kill them.

Minister, will you issue a directive today to make it clear that the hospital, with the help of the ministry, needs to clean up—

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said in the initial question, we are committed to increasing our capacity for dialysis and we are committed and acting on increasing the locations where people can get that dialysis treatment.

It is unbecoming of the people opposite to pretend that they can cut taxes and not cut services. I don't know what kind of magic wand they have, but I'm going to give you a little bit of help about what cutting \$3 billion actually means. We could completely eliminate home care for all Ontarians; that could save you \$3 billion. You could shut down the LHINs; that will save you \$70 million. You've got to find \$3 billion more. You could close all of the hospitals, every single hospital on University Avenue, shut down—that would find you \$3 billion, except it wouldn't; you'd have to do that twice. Every hospital on University Avenue, twice. Another option: eliminate drug programs—

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

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Health. While the Premier has been busy patting himself on the back for his supposed success in health care, communities across the province are seeing systems in decline. In London, families are facing the province's longest wait for cancer surgery, an excruciating and cruel wait time. Now, hit by the seasonal flu, the situation has only gotten worse, as hospitals have to cancel surgeries and they've seen admission times soar. How can this minister tell families that her health care plan is working when so obviously and clearly that is not the case?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very happy to have the opportunity to talk about the improvements we've made in health care across this province, including in my community of London and the member opposite's community of Hamilton. When it comes to wait times, the party who was in charge before us was afraid to even measure wait times. They did not measure wait times. We came into office and we started to measure. We publicly report. We've made strategic investments. We now have the lowest wait times in Canada, and I'm very proud of that accomplishment.

In the member opposite's own riding in Hamilton we've been able to bring down wait times for angiography by 44% and angioplasty by 91%. Bypass surgery wait times are down by 43% and hip replacements by 58%. Because we measure, because we publicly report, we know what progress we are making and we know where we need to do better, and we are—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Notwithstanding this minister's claims, instead of timely and effective solutions to the growing crisis in London, the situation is only getting worse. In January, St. Joseph's urgent care centre started severely cutting back their hours. Urgent care centres are supposed to be taking the pressure off hospitals by

treating less complex patients, and yet they're closing their doors. Now, urgent care is being cut in spite of the staggering burden that London hospitals are facing. Why has the minister completely ignored the concerns of families and allowed the health care disaster in London to get as bad as it is?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would welcome the member opposite to come to London and talk to the front-line health care workers there, talk to the doctors, talk to the nurses, talk to the patients, and ask them if we've made progress when it comes to improving access to primary care and if we've made progress when it comes to bringing down wait times.

I am very proud of the progress. We've got almost 3,000 more doctors working in our health care system today than when we took office. We have 1.2 million more Ontarians with access to primary health care. We've got more than 10,000 more nurses working in our system. Our wait times are down, and our quality is improving. I stand by the progress we've made in health care. I would put our record up against the record of that party opposite when they had the chance to govern this province, and certainly against the official opposition.

ABORIGINAL LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Dave Levac: My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Monday marks the fifth anniversary of the challenging events that unfolded at the Douglas Creek Estates. I do understand that only the federal government carries responsibility for solutions to the underlying issues surrounding the Six Nations land claims; however, it is important for all of us to continue to work hard to bring the communities together.

1130

Interjections.

Mr. Dave Levac: If they heard the question, they would understand that I believe all of us are culpable for this.

It is vital that we encourage citizens of both communities to continue to foster a positive atmosphere so that new relationships based on trust and mutual respect can grow.

Can the minister tell us what he and this government have been doing to move the situation forward in a positive and respectful way?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member from Brant has done some very good work in bringing people together. He recognizes that the solution to some very challenging issues along the Haldimand tract is about building relationships, not taking them apart. So he has supported the good work that Six Nations, the mayors of Caledonia, Brantford and Brant have been doing in working together.

He hasn't been suggesting, as the party opposite has at various times, that maybe you should send in the troops, maybe you should pit one people against another, maybe you should criticize the work of former OPP Commis-

sioner Fantino when he was doing that down there. You bring people together.

Yes, you have to call upon the federal government, which has constitutional responsibility, to get serious, get involved and help resolve—

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

Mr. Dave Levac: In the riding of Brant we've been working with Six Nations leadership, the municipal government and local business leaders to build a lasting local relationship, helping to establish economic development and partnerships that will lead to more opportunities for all of the citizens in the region. Although we are making slow and steady progress at the local level, there is more that needs to be done.

Could the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs please tell us what more we can do at the local level, at the community partnership level and, just as importantly, at the provincial government level to build a more positive culture for the region?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The kids have it right. The kids have launched this pen-pal project where kids from Six Nations and from Haldimand-Norfolk are working together on this pen-pal art project. They understand. They've lived together, they've lived beside each other for many years, and they'll be living together for many years afterwards. Rather than pit one family against another, one community against another, point fingers, sow division, as the party opposite wishes to do, the kids have it right: Work together, live together, play together; you'll find the solution together.

I just wish the party opposite would reveal their plan for Caledonia, their plan for division, their plan for the future. But they're going to keep it secret. They'll get their lessons from the past; we're all about the future.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Transportation: This government, through Metrolinx, is poised to sign a multi-million dollar contract with a foreign manufacturer for the purchase of diesel rail cars for use on the airport rail link. A request for information was issued but there was never a formal tendering process, no competitive bidding for this contract. Apparently Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation are content to rely on a tender process issued by the state of California. How does the minister justify yet another multi-million dollar untendered contract?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the member opposite knows that our procurement rules are very tight and that we follow them. The reality is that these cars are built nowhere in Canada. We had to look elsewhere to get these cars, and we followed the procurement process.

The point is that we need to have the highest and cleanest diesel engines possible for this line. They have to be convertible to electric; that is our plan. Our government is making a multi-billion dollar investment in public transit. We have done more than \$12 billion of invest-

ment in transit since we've been in office. That is our commitment, and we will continue to invest in public transit for the GTAA and for the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: In the wake of the eHealth scandal, the Premier repeatedly assured this House that there would be no more sole-sourced contracts entered into by this government. How can this government possibly justify signing yet one more multi-million dollar contract with a foreign company while knowing that at least five other manufacturers, including Siemens of Canada, a large employer here in Ontario, have the ability to meet the very same specifications?

Will the minister agree to put a stop to this backroom, untendered deal and direct Metrolinx to issue immediately an open public tender for this contract?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The procurement process has been followed on every single one of our deals. It has been open, it has followed the rules and it has gotten the best deal for the people of Ontario.

What we are doing is we are building public transit in Ontario. We are building an air-rail link so that Toronto can be a world-class city. We are investing in the transit that is needed in the GTHA in order for us to be an economic driver for this province and for this country.

The member opposite was part of a government that did zero investment in transit, that did zero investment in the moving of goods and people around this province.

I stand by our process. Metrolinx has been involved, as I say, in procurement processes that have followed all of the rules.

It is a bit rich to take advice from the member opposite, who was part of a government that did no investment in public—

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

ABITIBI DAMS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, you will know that the town of Iroquois Falls—because they've been in contact with you a number of times—is quite concerned in regard to the proposed sale of the Abitibi dams in Iroquois Falls to an unknown entity. They have been asking you to have a public process for review as far as what happens to those dams.

Are you prepared to give them the review they're asking for?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Our government certainly understands the historical significance of those dams and the concerns of our local community. I understand that Abitibi has agreed to sell its shares in Abitibi Consolidated hydro limited partnership, which owns the eight water-powered facilities, to a Canadian consortium. Our government requested that Abitibi ensure that these dams maintain an available supply of competitively priced hydro to the mills.

On September 9, 2010, I wrote to Abitibi, indicating my expectation that if the company sells its majority share, that Abitibi will guarantee that they continue to satisfactorily fulfill the terms and conditions of these leases. We know how important those power generation facilities are in northern Ontario and we remain committed to working with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, the municipality, the mayor, Mr. Forget, the union and citizens of that community don't trust the process. They went to Montreal last week to meet with the CEO of Abitibi. They didn't get the answers they were asking for.

They're asking that their provincial government, which is there supposedly to protect their interests, have a process that is clear, a process that is transparent, one that the community can have some confidence in, so that at the end, if this is not what it's meant to be, this province can intervene and do the things that need to be done, such as deal with the power purchase agreements and not approve them or not approve the water lease agreements.

I ask you again: Are you prepared to put in place a transparent process now that reviews what Abitibi is doing so that the community can best protect its own interests, because they certainly can't trust you?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I've met with Mayor Gilles Forget and others in the town of Iroquois Falls on many occasions to discuss the future of the dams and the town's pulp and paper mill. The town has been adamant, actually, about its choice to have MNR act as its spokesperson for them on this issue.

Our government understands how important the ability of northern dams is to generate the power and the electricity for the local pulp and paper production. I know Abitibi's business decisions have the potential to impact mill workers in northern communities. We're going to work with them. We want to make sure this is a successful operation.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Phil McNeely: Water is an important resource that we must protect in all parts of the world. In Ontario, we are surrounded by water, so it would be easy to take our fresh water for granted. But in other parts of the world, many people are suffering due to water shortages.

Some 97.5% of the world's water is salty, and the rest, nearly 70% of the fresh water, is locked in ice. By Ontario businesses developing solutions to conserve water and selling their solutions globally, we can be a leader in the water industry all across the world.

My question to the Minister of Research and Innovation is, what is the minister going to do to ensure that Ontario builds on its water technology expertise so that these companies have an opportunity to succeed?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We have come a very long way since 2003 when Ontarians were afraid to turn the water tap on because they couldn't trust the quality of the water coming out of it. We have actually moved so far

forward that Ontario is now recognized internationally as a world leader in clean water technology. Our Premier has led this province to be a global leader in innovation and productivity on the cutting edge.

Some 97.5% of the world's water supply is salty, as my friend who is such a committed environmentalist knows, and nearly 70% of the fresh water is locked in ice. We are now about to face, in the next decade, one in three people on this planet not having enough water to drink. This calls upon Ontario businesses to come up with better ways, which they are, to reclaim and reuse water and desalinate water, and as a result of this government's investments and partnerships with the private sector, we are leading globally in those technologies and selling them to the world.

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I know she was introduced earlier, but I too want to welcome Rosemary Speirs to the Legislature. If you've never had the opportunity, it's one of the most interesting books—I'm saying it in a non-political way—and it's called *Out of the Blue*. Welcome back to the Legislature today. It's a real pleasure to have you here.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would also like to introduce a guest today, Heather Fitzgerald. She's the registrar at St. Jerome's College at the University of Waterloo.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no deferred votes, the House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1500.

ESTIMATES

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I have a message from the Honourable David C. Onley, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by him.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2011 and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly. Dated February 22, 2011.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm thrilled to be able to introduce today four outstanding women: Pam Hundal from Brampton-Springdale; Liang Chen, Scarborough-Agincourt; Carol Williams, Scarborough Centre; and of course Laurie Scott, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. These are our nominated PC candidates.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased to welcome to the Legislature today Ms. Anne Wang, a university student who lives in Aurora, a very dynamic young person. I

have no doubt that one day we will see Ms. Wang as a nominated candidate for our party as well. Welcome, Anne.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Today we're joined by the mom of Simon Cook, who is a page from Oakville. We're joined today by Annette Cook from Oakville, who didn't want to be introduced, but Simon and I thought it would be a good idea if we introduced her anyway.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to welcome several guests from my ministry and my deputy's office who have all worked tirelessly to get us where we are today related to tenure reform in the province. I want to share this moment with my deputy, David O'Toole; Frances Hobbs; Mark Speers, director of our tenure and pricing review program; from our deputy's office, Melissa Faber, Julia Hancock and Joan VanKralingen. From our fabulous legal department, I welcome Andrew MacDonald, Lawrence Fagan and Kimberley Broome, and Nancy Houle, our senior forestry adviser in our industry relations branch. I'm very grateful for their hard work. Thank you, and welcome.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to welcome back again Rosemary Speirs, our esteemed author—I'm also a fan of her big book—and a member of Equal Voice, as well as Donna Dasko. I know that we have a number of representatives from Equal Voice, but I also want to point out Beki Scott, who used to work for me and who is also working very hard on this organization.

Mr. Dave Levac: On a point of order, Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent for the capacity to wear my anti-bullying pink shirt for my statement this afternoon.

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

On behalf of all members of the Legislature, I want to take this opportunity to welcome Laurie Scott back, the member from the 38th and 39th Parliaments from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. Welcome back to the Legislature, Laurie.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GENERAL MOTORS OF CANADA

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Once again, Oshawa and General Motors are moving ahead to the forefront. This past weekend, General Motors was honoured at the Canadian International AutoShow in Toronto when the Automotive Journalists Association of Canada awarded the Chevrolet Cruze as the 2011 Canadian Car of the Year. This is an extremely prestigious award for General Motors as over 70 of Canada's leading auto journalists evaluated the Chevrolet Cruze against 144 other new vehicles. This impressive award demonstrates the vision and dedication of the new General Motors and its commitment to building quality, world-class vehicles. The Cruze is a refined, compact, fuel-efficient car which

utilizes the newest technology to deliver best-in-class highway fuel economy.

This award comes after another important announcement recently made by General Motors in Oshawa. The Oshawa assembly plant is currently preparing to begin manufacturing the new Buick Regal. The production schedule just became a lot greener thanks to the announcement of the new 2012 Regal eAssist model beginning this fall. Production of the 2012 Regal eAssist will begin at the Oshawa assembly plant on the flex line, fulfilling General Motors Canada's commitment to add hybrid vehicle production at its Canadian facilities.

I am pleased once again that General Motors Oshawa has been recognized as one of the most effective and best-quality car assembly plants in the world. This is a reflection of the dedicated, hard-working General Motors employees from Oshawa. It's great to see General Motors investing in new hybrid technology in Oshawa and continuing to contribute positive impacts in the community.

I'd like to congratulate the work of the Canadian Auto Workers and General Motors for moving forward with innovative, fuel-efficient, high-quality new vehicles and building them right here in Ontario. Great things are happening once again in Oshawa.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mr. Dave Levac: I thank the Legislature for allowing me to take my jacket off and put this on, and that's all.

Every day, in Boys and Girls Clubs across Ontario, children and youth get the help they need to learn to develop positive relationships with peers, family, teachers and the people in the community they live in.

In Brantford, the Boys and Girls Club continues to shed light on the fact that countless children are at risk of spending their out-of-school hours alone, left to their own devices and/or vulnerable to the influences of unsupervised street-based activities. The Brantford Boys and Girls Club is committed to providing a good place for kids to be regardless of their circumstances during their out-of-school hours.

I stand here today to recognize the efforts of the executive director of the Brantford Boys and Girls Club, Deanna Searle, to build communities that instill respect, inclusion, fairness, equity and compassion, and not bullying. Deanna Searle and the Brantford Boys and Girls Club are adopting the Pink Shirt Anti-Bullying Campaign Day, which is today, as a day to promote awareness, understanding and openness about problems and about bullying, and to a shared commitment to finding a solution to bullying.

Brantford city council passed a proclamation: Pink Shirt Day.

Speaker, I would ask you and all of the members to join me in raising awareness and wear a pink shirt or some pink item for today only. Let's get rid of bullying in our communities.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Every winter in the break, I hold a couple of pre-budget consultation meetings in my riding to deal with the different organizations that look to see what might happen in the spring budget. This year, I held two meetings, one in Midland and one in Orillia. We had a total of about 33 deputations come forward from the hospital, the colleges, the schools, different organizations—small businesses, environmental centres. It's a really good opportunity to work with your constituents. We've tried to run it in the same fashion that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs runs its pre-budget meetings.

We deal with one organization, St. James Anglican Church in Orillia, under the leadership of Mrs. Helen Perry, who has done a remarkable job dealing with homelessness and people who don't have a lot of extra things in their lives. She has asked me to read this motion into the House. It comes from the diocese of Toronto, Anglican Church of Canada. It reads:

"The vestry of St. James Anglican Church, Orillia, urges the government of Ontario to immediately introduce a \$100-per-month healthy food supplement for all adults on social assistance so that they can afford more nutritious food and live a life of greater dignity." That's the end of the quote.

I'd like to read this into the record on behalf of Helen Perry and the folks who represent St. James Anglican Church in Orillia.

POVERTY

Mr. Peter Kormos: On February 8, 2011, the council for the township of Wainfleet passed the following resolution:

"Whereas" Mayor April Jeffs, Alderman Betty Konc and staff member Natasha Dawn "of the township of Wainfleet took part in the Food Box Challenge to raise awareness of poverty and the effects of poor food choices;

"Whereas from personal experience we know that the food from the food bank is high in sodium content and sugar and has a large carbohydrate content, as well as no fresh fruit or vegetables, thereby creating a poor diet;

"Whereas we know that the correlation between a poor diet is related to poor health, and in particular that those on social assistance have less access to food that makes up a good and balanced diet will more than likely have more diet-related illnesses due to poor diet;

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"Whereas we also know that children in poverty who have little or no access to a balanced diet have a higher incidence of obesity and diabetes, and poor performance in school;

"Whereas 14% of Niagara residents and 15.6% of Niagara's children live below the poverty level;

“Whereas children and their families constitute approximately 52% of the people receiving social assistance in Canada, as of 2003;

“Whereas we know that the federal government estimates that a person needs \$1,300 per month to survive and that the provincial social assistance for a single person is \$592 per month, leaving a gap of about \$700 a month;

“Whereas the ‘Put Food in the Budget’ initiative is to encourage the provincial government to increase the monthly social assistance by \$100 for food;

“Whereas we all know that those in a vulnerable position in life need advocates, it is now upon this council to advocate for those in our community who are vulnerable, to have the extra money in their budget for food....”

This council supports the increase in the food budget for persons on social assistance in the province of Ontario. I do too, and I condemn this government for dragging its heels in that regard.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I was being a little generous with the honourable member, who took advantage of the Speaker.

REEVES OF HALIBURTON– KAWARTHA LAKES–BROCK

Mr. Rick Johnson: The recent municipal election brought changes, big and small, to communities across Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I recently had the pleasure of speaking briefly at a municipal council’s inauguration ceremony. Looking around at the new and returning council members, I remember thinking what an honour it is to hold the trust of your community and to be elected by your community.

Today, I’d like to thank four individuals in particular. They are four local reeves who for years held their communities’ trust and who deserve thanks for their dedicated service through municipal government.

First is Jim McMahon, former reeve of the township of Minden Hills. Jim served for more than 20 years in municipal politics and should be proud of his many accomplishments. Jim has been succeeded by Barb Reid.

Next is Neal Cathcart, who served as reeve for 15 years in the township of Cavan Monaghan. Neal, too, should be proud of his leadership and representation. Neal has been succeeded by John Fallis.

Third is Tom Flynn, who retired in 2010 from his position as reeve in the township of Galway-Cavendish and Harvey. Tom provided 30 years of guidance to his community as a municipally elected official and has been succeeded by Janet Clarkson.

Last, but certainly not least, is Eleanor Harrison, who retired in 2010 from her position as reeve of the township of Algonquin Highlands. Eleanor committed 23 years of dedicated service to municipal politics and has been succeeded by Carol Moffatt.

Each of these former reeves knows the value of their community’s trust. Each has worked hard to listen, learn

and lead. Each leaves their community in capable, trusted hands. My sincere thanks go out to Jim, Neal, Tom and Eleanor for their roles in building a better Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

RAY DESJARDINS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I’d like to say hello to all my friends who are watching in Barrhaven today.

My friend John Baird once wrote that Ray Desjardins “has served as an inspiration and exemplary role model for the members of his community.” On his 70th birthday, I wanted to thank Ray in this esteemed chamber for doing what well-known and respected Rabbi Reuven Bulka has noted of Ray. He says, “Ray is a true champion of the welfare of our veterans, and has made this a life mission.” Indeed, Ray has.

Ray has been a serviceman, a public servant, a community association leader, a fundraiser for our very own Perley Rideau Veterans’ Health Centre and an officer for his church. But one of the greatest examples of Ray’s dedication to our community and to our country was his steadfast belief that the fast-growing community of Barrhaven needed a Royal Canadian Legion to celebrate our veterans and Canada’s new generation of soldiers, who have served and who continue to serve our country in Afghanistan and around the world. Thus Ray became the founding president of the Royal Canadian Legion, branch 641, of Barrhaven, of which I am a proud member.

I, of course, understand it was no small task to bring this legion into existence, because it was only started four short years ago. This legion is the first legion in all of Canada to be created in the last 25 years.

Today Ray is our branch chaplain. He presides over both happy and also solemn occasions. Recently we lost a comrade, Jerry Jodoin, who was a friend to us. He was also a World War II veteran.

Ray is a cancer survivor. He’s a cherished friend of many of us in Barrhaven. He’s also married to Carolyn, who has been a true partner to him in every sense of the word.

So, on behalf of the residents of Nepean–Carleton and, I know, all of my colleagues here in the Ontario Legislature, I want to let Ray know that he is appreciated. Happy birthday, Ray.

TOM SYMONS

Mr. Jeff Leal: Professor Tom Symons is well known in my riding of Peterborough as a man of integrity and commitment to the betterment of his community, and like many people with a strong sense of right and wrong, Professor Symons made his decision to put his name forward to sit on a board. The board he chose to become chairman of for four years was the Peterborough Lakefield Police Services Board. As a community representative, he served the board and the police association well.

Earlier in his life, he was a founding member of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. Chairing the police services board allowed him the opportunity to use his experience in human and civil rights but from a new perspective. He did his job very well.

During his time on the board, he forged relationships between the board, the police association, the police force and the community. This was not always an easy task but a challenge Professor Symons met with conviction and intelligence.

Community leaders like Professor Tom Symons are rare. He still sits on the board of 300 foundations and teaches occasionally at Trent University, a university of which he was the founding president, as well as being a Companion of the Order of Canada and a member of the Order of Ontario.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank him for his commitment to the police services board and wish him good luck in his future endeavours. I know that wherever choices lead him, he will be a tremendous success.

ATIKOKAN RENEWABLE FUELS

Mr. Bill Mauro: A short time ago, I was in Atikokan at the Legion hall for a great announcement in the community. Atikokan Renewable Fuels received the province's first new wood supply, 179,000 cubic metres, which is in addition to an already existing 100,000 cubic metres per year. I also announced \$1 million from the northern Ontario heritage fund for a plant conversion and another \$250,000 for a heating system conversion.

When we were first elected, the old Proboard mill was closed. Our government injected \$6.5 million, creating FibraTech and employment for roughly 130 men and women. This announcement will once again breathe life into this facility. The wood allocation will create 95 jobs in the plant and the woodlands operation combined.

Atikokan Renewable Fuels will produce wood pellets to create electricity for both domestic and international customers. As many of you already know, I was able to announce the conversion of the Atikokan generating station to biomass. There will be a competitive tender to supply the generating station with a fuel source. With Atikokan Renewable Fuels being so close, they will be well positioned to bid competitively to be the supplier to the station, and that could create additional long-term employment in Atikokan and northwestern Ontario.

With these recent announcements, and all of the mining activity in the area, the job situation is much brighter than it was a couple of years ago, and the community is looking more confidently towards the future.

RAINBOW FAMILY DAY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: This past Monday, we all got the opportunity to celebrate the fourth annual Family Day across the province, a fantastic new tradition in our province's life since 2007. I think it's safe to say that all ridings across the province are establishing new trad-

itions around Family Day, and one such new tradition started in my great riding of Ottawa Centre. For the first time, we hosted the first annual Rainbow Family Day event in my riding at Jack Purcell Community Centre. It was an exciting event which was a great success, and we look forward to making that event a regular event for families to come together and celebrate our diversity and to relish the ties that bind us together.

I was honoured to be part of this event that welcomes GLBTTQ families and their allies to come together for Family Day and enjoy a day of fun and community spirit, and there was a lot of spirit and fun to be had at this event. We had a great pancake breakfast—I got the opportunity to flip some pancakes—as well as a family skate; a family swim; Rainbow Family Day stage with theatre, dance, music and more; a welcoming youth lounge; and a lot of other activities put together to ensure that families of all kinds are welcome and are able to enjoy Family Day within our communities.

I want to give special thanks to Morris Rothman for bringing together this event and making it such a success. I look forward to celebrating Rainbow Family Day every single year on Family Day from now on.

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

REPRÉSENTATION DES FEMMES AU PARLEMENT PROVINCIAL

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes on the issue of greater representation of women in the provincial Legislature.

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

1520

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: C'est un grand plaisir pour moi que d'appuyer cette motion.

It's a pleasure to speak in support of this motion.

I want to thank everyone at Equal Voice for supporting female candidates, attracting outstanding people to public life and challenging everyone to think creatively about getting more women elected.

I think it's a truism: Our Legislature should reflect the society we serve. When we achieve that, then we are at our best in addressing the real lives of the people who elect us. That is why, during our last election, our party promised to nominate female candidates in half of our open ridings. I am proud to say that we beat our target, supporting female candidates in 55% of the ridings. This gave us a caucus with 19 women, with 11 serving in cabinet. We're going to keep up this important effort.

Il nous faut attirer plus de leaders qui sont des femmes, et il faut que plus de femmes répondent à cet appel. En vérité, plus il y aura de femmes en politique, plus notre démocratie sera dynamique et pertinente.

We need to put out the call for women leaders, and we need more women to answer that call. The fact is, the

more women there are in politics, the more vibrant and dynamic and thoughtful and relevant our democracy will be. That's because women bring unique perspectives, which lead to creative solutions; they bring different approaches, which lead to better collaboration; and they bring strong voices, so that all Ontarians are better heard in this chamber.

One of the great benefits of attracting more women to choose public life is that we have a better understanding of how we can best support women in whatever career they choose. This broader understanding led to our government launching full-day kindergarten; creating 22,000 new child care spaces; creating and increasing the Ontario child benefit; raising the minimum wage seven times over and changing the Occupational Health and Safety Act to address workplace violence, including domestic violence and sexual harassment.

Having said that, it would be a mistake to presume that more women here only means more progress on women's issues, however we choose to define those. The fact is that progress on increasing the percentage of female MPPs means progress in all areas of public policy. You just have to look at the career of one Agnes Macphail, one of the first two women elected to this Legislature and the first woman to be a federal MP. Those groundbreaking achievements rightly make her a hero today. But in her day, the achievements she fought for were things like: a better deal for farmers, more humane treatment of prisoners, and dignity for seniors through old age pensions.

She did more than stand up to discrimination against women; she stood up for all. She did more than break down barriers for women; she built up the society that we all enjoy today. As we prepare our province to meet the challenges of a new century, we need many more Agnes Macphails.

En Ontario, nous sommes privilégiés d'avoir de belles écoles où les jeunes filles peuvent s'épanouir, de remarquables collèges et universités où de jeunes femmes peuvent faire des études, une économie dynamique où les femmes bâtissent des entreprises et de solides communautés où des dirigeantes trouvent des solutions à des problèmes, qu'ils soient gros ou petits.

In Ontario today, we're fortunate to have great schools where girls are thriving; outstanding colleges and universities where young women are studying hard; a dynamic economy where women are building businesses; and strong communities where female leaders tackle problems both large and small.

So my message on behalf of our party and the government to all Ontario women is simply this: We need you. We need your experience. We need your energy. We need your insights. We need your ideas. We need your idealism. We need you right here in this Legislature working with us to continue building a stronger Ontario for all Ontarians, right here in the greatest province in the best country in the world.

Mr. Tim Hudak: As you may not know, my first real-life experience with public office was not actually here in

the Ontario Legislature; it was out at the municipal level, years and years ago. My mom was a high school teacher. She worked in special needs, and decided, against all odds, to run for council in the town of the Fort Erie. It wasn't expected she'd win, up against a veteran in the community, and it was a tough election. She knocked on every single door in her ward and won that first one in a squeaker by seven votes in total. She worked hard and took on leadership positions—we're awful darned proud—and won the next two consecutive elections by massive majorities as a credit to her hard work.

I'm proud of my mom and the work she did for her community. I learned a lot about leadership, dedication and public life.

Quite frankly, she's not the only woman who taught me what it takes to serve, to lead, to be a dedicated public servant. In 1997, during my first term, I was appointed by Premier Harris to be parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health. I got to serve with Elizabeth Witmer, at the time the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. Through Elizabeth, I saw the dedication required to be a leader in caucus. I saw her run, with confidence and knowledge, Ontario's largest ministry and learned never, ever to forget that it's the people of your riding who send you to Queen's Park. No doubt that's why Elizabeth Witmer, former Deputy Premier of the province of Ontario, is the longest-serving woman MPP in the history of the Ontario Legislature.

When I was first elected in 1995, fully 15% of the Legislature was made up of women MPPs. Today, that number has grown to 26%. Although not quite the desired one third that Equal Voice promotes, the merit and ability of the women in this place are extraordinary, and they are setting an example and inspiring young women and men right across the province of Ontario.

Look to my right. My colleague from Whitby–Oshawa: deputy leader of our party, critic for the Ministry of Health, a strong leader on the Ontario PC team.

Right behind me, the member for Nepean–Carleton: our critic for Revenue and government accountability; as members opposite know, a tenacious advocate here in the Legislature in defending the family budget; and also—Debbie and I know a bit about this ourselves; we have a little girl at home—balancing responsibilities and a home life in Ottawa from miles and miles away.

Christine, Lisa, Joyce, Sylvia, Julia: strong members of our team. It is in no small part to their credit that fully 30% of the new MPP candidates nominated to run for the Ontario PC Party since I have become leader are women joining our team who want to bring change to the province of Ontario.

I want to recognize, while I can, some of those leaders who have joined our team in the House here today: Pam Hundal, a lawyer from Brampton–Springdale, an active volunteer; Liang Chen, Scarborough–Agincourt, who is an associate dean at the University of Toronto, Scarborough campus; retired Catholic high school principal Carol Williams from Scarborough Centre, today helping to train new teachers; and Laurie Scott, a registered nurse

for more than 20 years, from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and a former MPP.

We also have on our team Nancy Branscombe, the top vote-winning candidate in the city of London council elections; and Paula Peroni, Nickel Belt, who serves as president of the Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association: dedicated, hard-working professionals who want to fight for their communities, who want to bring change to the province of Ontario. I welcome our future colleagues who have joined us here today in the Legislature.

Our team: bringing decades of experience as true community leaders, professionals who want to bring change to our province, and part of a team that will continue to stand up for Ontario families, to demand the respect that they deserve, and bring needed relief and a chance to catch up.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and the PC candidates, I commend Equal Voice for the dedication, for the leadership, for the progress and the steps you have gained. I look forward to working with them and my colleagues in this and future elections as they strive to achieve their goal of more women MPPs here in the Ontario Legislature.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Having an equal voice for women in this Legislature should not be difficult, but history has shown it to be anything but simple.

Agnes Macphail was elected to represent the voters of Grey Southeast in the federal election of 1921, the first woman to be elected to the House of Commons, even though women were not officially even recognized as persons under the law at that time.

Since then, we've certainly seen a lot of change. Women, working together, have redefined their role in society, and we owe them a huge, huge debt of gratitude. But, we're certainly not done yet. You can't tell me, when you look around this room, that we're complete with our task.

1530

Women make up over half of our country's population, but only one in four of the people elected to this very Legislature are women. Only one in five of the members of the House of Commons are women. Canada stands 50th in an international ranking of women's political representation.

Now, I'm proud of the fact that I'm the first woman to lead my party in this Legislature, but in a strange way I'm also a bit saddened by the fact that that still remains something that has to be indicated as noteworthy these days.

The New Democrats have a very strong track record that we're quite proud of. We regularly nominate the most women candidates and we regularly elect the largest percentage of women in our caucuses, but we can do much better ourselves. I'm very clear to indicate that. We can't be satisfied with just some progress.

Women have achieved important reforms and broken down barriers, but there's still much more that needs to be done. The increasing inequality that we see today

affects all of us, but women suffer disproportionately, and I believe electing more women to legislatures like our Legislature will mean real success in dealing with these issues and will benefit our society as a whole. But there's a lot of work to do.

Employment equity: We've actually gone backwards in the last couple of years from when employment equity was first raised in this province. Public, licensed child care: We see children dying in unlicensed child care in this province because we don't have enough licensed child care. Safety and security in our workplaces and our communities: again, people dying in the workplace for no reason, because we don't have proper and adequate laws and procedures to keep workers safe.

The work may appear to be daunting, but our mothers and our grandmothers understood that once you take that first step towards making a change in your world, the question stops being whether the change will come and the question then becomes when the change will come.

So it's a personal priority of mine to ensure that Ontario New Democrats are part of that change. That will mean getting more women nominated, which we're in the process of doing right now. That means helping them win; providing training, support and assistance to help women overcome barriers to their participation. It's an important initiative, but it can be done because I know that there are plenty of qualified women who, with some encouragement and support, will make excellent MPPs—and I dare say, MPs as well. Many of them we may not know right now. Many of them I may not know right now, but I know that women have never backed down from a tough and challenging job and I know that by increasing the representation of women at all levels of government, we will not only make strides towards equality but we will also ensure better, more representative, more inclusive government for women, for men, for children and for the future of a just Ontario.

SPECIAL REPORT, OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today I've laid upon the table a report from the Ombudsman entitled Response to Request for Information from the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, February 2011.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO FOREST TENURE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA MODERNISATION DU RÉGIME DE TENURE FORESTIÈRE EN ONTARIO

Mr. Gravelle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur la modernisation du régime de tenure forestière en Ontario et modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur la durabilité des forêts de la Couronne.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Ministerial statements, Speaker.

SMALL BUSINESS
BILL OF RIGHTS, 2011
CHARTRE DES DROITS DES PETITES
ENTREPRISES DE 2011

Mrs. Munro moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act to enact a Bill of Rights for small business / Projet de loi 152, Loi édictant une Charte des droits pour les petites entreprises.

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.

Mrs. Julia Munro: This bill creates a bill of rights for small businesses in Ontario.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AMENDMENT
ACT (COMMENCEMENT OF TERM
OF OFFICES DATE), 2011
LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES ÉLECTIONS MUNICIPALES
(DATE DE COMMENCEMENT
DES MANDATS)

Mr. Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 153, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 to change the date on which the term of offices begins and to make related amendments / Projet de loi 153, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales pour changer la date de commencement des mandats et apporter des modifications connexes.

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. Jean-Marc Lalonde: The bill amends the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, to change the date on which the term of offices governed by the act begins, from December 1 to the second Monday in November in the year of regular elections.

The bill also amends the act to reduce the time frame within which recounts of votes must be completed.

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES**

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I think every member of this House knows that the Ontario forest industry has suffered a number of serious setbacks, particularly in recent years. Despite this, the sector has some incredibly strong advantages. We have a large sustainable supply of quality fibre and we have a solid infrastructure. Perhaps most importantly, we have the expertise and the drive of the people who work in this sector.

Today I am very pleased to introduce a bill that, if passed, would help re-energize Ontario's forest sector, create new jobs and attract investment while ensuring that this critical public resource continues to be managed sustainably.

Modernizing the forest tenure and pricing system would make Ontario's timber supply and prices more responsive to market demand, create new opportunities for entrepreneurs and make it easier for aboriginal peoples and communities to effectively participate in and benefit from this sector.

This proposed reform is a very strong sign of this government's confidence in the future of forestry. If passed, the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011, would stimulate a bold rethink of how our forest sector will do business in the future. It would help ensure that forestry activities continue to benefit not only the families, the communities and the businesses that rely directly on this sector, but all Ontarians.

1540

To achieve this, we are proposing to pursue two new governance models. First, the act, if passed, would enable us to establish local forest management corporations. They would manage crown forests and they would oversee the competitive sale of the timber in a given area. The second new governance model we would pursue is the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licence. That would consist of a group of mills and/or harvesters that collectively form a new company to manage the crown forests.

We would continue to work with the forest industry itself, with other key stakeholders and with aboriginal peoples to further develop the operational details of the models and the implementation plans. We would certainly also work with these groups to test and to evaluate both the initial local forest management corporations and the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences.

The legislation introduced today was drafted after extensive consultations through public sessions, round table discussions and sessions with key industry stakeholders and aboriginal communities and organizations. We certainly listened carefully and we responded substantively to the concerns raised in the consultations. I believe that this is actually very evident from the positive response to our proposed modified approach.

For example, the Ontario Forest Industries Association calls our proposed path forward “a positive development that provides much-needed certainty for operating mills while at the same time creating opportunities for new investment in the sector.”

The Timmins Chamber of Commerce told us that the use of enhanced shareholder SFLs is in line with their request for working with an existing industry development model that is benefiting their members.

We’ve also had some very real interest expressed from some First Nations communities for the establishment of a local forest management corporation in their area, and we’re very, very excited about that.

I do want to acknowledge and thank everyone upon whose comments and advice we have relied. Earlier today, I introduced a number of people from our ministry; I want to thank them once again for the extraordinary hard work that they did.

In the weeks ahead, we will continue our consultation efforts so that interested parties clearly understand the intent of this legislation. If passed, we would also look for their advice on how best to implement it. I look forward very much to the debate.

I do want to thank especially my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources, Linda Jeffrey, for her assistance throughout this process. It was extraordinarily helpful and supportive.

Our government is absolutely committed to implementing a forest tenure and timber pricing system that works for the province of Ontario, and we want to implement change in a responsible and measured manner. I believe that the new tenure system proposed would achieve these goals and point us toward better access and better use of our very highly prized forest resources.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I guess before I start my address on this Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, I will commend the minister and his ministry for providing a briefing on this bill before it was introduced into the House.

But I will say that for two years now we have been under this forest tenure review—two years of uncertainty in our forestry sector, two years of bleakness in forestry, two years when we’ve seen over 60 mills closed, over 40,000 jobs lost. And in two years’ time we have received this bill, which is really nothing more than an empty vessel. It’s 16 pages which really provide nothing other than a backtrack, one more backtrack by this Liberal government, in their obligations to the north and to our forestry.

It does do a couple of things, this bill. We do know that in those 16 pages there are a few things it does do. It does provide another vehicle for political patronage. It does create additional agencies of the Liberal government called forest management corporations, local forest management. These are additional agencies, if we don’t have enough already. We already have over 600 agencies, boards and commissions in this province, but we’re going to create a few more with this bill.

What we have seen with these agencies, boards and commissions, like the LHINs, is a very significant and very purposeful method of shielding the government from the decisions of the day. As we have seen with the LHINs, we are now seeing I guess what we would call the forestry LHINs, or the FLHINs, being created by this Liberal government.

But I think there is also very much of importance. Within this bill there are a couple of very significant components: changes to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. Of course, we won’t know what all is going to happen because there aren’t any regulations—very few. Everything is going to be done by regulation afterwards in this bill, and I don’t know how many more years the forestry industry is going to have to suffer and wait for the regulations to be done on this. Under the changes to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, the minister now has the ability to arbitrarily cancel licences, has the authority to cancel supplies and, in an arbitrary fashion, leave the people in our forestry industry once again with uncertainty about their future, uncertainty about their supplies. That starts on page 13 of this act.

What also is significant in this act is significant protection for the ministry, significant protection for the minister, significant protection for the local forest management corporations; that whatever they do there can be no liability, no remedy attached to those agents of the crown. That goes from page 14 through page 16 of this act: limitations on remedies, no remedies, proceedings barred, no expropriation or injurious affection, exception, exception. The crown leaves itself harmless from any of its actions but puts three or four more years of uncertainty into an already very devastated resource sector of this province.

I’m very disappointed that in two years’ time this Liberal government has achieved absolutely nothing except one more backtrack and one more slap to the people of northern Ontario. This Liberal government manages to pass the buck once more as they try to pass a bill—these are not really bills that are being introduced in this House. They’re just looking to pass the buck, not bills.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I’ve got five minutes but it’s going to be hard to cover all that I want to say.

First of all, the government is proposing to do a fairly radical change here when it comes to the forest tenure system in the province of Ontario. My first caution is, I certainly hope to God that the government is not proposing to do all this and finish third reading this spring. If that’s what you’re asking us to do in this assembly, I think this will be short shrift to the process, and people in northern Ontario are going to be pretty skeptical of the process in the end.

This is one of these things where we’re asking to make a major shift when it comes to how we manage our forests in northern Ontario and, more importantly, how we allocate that timber to those who need it. If we’re being asked to do this in a session that I would think is going to be a fairly short one this spring—second

reading, committee hearings and third reading—I would argue against that and I'll be opposing it, if it's just on that point alone.

I've gone through this before, as other members in the assembly have, in regard to changes in how to manage forests, first under Alan Pope, before I was here. My predecessor as minister brought into place a system of managing our forests for the first time. It got plenty of time at second reading. It went out to committee. There was lots of discussion. The bill was fine-tuned based on what we had to say because, do you know what? The bureaucrats and the government didn't get it right the first time and it came back as an amended bill at third reading.

1550

I was part of the committee under Howard Hampton when the sustainable forestry development act was put forward, where we actually had time to deal with it. It went over a couple of sessions so that there were proper hearings in between second reading and third reading. More importantly, those affected—the communities, the forest industry, First Nations, environmental groups and others—had an opportunity to really have a say. So this had better not be a truncated process, because you're going to have me offside right at the beginning.

Is there a need for forest tenure reform? Absolutely. I don't have a problem with the idea. Should we go in the way that the government is going? I think it's worthy of discussion. But the devil will be in the details, and let me just raise a couple of them.

This would be an ideal place in this legislation to deal with one of the issues northern Ontarians have wanted to deal with for a long time, and that is dealing with the allowable cut. If we were to put into the legislation that we will protect 26 million cubic metres of wood a year, as has been recommended by chambers of commerce, by municipalities, by First Nations, by the OFIA and others, I think that would be a starting-off process, because at least then we wouldn't see this as a diminution, making the wood basket smaller for those who need it.

If this is about how we can learn about how to do forest management practices better so we can become even better than we are now, then that would be a step in the right direction. So one of the things that I would be looking for is for the government to deal with the allowable cut issue, and I think this is a place that we're able to do it.

The other issue is, as I read this—and I've not read the legislation, I must admit. I've only read the compendium, and it's only a page and a bit long, so the details, as I say, are in the legislation—but this had better not put at risk any timber that is currently associated with a mill or a mill that may be shut down right now, looking to reopen. For many of those communities, that's the only game in town. You're not going to build a car plant there, you're not going to launch the next moon shot from there, but you will cut trees and you will process them in those communities. So this had better not affect wood that is currently associated with current mills. I would put that

up front at the beginning. I don't know; I haven't read the legislation.

The other issue is that I looked at the compendium, and it talks about basically making this a market-driven process when it comes to pricing our wood. My God. Some would argue, "Oh, well, that's not going to be so serious, because who is left in the wood industry may not raise up the price." But we know that eventually things will get better in the US of A, where they like to buy our wood and dimensional lumber products that we make out of Ontario. If we go to a competitive wood pricing system, you will have, when the market is good, mills which will be competing on price for the wood. That'll be really good in the upswing when the economy is doing well, which it will in the forest industry eventually, but it's going to kill our industry in the longer term. So I just warn the government that this had better not make this a market-driven price and drive us to an American solution. I suspect that what we are trying to do here is speak to the constant threat of the Americans bringing us before the free trade and bringing us before the various processes on the countervail duty.

The other issue is, I'm not sure how this deals with the unutilized timber that is so much wanted by smaller operators out there. I know that my colleague the former Minister of Natural Resources in the Conservative Party was a huge advocate, as I am, on this issue. I know France Gélinas has people in her riding—as I have in my riding, as you have in your riding, as minister—who are trying to get access to unutilized timber to do some innovative things when it comes to value-added in the wood industry.

I look forward to the debate. I look forward to reading the legislation, but I warn you now: second reading only, this spring. We are not going to go to third reading on this at the end.

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS CODE

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

"Whereas the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that everyone has freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression; and freedom of association; and

"Whereas concerns have been raised from a broad spectrum of citizens about the conduct of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal; and

"Whereas section 24(1)(a) of the Ontario Human Rights Code fails to protect religious organizations from the imposition of secular values and morals and insufficiently protects the freedom of association of religious individuals and inadequately protects the freedom of religion and conscience of religious communities;

“Therefore we call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stand up for our freedoms by amending the Human Rights Code and removing the phrase ‘if the qualification is a reasonable and bona fide qualification because of the nature of the employment’ from section 24(1)(a).”

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury, and it reads as follows.

“Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning, a publicly insured health service ... ; 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 our new page Ira to bring it to the Clerk.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents, as requested in Bill 33, put forward by MPP Kim Craitor.

“Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant’s willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children’s Law

Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.”

I affix my signature and send it via page Maria.

OAK RIDGES MORaine

Mr. John O’Toole: Thank you for the pleasure to present this petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the Oak Ridges moraine; and

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and”—indeed—“a duty to protect the Oak Ridges moraine; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier government to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permit process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

“Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Minister of the Environment initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the Oak Ridges moraine until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to prevent contamination of the Oak Ridges moraine.”

I’m pleased to sign and present it to one of the pages, Erik, on his second day here.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have a petition that is certified by the Clerk.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

I have affixed my signature.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I have a petition of 624 signatures of concerned citizens of the township of Russell.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, the undersigned residents of” Glengarry–Prescott–Russell “in the province of Ontario, draw to the attention of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario the following:

“Whereas the petitioners have serious grievances with the proposed development by Taggart Miller Environmental Services, proponents of the Capital Region Resource Recovery Centre (CRRRC) planned for the old Russell shale pit and surrounding properties

between Eadie Road and North Russell Road, between routes 100 and 200 in the township of Russell;

1600

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

“To take action to cause an absolute cease and desist order for this proposed CRRRC development by Taggart Miller Environmental Services on this site of the old Russell shale pit and surrounding properties in the township of Russell in the province of Ontario.”

I fully understand the concerns of those people.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition that reads:

“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, have 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” or not.

I affix my name in full support.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that has been gathered by USW Local 1005 from Hamilton, and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition from Brad Vander Hock from the great community of Strathroy, Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

“Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

“Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

“Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

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

“Enact Bill 115, a private member’s bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery.”

I agree with this fine petition, will affix my name to it, and give it to none other than Braden Leal.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

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

“Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

“Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

“Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

“Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

“Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

“Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

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

“That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector.”

As I agree, I have affixed my signature, and give to it page Simon.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’ai une pétition qui me vient des gens de Sudbury, de Nickel Belt ainsi que de Sturgeon Falls :

« Attendu que la mission du commissaire aux services en français est de veiller à ce que la population reçoive en français des services de qualité du gouvernement de l’Ontario et de surveiller l’application de la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que le commissaire a le mandat de mener des enquêtes indépendantes selon la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que contrairement au vérificateur général, à l’ombudsman, au commissaire à l’environnement et au commissaire à l’intégrité qui, eux, relèvent de l’Assemblée législative, le commissaire aux services en français relève de la ministre déléguée aux services en français;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu’il relève directement de l’Assemblée législative. »

J’appuie cette pétition et je demanderais à notre page Sadie de l’amener à un greffier.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Dave Levac: I was tested.

On behalf of a good colleague and friend of mine:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

“Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

“Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

“Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

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

“Enact Bill 115, a private member’s bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery.”

I sign this petition and hand it to our page Benjamin.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to stand shoulder to shoulder, if you will, with the pharmacists in my riding of Durham. The petition reads as follows:

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

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

“Stop the cuts to front-line health care and the disorganization at our pharmacies now.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this, in support of pharmacists and other health care providers in my riding of Durham, and present it to Simon, one of the new pages.

CHRONIC CEREBROSPINAL VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

“Funding and approval of CCSVI diagnostic treatment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It’s my pleasure to present this petition, and I will ask page Ira to bring it to the Clerk.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSED TRANSACTION OF THE TMX GROUP AND THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE GROUP

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that a select committee on the proposed transaction of the TMX Group and the London Stock Exchange Group be appointed to consider and report its observations and recommendations concerning the impact and net benefit to Canada, including Ontario, its economy and people, Toronto's financial services sector and northern Ontario's mining industries.

In order to develop its recommendations, the committee will do the following:

(a) invite both parties to the transaction to appear, specifically: TMX Group and London Stock Exchange;

(b) by March 10, 2011, conduct at least two days and no more than four days of public hearings in Toronto and allow participation from across Ontario and Canada via Web conference, teleconference or video conference and by written submissions due by March 10, 2011;

(c) consider the role of the TMX Group in today's capital markets and how this might evolve;

(d) consider the emergence around the world of consolidation amongst exchanges and the outcome and implications of these consolidations;

(e) identify the role to be played by Ontario's financial sector in the proposed transaction, including management, regulation, direction, location of activities, listing of stocks, clearing and software development;

(f) evaluate the short- and long-term impact of the proposed transaction on number and quality of jobs in Ontario;

(g) consider the effect of the proposed transaction on future investment in Ontario, including the mining sector;

(h) examine opportunities in the proposed transaction to strengthen Ontario's role as a financial services centre, and consider potential risks;

That the committee shall present or, if the House is not sitting, shall release by depositing with the Clerk of the House, its final report to the assembly by April 7, 2011;

That the committee have the authority to meet at Queen's Park on March 2, 2011, from 12 noon to 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., March 3 from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., March 9 from 12 noon to 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and March 10 from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., to call for persons, papers and things; to employ counsel and staff; and, as the committee deems relevant to its terms of reference, to commission reports; and

That the committee may meet at the call of the Chair for report writing; and

That the committee may examine any other matter it deems relevant to its terms of reference; and

That the committee be composed of the following members: Mr. Phillips (Chair), Mr. Klees (Vice-Chair), Mr. Arthurs, Mrs. Albanese, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Van Bommel, Mr. Zimmer, Mr. Shurman and Mr. Bisson.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 53. Mr. Bradley.

Hon. James J. Bradley: We have unanimous agreement, I believe, that 40 minutes be allotted to each party to debate government notion of motion 53, at the end of which time the Speaker shall put the question without debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Speaker, if I may?

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: The government might better seek unanimous consent for an agreement that indicated that each caucus has up to 40 minutes to speak to the motion and any amendments put to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): To the honourable member from Welland: That is implied as part of the debate, but certainly, if the minister chooses—Minister of Community Safety.

Hon. James J. Bradley: If it's implied, I think we would all agree that that shall be the case.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: I am looking forward, along with my colleague Mr. Shurman in our caucus, who I know will be participating as well, to the committee hearings. Mr. O'Toole is going to be speaking to this motion, as well as Mr. Miller, as our finance critic. I look forward to participating as a member of this committee.

There is no question that the business before us and that will be before the committee has significant potential implications to not only the province of Ontario but to our country, so I welcome the opportunity to participate in this select committee. I also welcome the initiative of the government to strike this committee for the purpose of considering what I believe will be an incredibly important proposal for not only the financial services sector but for businesses throughout this province and, in fact, our country.

I want to say at the outset, though, that I have some very serious concerns about the positioning that the Minister of Finance has taken so far. In many ways, he may well have already undermined the very purpose of this committee. I opened one of the newspapers this morning, and the very bold headline reads, "TSX Merger Bad for Small Biz: Duncan." It goes on to talk about how the Minister of Finance for this province has already expressed his personal view. We know in this place that there's no such thing as a minister of the crown expressing a personal view when he speaks publicly, so he has already made a very strong statement in terms of

his positioning and, I expect, the positioning of this government.

I read in the *Globe and Mail* dated February 17, “Ontario’s Finance Minister is challenging the sales pitch for a transatlantic deal between the Toronto and London stock exchanges and questioning whether it makes sense for Canada to join forces with an overseas partner.” I’ll go on to quote because I think it’s important for the record that people understand the challenge that this select committee will have as we carry out our business.

I have a great deal of respect for the Chair, Mr. Phillips. I know that he brings not only a number of years of experience here in the Legislature, but also, prior to that, in business. I have the confidence in him that he will provide appropriate leadership as Chair of this committee. I have serious concerns, however, knowing what happens to committees in this place, that there will be little, if any, objective listening as we meet with stakeholders and that there isn’t already a foregone conclusion in terms of the position that government members will be taking.

I quote again from the *Globe and Mail*, this article on February 17. The finance minister is talking about Mr. Thomas Kloet, chief executive officer of the TMX Group, which is the owner of the Toronto Stock Exchange, and Xavier Rolet, his counterpart at the London Stock Exchange, who met with the minister last week to discuss this proposal with him. Following this meeting, here’s what the finance minister had to say to the *Globe and Mail*: “‘Not only are they not a very good storyteller,’ Dwight Duncan told the *Globe and Mail* on Thursday, discussing for the first time his meeting with the architects of the deal, ‘but if they have not thought through the communications of this, have they not thought through the substance of it’” either?

1620

I think the first responsibility that we have as legislators, as members of this committee and as members of this House is to ensure that when we take an issue such as this, considering it important enough to strike a select committee so that we can hear from stakeholders, we be objective and we send a strong signal to those coming forward to present their case, pro and con, that they will not be wasting their time in this legislative process.

I would want this from the finance minister, notwithstanding what he has said to date: I would like to hear from the finance minister—and that he make it very clear as this committee ramps up—a public statement that he will set aside his preconceived notions, that he will keep an open mind to the evidence that will be presented and that he will take the advice of the committee, which he, I would hope as well, will allow to function independently of his personal views as they’ve been expressed to date.

This merger is being proposed, as has been stated, for the benefit of both markets and the viability of markets here in Ontario as well as those overseas. The objective, as I understand it, in the proposal wouldn’t have been brought forward had the proponents not firmly believed that it would be in the best interests of both entities. Our

responsibility as a committee will be to investigate that. We have a responsibility to ensure that whatever takes place will be in the best interests of Ontario, of Ontario businesses and of this country. We have a responsibility to be vigilant, so we’ll be considering the testimony as we hear it.

I don’t pretend to be an expert on this topic, and I don’t believe, as we look at the membership of our committee, there is a great deal of expertise relative to the nuances of this deal on the part of any of the committee members. Therefore, it’s particularly important that we take the time to listen to experts who will be coming forward and providing us with their evidence, their arguments and their supportive information to make the case, either pro or con.

I can commit to the House that I and my colleagues will be taking that position: that we have an awesome responsibility here to deal with the information that will be presented to us, that we will assess it carefully and, at the end of the time, work co-operatively with all members of the committee so that we can make a recommendation to this House that will be in the best interests of Ontario, that will be in the best interests of Canada and that, at the end of the day, will result not only in economic activity but an improved quality of life for everyone here in this province.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, that was interesting. I was just wanting to hear what the Chair of the committee had to say, or other members of the Liberal caucus. I didn’t want to get up right away because, being the only speaker in the New Democratic caucus to this issue, I wanted to make sure that I properly heard the arguments from the other side.

First of all, I just want to say at the beginning that I’m going to be moving an amendment to this motion. I might as well do it right now; I’ve got the copies.

I move that the motion be amended as follows:

By adding clause c.1 as follows:

“c.1 Conduct up to four days of travel for the purpose of holding public hearings in Ontario mining communities, this travel to take place during one or more of the recess periods between March 10 and May 5;” and

By deleting the words “its final report to the assembly by April 7, 2011” and replacing them with “an interim report to the assembly by March 10, 2011, and its final report to the assembly by June 2, 2011;” and

By adding after the words “to commission reports; and” the following:

“That the dates, locations and times for public meetings in Ontario mining communities be established by subcommittee;”

I send this over with Erik to the clerks’ table, and I would ask for this amendment to be accepted, if you want to bring that over.

Let me first of all deal with the procedural—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: After?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Bisson has moved an amendment as follows:

By adding clause c.1 as follows:

“c.1 Conduct up to four days of travel for the purpose of holding public hearings in Ontario mining communities, this travel to take place during one or more of the recess periods between March 10 and May 5;” and

By deleting the words “its final report to the assembly by April 7, 2011” and replacing them with “an interim report to the assembly by March 10, 2011, and its final report to the assembly by June 2, 2011;” and

By adding after the words “to commission reports; and” the following:

“That the dates, locations and times for public meetings in Ontario mining communities be established by subcommittee;”

Mr. Bisson.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Let me just speak to that motion first and generally to the issue. The government is proposing that this committee be struck in order to take a look at the possible effects of a merger of the TSX/TSE with the London Stock Exchange. I think most people in the assembly, myself included, don't have a fairly good idea what that really means. I think it's cautious and I don't think it's a bad thing to refer this thing to committee so that the assembly could look at the issue and then pronounce itself on what they think would be the move for Ontario: Should we or should we not? Or should the TSX take over the London? Because quite frankly, we're as big as the London to a certain extent and it would be advantageous for us to do so for a number of reasons I'll talk about later. Nonetheless, the government wants this issue to go to committee.

Here's my fear, and it has already been raised by Mr. Klees. I would say the riding but I don't remember the riding name.

Mr. Frank Klees: Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Newmarket–Aurora, because I know I can't use his name, so that was the way I got the riding in. He raises the issue, and I think it's a fair one.

We have seen plenty of examples in this assembly where committees and select committees have been charged to look at very important issues for the province of Ontario and all of the good work the committee does comes to nothing, and so we ask ourselves as members of this assembly what this is really all about. Is the government truly interested in taking direction from the members of the assembly? Or is the government just going to do what the government is going to do and use this committee as a way of hiding behind some recommendation that is contrived by the majority? Because we know that the government controls the majority of the committee, and they could easily have a situation where the opposition parties don't agree with what the government members have to say, and the government says, “Well, the committee has looked at it and a majority of the committee thought this was a great thing for Ontario, so we're going to hide behind the committee.” And if that's what this is all about, I tell you now I don't want

any part of it. I think we're all very busy. We've all got great things to do for the people we represent in the province of Ontario, and let's not enter into a process that is going to give short shrift to what is I think a very important issue.

I know there are people in the mining community who think this is a great thing. If I'm the Vale Incos of this world, if I'm the Chinese interests trying to buy into Canadian resource companies, this is great news because you will be able to gobble up lots of Canadian natural resources, specifically Ontario natural resources, by the back door. They're kind of doing it by the front door and the back door right now, which is a whole other question, but will it certainly make it a lot easier for them to be able to buy other companies, to basically take control of other companies, and make more and more decisions about what happens to the natural resources here in the province of Ontario. I know there are some in the mining community who are going to call me and say, “Gilles, this is a great thing and your party should support this.”

But on the other hand there's great concern because we need to understand that the Toronto stock market, the Toronto Stock Exchange, is an exchange that was primarily built out of mining. There has been a whole history in this province and the city of Toronto, where we are right now, where we have become the mining capital of the world. Most of the money that is raised, most of the expertise when it comes to putting together new companies, when it comes to listing them on the market, dealing with the legalities of that and dealing with the financial dealings on that is here in the city of Toronto. And why? Because the TSX is here.

1630

I fear there is a possibility that, if we merge with London and we fall under the London rules, a lot of those experts and a lot of those firms that are currently here in the city of Toronto, who employ lawyers and economists, various types of people who are involved in the purchasing and the creation of companies and listing them on the stock exchange, will end up going the way of London. Is that what we want in the province of Ontario, to go from being the mining capital of the world when it comes to financing of mining to being relegated to a backwater to London? If that's what this is all about, I want no part of it.

I think we need to have a debate—or not so much a debate but we need to have a discussion, I think would be the right word—with those people who are much more learned about this, who work in the financial system here in Toronto and across Ontario when it comes to mining; who understand how you list companies on the stock market, what the ins and outs are and what it means. We need to give them a proper opportunity to prepare themselves and come to speak to the committee.

That's why I'm putting forward this particular motion. The government is asking, by way of their motion, that we're essentially going to have, at the most, four days of hearings in the city of Toronto within the next couple of weeks. Well, this is a pretty complex issue. You're

asking Ontario to buy a pig in a poke, as they would say, with the merger of the TSX with the London exchange. This is not something that, in my view, people get their heads around in two minutes. It's something that you've really got to think about: What are the short-, medium- and long-term implications to the Ontario economy, and specifically to the mining sector here in Ontario?

So at the end, if it's found to be, "Oh, my God, this is the best thing since sliced bread and we can make this work," that's one thing. I don't think that's where it's going to end up, but that's one thing. But if it turns out, as I fear, that for the pluses we get in merging with the London exchange, there are the negatives which mean we lose control of our own mining industry and the ability to raise the money the way that we have, the way that we've been successful in bringing online some of the best mining properties in the world in a jurisdiction called Ontario, well then, I want no part of it.

We need to give people the opportunity to have their say, but not just people here in Toronto who work in and around the TSX as far as listing companies on the exchange and dealing with the legal and financial matters of mining, the raising of capital etc. We also have to get input from the people who are going to be affected in the end. You know what? That's people in northern Ontario.

People don't realize this, but the largest thing that drives the TSX is the mining sector. When it comes to how much money is raised in this province, a majority of the money that is raised for junior mining companies in Ontario comes out of the TSX. There is a fear that if you move the exchange to London and the money is raised through the London exchange, those juniors will lose out to the senior mining companies.

Again, God bless De Beers Canada and Vale and Xstrata and others that I won't name. They're trying to make bucks and they're trying to run their business, which is mining, and I understand that. But do we want to give more and more control of our mining exploration and development to the larger mining players or do we want to make sure that we have a strong, vibrant community of small explorationists and people in the business who are able to go out and yes, to speculate on what is a good mining property; to spend some money to find out if, in fact, there is ore on that property that they have been exploring for some time and to be able to raise the money to do so independently from the large mining companies. Eventually, the large mining companies will have these properties, but the way that we bring the properties from being "Maybe there's a mine there," to a mine is by allowing the juniors to do the work that they've got to do. Then eventually the Vales and the Xstratas and others—the Goldcorps, the Lake Shore Golds—go out and buy those, and the junior mining company goes back and starts all over again.

So we have to allow the exploration community in Ontario to continue to be as strong as possible, because the exploration community, I would argue, in Ontario has been under attack for a long time.

When I was first elected in 1990, many moons ago, one of the first issues I had to deal with was a gentleman by the name of Dave Munier, who I think now lives in Kirkland Lake, if he's not back in Timmins. I can't remember the other man; I think his name was Perry or Price. I've got to remember his name later; I don't have it in my mind. They came to my office and they said, "The junior mining companies in Ontario are going the way of the dodo bird. We have less and less junior mining explorationists in the field. If you don't have the geologists and the prospectors doing the kind of stuff that the Don MacKinnons of this world have done up at Hemlo or others have done across this province, you're not going to find the mines that we need to find to sustain the mining levels that we see in Ontario when it comes to how much ore is extracted from the ground and how many jobs and riches come from that." They came to me and they tried to impress, in the 1990s—in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993—what they needed governments to do in order to shore up the junior mining explorationists.

I've got to say, I was very proud to be a member of the NDP government, which basically sat down with the junior mining exploration companies; we sat down with the mining companies. It was a process that took over a year or a year and a half, and we made some fundamental changes to how we were able to support the junior mining companies in this province. As a result of that, I would argue—we didn't save them all because of them did close down—we managed to maintain a fairly healthy mining community to what it would be today when it comes to junior mining explorationists. I would argue that if we hadn't done what we did in the early 1990s, a lot of the junior mining explorationists that we see in the field today might have gone the same way as some of their brothers and sisters did, as they ended up having to leave this province to find work because there wasn't any work in the exploration industry.

This proposed merger with London coming over and merging with the TSX: If we fall under the London rules, what does that mean to the junior mining exploration companies in northern Ontario? That's why I put forward a motion that I don't see as deleterious; I see this as complementary to what the government is trying to achieve: Have the committee meet in Toronto for those four days that the government proposed, have an interim report issued by the date that the government said they would put forward a final report, but then give the committee the opportunity to continue working until the spring so that we can do as much work as possible between now and the next provincial election.

All of this is going to play out in the next six months, and I believe that as an assembly we need to have the opportunity to review this and to look at it and pronounce ourselves as to what advice we think we need to give our provincial and federal governments when it comes to this particular issue.

I don't think we're going to have a definitive answer by March 10. If all we allow is people to come into committee hearing rooms here in Toronto for those four

days, I predict that we will not fill the committee chambers for four days of hearings. I predict that now. Why? Because most people—some of them—will not even have heard of this; some of them are still out in the bush doing the work, by the way. Others will not have had a chance to pull together the thoughts that they need to put on paper so that they're able to come before this committee and do what has to be done.

So let's have an initial go at those who are ready to go, hear what they have to say, do an interim report, report back from the committee what we see as being the issues pro or con when it comes to an interim report, and allow us the time thereafter to really look at this in some detail so that we can really give some good, informed advice to the minister and the cabinet when it comes to the decision whether Ontario should support a merger of the London exchange with the Toronto exchange, or should Ontario instead say, "Okay; as long as Toronto becomes the mother ship." In other words, we become the drivers. Maybe that's where we have to go. I don't know, but those are the questions we have to ask.

Number two, the motion speaks to: Where mining happens is where we need to go and talk to people. So we need to get into Timmins, into Sudbury, I would argue into Thunder Bay or into Red Lake, so that we're able to talk to those people who are in the mining business, who are the junior mining explorationists, who are the prospectors, who can come to us and say, "Hey, I've been reading all about this, and here are my thoughts."

I will venture to guess that there are a whole bunch of prospectors out there and, I would argue, some junior mining exploration companies, who will not have the time or the means to get to Toronto to stand before a committee here in Toronto. So, go to Timmins, go to Sudbury, go to Thunder Bay and possibly Red Lake in order to give people an opportunity to have a say in those mining communities—maybe even Kirkland Lake; I skipped over Kirkland Lake and I shouldn't have done that because it's a mining player as well—and have an opportunity for them to have their say.

If the government says, "We can't go to all the mining communities," then let's decide which ones we're going to go to, because I think we're going to get a very different story. I'd be willing to bet that if we go to northern Ontario and we listen to the prospectors, we listen to the junior mining exploration companies, we speak to the economic development corporation people in those communities, we talk to mayors and councils and chambers of commerce and others and labour councils, we're probably going to get a fairly different picture than what we're going to get out of Toronto. It might be complementary, but you're going to get a different take on it. They may have some of the same basic concerns but a much more practical and different way of coming at it.

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I think there are essentially two or three things that we have to watch out for through this process. That's why I'm asking that the government extend the hearings, allow us the time after the interim report to do some

additional work and allow the committee to do its work. Election cycles being what they are, I can't prevent that there's going to be an election come October 6. I know there are a lot of Liberal members who would rather not have an election on October 6. A lot of New Democrats would argue that we'd like to have one, and it's going to happen because it's fixed in our constitution. The point is that we're going to be on summer break and into an election cycle before the second week of June. I think that before we rise in this place, we should at least give this as much time as we can and work that needs to be done.

Here are a couple of my concerns up front. As I said earlier, I think there are some mining companies that will come before the committee and say, "Right on. Best thing in the world. Love it!" I'm sure it's going to happen. But I can also guarantee you that there are going to be others that are going to come ringing alarm bells, which tells me that there really are two sides to this. I think it can almost be taken down to big versus small. If you're a large mining company, and I'll give you an example, you're probably more likely to support this for a couple of different reasons. One is—look at the situation of what used to be called Falconbridge in Sudbury. For those who don't know, Falconbridge was a Canadian-owned large mining company in Ontario based out of Sudbury. They operated primarily in the nickel deposits out of Sudbury and Manitoba and some processes down here in southern Ontario. For years and years that company operated. It was quite successful and negotiated some good collective agreement with the Steelworkers, provided lots of employment for people in those communities, and they made lots of money and workers did well. Mind you, it was a struggle, but generally they did okay. All of a sudden, a company by the name of Vale wanted to—no, let me first of all start. Falconbridge was originally a bid from the Chinese, who wanted to buy Vale at the time. The Chinese, primarily because they want access to the natural resources, are interested as a growing consumer of natural resources to secure as much supply of natural resources as they can from wherever in the world they can. They saw Falconbridge as a pretty good thing. If they could buy Falconbridge, they could then get themselves some nickel matte and have it shipped over to China and use it for the various processes you use nickel matte for.

At the time, that particular deal was not allowed. It was found not to be in the interests of Canada that we allow a foreign nation to buy out Falconbridge. The government of the day thought that wasn't a good idea. I think the way it went is that they were actually never told no, but the Chinese basically withdrew their offer. That was the end of that, we thought. But within a year what ended up happening is that the Chinese bought the debt of Vale. Vale, being a large multinational mining company—essentially what the Chinese did is say, "What we can't do by the front door when it comes to buying Falconbridge, we can do by the back door if we hold the debt on Vale." Vale came in, and the rest is history. They

came in and they bought out Falconbridge. They became the principal shareholders of Falconbridge with most of the debt being secured by the Chinese. The rest is history again. We saw Vale, who came in at first when the price of nickel was way up here and said, "Don't worry, Sudbury. Don't worry, Ontario. Everything will be fine. We're not going to do anything to shake things up here. We're going to make sure that workers are well paid. We're going to make sure that our responsibility to the community is maintained and we are going to be good corporate citizens in Ontario." Howard Hampton, Shelley Martel, Gilles Bisson, Tony Martin, Charlie Angus and other northern New Democrats gathered in Sudbury, remember, when this deal was being inked, and said, "We warn that the province of Ontario should oppose this takeover," because in the end, if Vale takes over, this is all about securing our nickel matte. At the end of the day, this is about taking the control of our natural resources out of the hands of Canadians and putting the decisions about what happens in our communities to people who live far away and who have less concern for what happens to Mr. and Mrs. Smith living in Sudbury or wherever it might be.

Of course, the media gave us some play, but the government of the day, under Rick Bartolucci as minister and Dalton McGuinty as the Premier, said, "They don't know what they're talking about. Them New Democrats, they're always saying these things. You know that this is going to be a good corporate citizen. Everything is going to be wonderful." Go tell that to the communities that just went through a one-year strike when Vale Inco came in and said, "We just want to make a couple of minor changes to your collective agreement. We want to basically gut your pension so that no new employee hired at Vale is going to have a defined pension plan." That's something that workers in Inco in Sudbury fought for and went on the picket line for 10 months for; that's something they worked on all of their lives, for the workers of the mines of Inco to be able to retire with a decent pension by having a defined pension plan that is paid by whom? It's paid by the workers. These are deferred wages that the workers negotiated at the table instead of wages, and then they made pension contributions to boot.

Vale comes in and says, "We want to throw all that out. We think that workers who are there now should be entitled to some pension—that is, a defined pension plan—but we think all new employees shouldn't have the same thing." So they pit new workers, to-be-hired workers, against the current members. And the current members, I think, made the right decision—it was a very tough one—and said, "Listen, we're not going to put at jeopardy, just automatically, the rights of new workers to come and work here. They should be entitled to the same defined pension plan as us." So they went out on strike for a year. That was issue number one.

Issue number two: This is the one that was really laughable to me. The United Steelworkers, Local 6500, when Inco was making not a lot of money, when the price of nickel was low, the union said, and I remember

because I was a Steelworker then—still a Steelworker today, but I was, at that time, a member within Local 4440 out of Timmins, out of the McIntyre mine. The workers at Inco, through Local 6500, said—and I remember, because I was at the wage conferences, what we used to call the northeastern Ontario council, where we had these discussions. Local 6500 said, "We have a proposal. Rather than asking our employer to give us money in our wages that they're going to have to bank and pay for each and every year at a time when they can't control the price of nickel, we're going to go for a nickel bonus. Rather than asking for an extra 10 or 15 or 20 cents an hour, we're going to negotiate a nickel bonus, that our bonus is based on the price of nickel and the cost to produce the nickel in our mines."

I thought that was a very responsible thing for workers to do. It recognized that the employer couldn't control the price of the commodity that they were producing, and it allowed the workers to benefit in the case where the price went up, and when the price went down, they shared in the pain. I was proud to be a Steelworker who was a member of a union that actually proposed that as a way of dealing with what the vagaries of the market are and how difficult that is for the employer to pay wages.

We agreed to that. Not only did we agree to it; the floor for us to get the money was set fairly high. We didn't set it at the price of nickel then; we set it at a price that was fairly high. All of the experts in the industry were saying, "If the price of nickel went up to that, we'd all be happy. We can live with this agreement. If the price of nickel goes to the point that's been negotiated in the nickel bonus, we don't worry because we don't think it's going to get there, and if it does it won't stay there long and won't go much higher." So they were perfectly willing to live with it.

In fact, Falconbridge lived with it when the price of nickel went up. The price of nickel not only went up to that floor price that we had negotiated, but it went way beyond. So Vale came and said, "We don't like that. We want to get rid of it. This is bad. Why should we give all these workers all the money?" And they started this rumour in the community that somehow or other it was really unfair that workers were getting this kind of money, that this wasn't right—terrible, terrible. Well, the money that the workers got was a pittance compared to what the company made on the price of nickel. I would venture to guess that the cost to pay out the entire nickel bonus was probably less than 10% of the profit that the company made in addition to what they would have made when the price of nickel was lower. In other words, the company got to keep 90% of the increase, and we only got 10%.

Community members, through Sudbury—not everybody but some of them said, "Those workers are greedy." They forgot to think that when the guy or the girl gets their nickel bonus at Inco, where do they go spend their money? They go by a Ski-Doo. They go buy some timber for their cottage or their house. They go and buy a car or a truck. They spend money in Sudbury, and make that

money go round and round and round in the economy. Inco, essentially, took money right out of the community in Sudbury and put it into the coffers of Vale so it could be spent somewhere outside of Ontario.

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Am I a little bit fearful of the larger mining company that does that, such as Vale? Absolutely. I believe they should have the right to make money, but I believe they have a responsibility to the community in which they operate and to the workers.

I say all of this not only because of what happened in the strike and on the picket line in Sudbury but because of what happened in the ensuing years with Vale and the Chinese. If you now go take a look at who actually owns Vale, a majority of the shares of Vale are not owned by Vale; they're owned by the Chinese, because they basically have secured the debt. When you figure out—I think I wrote the numbers down here somewhere. I did a bit of research based on something somebody sent me. Of course, I dropped my glasses. It's kind of hard to read without these things. If you take a look at—where did I put that? I've got so many papers here.

Anyway, aside from the point of what the actual numbers are, the point is this: The Chinese now own the largest percentage of shares of Vale if they were to cash in their debt and the shares they currently own.

The bigger issue for me is: How did we allow that to happen? That was a takeover by the back door, as one gentleman called it who sent me an email today on this particular issue. He said that is the true issue that we need to deal with.

Should this committee deal with that issue? Should this committee ask, "How are we able to make sure that we don't allow this back-door takeover by way of debt to happen so that we lose control of our natural resources industries here in Ontario?" That's just the one issue.

The bigger issue, and I think I started on that and I just touched on it at the beginning, is the issue of what happens with the people who are now in Toronto who are employed in the field of providing the services that junior mining companies and others use in order to list themselves on the stock exchange and to do the work that needs to be done to drive that.

Ontario has become one of the world leaders when it comes to mining, and most of those people reside here in Toronto. Those activities are big, value-added jobs that pay large salaries, that rent space in our commercial buildings in downtown Toronto and provide much in the way of being able to raise capital here in the province of Ontario for the junior mining companies and others.

I say that one of the things we're going to have to take a look at is: What is this going to mean to those firms that are in Toronto that currently are employed in the field of providing financing and the legal requirements to list stocks on the TSX? If we move to the London exchange, is that going to change? We need to hear from people on that point, because if it is the case that they're going to change, and I would suspect it is, this may not be a good deal for Ontario. Maybe we've got to turn this whole

thing on its head and say, "Well, you know, the TSX is not exactly a bit player in the stock market business, as compared to London." We're of about equal size, or pretty close to. Maybe we need to say, "Maybe the TSX becomes the driver and we run by Ontario rules, Canadian rules." Maybe that's what we need to say. I don't know. I don't advocate that at this point, but that's a question that I think we need to take a look at. I say to my friends that it's something that we're going to have to spend some time on to be able to take a look at what needs to be done in order to make sure that Ontario's interests are protected.

I really believe, in conclusion, that the government's process that they've basically put in place, when it comes to hearing this through a select committee, is commendable to a degree. But to say that we've got four days of hearings and we've got to make a final report by March 10 on an issue that's fairly complex, and people are not going to have a chance to really get their heads around this, is giving this short shrift. That's why I have moved the amendment to have an interim report filed by March 10 and then have a final report tabled here at the assembly by June 2, in order for the committee to have an opportunity to give this issue full review so that we're able to take a look at what makes sense for Ontario and we don't jump into this without our eyes open, understanding what the consequences are for the province of Ontario and specifically for the mining industry of Ontario.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: As we've been discussing this afternoon about the select committee, this will be an all-party legislative committee. Its review will report on its observations and recommendations concerning the impact and net benefit to Canada, including Ontario, its economy and its people; Toronto's financial services sector, which is incredibly important to the province; and, of course, northern Ontario's mining industry.

My colleague from the third party has indicated he feels that this process should be dragged out for some time and not completed until June. Unfortunately, my understanding is that the federal government has about a 45-day window of opportunity in which to report back and make its decision. If we took the advice of the member from Timmins-James Bay, we'd be here until June, and our advice would be unheeded by anyone because we would have no input.

The input that is valid and that will be useful to our Minister of Finance, our government, as well as the federal government, is useful only in its timeliness. We don't want to miss our opportunity as a province to have some say and make some recommendations, which is why the strict timelines have been put together in this motion.

Certainly, I've consulted with the other parties on moving this motion forward today. I appreciate that we are moving it forward this afternoon in a timely manner. I understand that the committee is hoping to start meet-

ing—the subcommittee as early as tomorrow—so that we can invite our guests to come and speak to this. I'm sure that those who are interested in this issue are following this issue very closely. Those in the financial sector and the mining sector are fully aware that this is a timely issue and that it needs to be addressed very quickly.

Therefore, I am very pleased that all three parties are speaking to this this afternoon and that we will have this committee look into this issue which is of great interest to the province of Ontario and come back with recommendations that will allow us to put forward Ontario's view on this potential merger and how it will impact our province, our resources, our people, and our financial sector, and will put forward the best recommendations for our province.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to enter into the debate this afternoon on this government motion to create a select committee. But before I get going, I would like to note that we have a new page from Parry Sound–Muskoka here in the Legislature, Sadie Honderich from Huntsville, whom I just had the opportunity to meet. I want to welcome her to Queen's Park and hope she has a great time here as the page representing Parry Sound–Muskoka.

This afternoon we're debating a motion that's essentially setting up a select committee to look at the proposed merger of the TMX Group and the London Stock Exchange. The TMX Group owns the Toronto Stock Exchange.

As was just mentioned by the government House leader, it is a fairly tight timeline. The committee is going to be holding public hearings—let's see here; oh, here we are, the times—March 2 and 3 and March 9 and 10, according to the order of the House, a fairly tight timeline to evaluate this transaction from an Ontario perspective.

I would point out that for this merger to go ahead, there are many, many approvals in the process. There's federal approvals: the Investment Canada Act, the Competition Act. Other than this committee that's going to look at it, there's also the Ontario Securities Commission, the Quebec Autorité des marchés financiers, the Alberta Securities Commission, the British Columbia Securities Commission. It also needs Canadian court approval in relation to the plan. There's approval required in the United States' Hart-Scott-Rodino act, in the UK through the Financial Services Authority, in Italy from the Commissione Nazionale per le Società e la Borsa, and also shareholder approval. So there's a long process of approvals, of which the Ontario government's is one part.

I would simply say at this point that we're just debating this motion to form a committee to look at it, and we're supportive of that. We have a couple of our key members—Mr. Klees, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, and also the member from Thornhill, Mr. Shurman, are representatives from the PC Party on this committee.

As the member from Newmarket–Aurora stated, though, we're hoping that the committee is going to take an objective look at this merger and that it's not a foregone conclusion what the result will be, because the financial sector certainly is a very important sector in Ontario, in Toronto and in Canada. In Toronto, there are some 300,000 people employed in the financial sector: 20% of the gross domestic product.

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What we're talking about is the merger of two companies that own stock exchanges. However, the reason I raise the concern about hoping that it's not a foregone conclusion and the government has already made up their mind, is that it's too important, and I think what we all should be looking for is what is in the best interests of the province of Ontario.

Right off the bat, Mr. Duncan, the finance minister, seems to be playing a bit of politics with it. Barely a day after it was announced, he was making headlines like "TSX Merger Bad for Small Business" and "Duncan Demands Proof TSX-LSE Merger Won't Boost Costs for Canadian Companies." There's a quote in here that I would say is a little bit inflammatory if you're really trying to look out for the best interests of the province. "What they should be doing is acting and thinking about what is in the best interests of the country," Mr. Duncan told reporters on Tuesday. "I think they need to engage in a more rational debate as opposed to fearmongering." So he's kind of accusing the companies of fearmongering.

In reaction to that, I would simply say that I'm certainly not an expert on this, nor would I say are any members of the Legislature. We should be getting experts in to make comment.

We've had some people in the news already comment. We had Mr. Thomas Caldwell, of Caldwell Financial Group, who certainly took issue with the finance minister. I'll read from a CBC article that states, "TSX-LSE merger stalled by politics..."

"Caldwell, founder and chair of Caldwell Financial Ltd., primarily took issue with criticism expressed by Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, who was the first out of the gate with doubts about whether the merger would benefit Canada..."

"The Ontario minister also went on to express his doubts about the Middle East 'owning' the stock exchange.

"Caldwell, whose company has holdings in both TMX Group and the LSE, called Duncan's comments 'odd,'" and he goes on to say why he thinks it's a good idea. As I say, this is very important, and so we should not be playing politics with it.

Mr. Caldwell suggests that these are some of the arguments in favour of a TSX-LSE merger:

"The listings, the fundraising, the corporate finance will still be done in Toronto.

"It gives 'easier access to Canadian companies, easier access to European and Middle East funding via the London Stock Exchange, that would be a tremendous economic boom.'

“The LSE does not have a derivatives platform, that is, options, and Montreal does. So they’re going to be using the Montreal system and staff to build their product in Europe.

“Quebec may actually get jobs out of this.

“We are going to have a greater selection of investments quite possibly, and greater access to capital.”

Obviously, the points he’s making are that there are net benefits for both the LSE and the TMX Group and for both countries. I think that’s the kind of thing this committee should be looking at to establish whether that is in fact the case.

You look at the stock exchange history and note that, of late, globalization in technology has spurred an increase in mergers of stock exchanges. Initially mergers happened in Europe. For example, in March 2000, the consolidation of the Brussels, Amsterdam and Paris exchanges led to Euronext, and right now, of course, we have the New York Stock Exchange looking at merging with the Deutsche Börse of Germany—that’s also in the news—and I believe that Australia and Singapore are looking at merging.

“What are the factors that are driving the traditional stock exchanges to seek mergers? Firstly, the development of alternative trading systems ... which operate outside the stock exchanges but perform the same function of bringing buyers and sellers together. ATS are able to offer lower transaction costs and gained market share at the cost of traditional stock exchanges. Mergers can enable stock exchanges to lower costs.”

That’s obviously completely contrary to Mr. Duncan saying that it would boost costs. This article on why they’re happening says, “Mergers can enable stock exchanges to lower costs. Firstly, there are huge technology savings.

“Once two exchanges are merged there will be no need for two separate technology platforms. Hence, there will be fewer technology development, maintenance and manpower costs. Secondly, inter-listing of companies will be possible. This will enable the companies to tap capital and increased revenue for the merged stock exchange through higher listing fees. Thirdly, increased liquidity will lower the costs of issuing equity and also trading costs for retail investors. The lower costs will enable the traditional stock exchanges which have been losing revenue to compete with alternative trading systems like Omega, Chi-X etc....

“But these factors cannot deter the continuing spree of stock exchange mergers as benefits clearly outweigh risks.” That’s the opinion of one article, but we can see where the history of this is coming from.

In the short time I have available, because I think Mr. O’Toole would like to speak a bit about this new committee that’s being formed as well, I would just like to note some of the surveys of businesses out there which are probably more tuned into whether this is a benefit or not.

Last week, it being a big news item, the Globe and Mail had a substantial article in the Saturday edition, and

they did an informal survey. “The Globe and Mail contacted every company in the S&P/TSX 60 index, along with a number of major institutional investors, private companies and smaller firms, to gauge the level of support for the \$7-billion merger. The informal survey suggests there is broad approval for the deal among senior Canadian corporate leaders in a number of sectors—along with a few reservations.”

Going further down the article, “But reaction from CEOs and chief financial officers suggests that executives at many of Canada’s largest public companies do not want politicians to step in.” They’re concerned about politicians just jumping into this and not necessarily being rational.

“When citing potential benefits of the deal, more-efficient trading and access to capital were at the top of executives’ lists....

“But the Globe’s survey shows that the exchanges would be wise to disclose more, and do a better job of explaining it, as they fight for their deal to go through....

“A number of executives across various sectors said it would be difficult for them to argue that Canada should block any deal, given that they are expanding into other countries themselves.”

This survey of many of the companies across the country indicates there’s a great deal of support for this merger.

Another article in the Globe and Mail on the topic noted that “If consummated and approved, the TMX-LSE deal would unite two exchanges that list some of the world’s largest mining companies. London lists producers like Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton, while Toronto is the home market for large players such as Barrick Gold and Teck Resources. The combined market value of LSE and TMX would be about \$6.9 billion.”

They quote from a leading mining executive who happens to be from Parry Sound. I have a home in Parry Sound–Muskoka. Tye Burt gave a quote for the article. “‘This a natural evolution of global capital markets,’ said Tye Burt, chief executive officer of Kinross Gold Corp., one of Canada’s largest gold miners. ‘From a global and Canadian mining perspective, it appears to be a positive development, as it brings together the world’s two leading capital markets for mining, and has the potential to give Canadian-based mining companies greater exposure to European investors.’”

I think I’m just about done talking about this subject for today, because I know Mr. O’Toole would like to add some comments as well.

As the member for Newmarket–Aurora stated, we should be looking at what’s in the best interests of the province of Ontario. I frankly don’t think this is a matter where there are a lot of votes won or lost, but it is important to the province.

I look forward to the work of the committee in getting the expert testimony and trying to determine if there are concerns that should be taken into consideration. I look forward to the results of that committee.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I also want to acknowledge that this is kind of an arcane sort of topic here because a lot of members know how important the capital market is. They also probably themselves are concerned about the success of the market and how that plays out.

I can only say that my good friend here from Halton and I are of that generation that certainly have a mixed portfolio, mostly on the downside at the moment. The point being, though, that I think broadly, members are interested and we all want the right decision.

1710

I will say at the outset here that our members who just spoke—of course, the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka is our finance critic. He's sort of removing himself to take the broader, the 30,000-foot view of the issue and listen carefully. He could easily have imposed himself on the committee with Mr. Shurman from Thornhill and Mr. Klees from Newmarket—Aurora. I'm confident that Mr. Shurman, who speaks often here on the economic critic file and does a formidable job of monitoring both the economic numbers and the employment numbers—but my good friend from Halton has done that for years here and done a commendable job. In fact, he's just sharing his skills often. I would only say that it's important.

This motion is really about setting up a committee. We're of the mind that that's a good move. In fact, I would say it's an educational move, and I would probably encourage all members, including myself and the member from Halton—we said we'll be watching carefully, only to learn, because it's a complex issue.

I remember the first course I took in monetary theory some time ago, and I'm probably one of the ones who need more training. What is money? Money is a temporary store value. It's sort of an economics 101; it's a monetary theory course 101. Then, it's "What is money?" The dollars, I'm saying, are a medium of exchange.

Right now, if you listen and watch around the world, there's a monetary crisis. Everybody's cheating on currency. That's what's going on. If you read *The Economist* from, I think, around October of last year, they talked after the meltdown about the US dollar going down and the Canadian dollar going up in relation—the basis of trading. It became evident that when they financed the TARP program in the US for the bailout, there was \$3 trillion of money printed. Now, how come it was printed? It actually devalued the US dollar. That's what happened.

Who held that debt, the promissory provisions of printing money based on some kind of commitment? It was China. That's why Barack Obama has been to China a couple of times to assure them that he's not going to pay them back with 50-cent dollars.

We see in our economy the impact of money—this is important, the impact of our economy with the value of the dollar, and also the access to market. What is the

point of a market? My good friend from Halton and I were talking just informally here. What's the point of the market? It's to raise capital. So they're going to float a new issue—and my son-in-law, who is a securities lawyer; he was with Cassels Brock. Now he's in London. He works for the largest securities firm in the world, in London, England.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: London?

Mr. John O'Toole: Yes. London, England. I talked to him just recently about this. I think it's fascinating; again, as a practical investor.

I remember I took the Ontario securities course probably 20 years ago. It was before I came here, because I was at the point where I had shares as part of where I worked and I wanted to know about some of the options you have. I didn't really know much about how to buy shares. In fact, the first time I bought shares, I remember I said, "I'll have 100." I meant \$100 worth; I ended up getting 100 shares because that's one unit, more or less. You buy them in lots of 100, basically. It turned out it was a good decision, because it was Laidlaw, and Laidlaw transportation went up and did three splits, and the 100 shares ended up being 500 shares because once they split you have 200 and then you have, when they double—so I had 500 shares after 100 shares, and I sold them. I bought them at about \$9 or \$11 or something like that and sold them at \$25 or \$30, all by mistake. I had no clue. In fact, I'm sort of a buy-and-hold and sort of investor, which has not been a good idea as I still have General Motors shares.

I think the important thing here is, what's the market? This merger is really so complex in terms of whether it's the right thing. The first thing our leader, Tim Hudak, said was, "You know, we have to look at this objectively." What was the first thing that the Minister of Finance did? He starts to criticize. I was surprised and others were surprised as well.

I hope they listen to the work of this committee. I have the greatest respect for the people that our leader has put on that committee: Mr. Klees and Mr. Shurman. I know that Mr. Chudleigh would have done an excellent job. I say that with all due respect. In our caucus, he's the only guy who really sits on the pension advisory committee and other committees like that.

I think it's important—I would have liked, this morning, to have gone to the remarks made by Howard Wetston. He spoke this morning at the Economic Club of Canada here in Toronto. I'm just going to quote, because it's easier.

I can recall when Howard Wetston became—he was part of the Ontario Securities Commission. He's now the chair, which is very respectable. I had the opportunity, when I was assistant to the Minister of Finance, when Jim Bradley—Jim Bradley, jeez. Lord forbid. Heaven forbid.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Bite your tongue.

Mr. John O'Toole: Bite my tongue—to actually meet with David Brown when he was chair of the OSC. They were looking at partial windup rules on things—it was

called the Monsanto case. We were looking at partial windup rules. I've seen the work done by Purdy Crawford and the Wise Persons' Committee. The number of real experts, both in law and financing, is very interesting. It's humbling when you see these guys.

It was quite interesting, to really bring this into some sort of focus here, that in the background here that I was seeing is the argument on the single regulator. Now, I'm looking over and Mr. Phillips, who's a guy I respect—he's a minister and I think the chair of cabinet, Chair of Management Board, something like that. He's minister without portfolio and in charge of everything. He's sort of like Greg Sorbara: in the background on everything. He's sort of got his fingerprints on most files, and I say that respectfully.

But here's what I'm saying. It's hardly appropriate—listen, I've been on lots of select committees over 15 years. They've never been chaired by a minister, ever. Now, that's not impugning any kind of motive. It's just suspicious. The chair of cabinet is going to chair the committee. I think he gets his marching orders from the Premier. I think Dwight has kind of recused himself from any discussion, because he has already decided he's against it. So we'll have to watch carefully.

Tom Caldwell: I thought Mr. Caldwell, who my boss had once been on a panel with—in fact, I did all the listening. Here's what he said: “Mr. Duncan's aggressive”—just a minute. “With an air of skepticism about the proposed marriage of the Toronto and London ... exchanges, Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan challenged the dealmakers to prove it would not become more costly for businesses to list their shares. Mr. Duncan's aggressive approach followed a CBC ... interview last weekend with Bay Street veteran Tom Caldwell, founder of Caldwell Financial Ltd.”—a very respectable man in the community broadly, even without this acronym of his company—“who took a few digs at the finance minister's questions about the merger. Caldwell quipped”—and I'm quoting here. “Caldwell quipped”—this is important—“Mr. Duncan has never visited the Toronto Stock Exchange ... I don't even think he knows the ... address.” Okay? Be careful of what you're speaking. That's why today I'm in humble deference to those experts who will do all that hearing. I think it's important that we hear from Mr. Caldwell, and these people should almost be subpoenaed.

I've looked at the merger information. I've looked at the articles from February. This is in thespec.com: “TSX Merger”—and this is the NDP position; there's Andrea Horwath.

“I do believe the control will rest with the other side,” he said and added these are the kinds of questions that need to be explained in greater detail. Duncan said he spoke with his counterparts in Ottawa and Montreal and was briefed by representatives of the TSX and the London exchange earlier this week. “We don't understand the whole deal; we need a better understanding of it.” I think that's a fair comment, our finance minister saying exactly what Mr. Caldwell said.

I think the hearing, as long as we approach it objectively and with the sense of trying to do the right thing—here's the next most important comment. Minister Clement has been in the media. Minister Flaherty has been in the media. These are the federal counterparts on this. They will ultimately make the final decision, I guess. They have both acknowledged the sovereignty issue. Canada has been cited around the world for having a paramount sort of monetary system, with the recent meltdown in the economy in the world, basically. Canada has withstood a lot of that.

1720

I think the content of this particular thing is really to educate with this motion, with a committee that is going to be struck. I believe, it's going to meet very—there's an amendment moved by the NDP; I won't speak to the amendment. The motion says they'll have to report by April 7; that gives them the month of March, by the time they get the committee, and they do the advertising. They're supposed to meet for four days of public hearings in Toronto and allow participants from across Ontario and Canada to participate via Web conference or video conference and by writing submissions due by March 10.

March 10 is moving really quickly on a very complex subject. Then you get to read these submissions. I can tell you they're going to be different for many of us to read. There are very technical things here. You might want to call in Purdy Crawford and a few people who actually know what they're talking about to help—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: There's the House leader over there quipping again. It's fine for her to make those snide, cheap remarks, but I'm not sure they're appropriate for this debate. Really, it's that attitude that really makes me feel saddened—

Mr. Dave Levac: Put that finger down.

Mr. John O'Toole: Mr. Levac, from Brant, is saying the same thing. We wore the shirt today, and everyone got along. Don't be so malicious. What do you gain by it, David?

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: I would say you should yourself listen sometimes to what you say.

All I'm trying to say here is that this is an educational experience that this committee is charged with. For me, the travel, I'm not sure; perhaps they should see London. Perhaps they should go to London to meet with some of the principals on that side of the pond.

In my view, there's a few things that have been said that I would want to make sure are on the record. Our finance critic, Mr. Miller, has put most of this on the record, but it's important to realize that the total value of this deal is large; it's \$6 billion. It's a little less than the Samsung deal that was signed with the Korean firm Samsung as part of resolving our electricity issues.

Now, the TMX is the TSX, and there's another exchange within that. It's the parent of the TSX, the TMX. It's worth about \$2.9 billion, and the London

Stock Exchange is valued at about \$3.25 billion. The resulting merger has been valued at \$6 billion, and the merger would operate nine separate exchanges with 6,700 listings. TMX shares gained 10% on February 9 in reaction to the news. Xavier Rolet, current London Stock Exchange CEO, would be the new CEO of the merged companies. Thomas Kloet, the current TMX CEO, would be the new president. Ottawa has 45 days to complete a review after it receives a formal merger application.

As I said, Howard Wetston has spoken on this and will actually have a fair amount to say, but they have resolved that they will not have public hearings—that's the Ontario Securities Commission—until afterwards. A push here for the single regulator in Canada, which has been a federal initiative, is going to be reviewed by the Supreme Court, I think in April sometime. That is important. The initiative for Toronto being the headquarters, the financial capital of Canada, if you will, is being led by Janet Ecker, former finance minister. I think those are all parties that should be a part of this.

Even the definitions that we've read on the composition of this proposed board of 15 members: There's eight from the LSE which, of course, also includes the Italian exchange; I think it's two voting members from the Italian board. That means that Ontario, Canada, would have five. But all of this is predicated on these hearings, the governance structure, the ownership provisions and access to market.

I think I go back to first principles here that the real issue will be the sovereignty issue. When you look at not just Ontario but indeed Canada, and what we're comparing to, all of the exchanges around the world are in the midst of great discussions. For instance, in the brief time I have left, putting this in context, it's global. This is not Ontario, this is not London.

The New York Stock Exchange merged with Equinix in a complex transaction in 2006. At that time, NASDAQ attempted to purchase the London Stock Exchange, so that's not the first marriage or lack of, and there's speculation that the New York Stock Exchange might still have interest in the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The reason why all of this becomes rather murky is, it's raising capital—the larger the market, the larger the listings, the larger the revenue base. Where does the revenue come into this? The exchanges themselves make huge amounts of revenue by taking fractional shares on each transaction, and those transactions, the more of them you have, the larger your revenue stream, and that's a very complex—which values the exchanges themselves.

A very appropriate question is the control of the exchanges, who gets listed, and there's a lot to be said on that part as well.

I think the one other condition that Ontario has high regard for is that we in Ontario have a large mining exchange, and the resource section strictly has a lot to do with this transaction. Also, keep in mind that one third of

the London exchange is on mining indexes themselves and a lot of trading is done in China through the London exchange. Companies in Ontario and, indeed, Canada that want to be listed on the London exchange might have more exposure to larger pools of capital, and there are other rules about ownership provisions under the Ontario Securities Commission.

I think it's an important exercise. I hope I haven't offended anyone. I haven't taken any offence to the remarks that may have been made or directed to me. I think it's important that we put on the record how important it is to be objective and listen to the experts during these hearings, and I'm sure that the committee that's being comprised will be doing just that.

The time frame is, I think, fairly short, but again, this whole transaction, I think, has a provision for 45 days of review at the federal government level. I wish all those participants good luck and I hope we all become a little bit more educated in this transaction.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak? If not, we will first deal with the amendment moved by Mr. Bisson.

Mr. Bisson has moved that the motion be amended as follows:

By adding clause c.1 as follows:

“c.1 Conduct up to four days of travel for the purpose of holding public hearings in Ontario mining communities, this travel to take place during one or more of the recess periods between March 10 and May 5;” and

By deleting the words “its final report to the assembly by April 7, 2011” and replacing them with “an interim report to the assembly by March 10, 2011, and its final report to the assembly by June 2, 2011;” and

By adding after the words “to commission reports; and” the following:

“That the dates, locations and times for public meetings in Ontario mining communities be established by subcommittee;”

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

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it. It's defeated.

We'll now deal with the main motion.

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 53. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Orders of the day? Government House leader.

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

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

This House is adjourned until Thursday, February 24, Thursday, at 9 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1729.

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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 / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on the proposed transaction of the TMX
Group and the London Stock Exchange Group / Comité
spécial sur la transaction proposée entre le Groupe TMX et le
London Stock Exchange Group**

Chair / Président: Gerry Phillips
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Frank Klees
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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