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Wednesday 9 March 2011

Mercredi 9 mars 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Wednesday 9 March 2011

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mercredi 9 mars 2011

The House met at 0900.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Good morning. Remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Jewish prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2011**

**LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA SANTÉ
ET LA SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL**

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 8, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 160, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to occupational health and safety and other matters / *Projet de loi 160, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail et la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne la santé et la sécurité au travail et d'autres questions.*

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 160 today, the Occupational Health and Safety Act amendments. I want to just put a little context to this debate. We know the storyline, the narrative, that has been told by the Liberal government on this bill. The storyline that we're told, of course, is that these changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act are the result of the Tony Dean panel.

The Tony Dean panel was convened due to that tragic and unfortunate accident back at Christmas 2009, where four unregistered workers fell to their death at a scaffolding accident here in Toronto. That was the motivation for the Tony Dean report and these changes. That's what we're told. That's the story that we've been given.

Of course, to complete that story a little bit, those four individuals died that day as a result of a contractor not following the laws of this province at the time. Those employees were not registered anywhere. There was a complete breach of all the rules and the laws that were currently in place in the province.

So then we have this Tony Dean panel constructed. According to the minister, they've adopted all the recommendations of the Dean panel and the Dean panel came out with a consensus agreement for their recommendations. That is true; the Dean panel did come out with a consensus agreement on those recommendations.

The only problem is that this bill and the amendments in this bill do not correspond very well with the recommendations of the Dean panel. Probably the greatest dismissal of the Dean panel is that in this bill the government is going to remove and dismiss all the section 21 occupational health and safety association committees across this province.

The section 21 committees start off at industry or trade sector committees, and then at each region in each sector there are committees, and these roll up to provincial bodies. It's a very effective council. It represents all trades and all industry, across all regions of the province. It's also done completely by industry's own funding or by the volunteers within those industries.

All these section 21 committees are now going to be toast under this new Bill 160. All that industry expertise and regional expertise will be dismissed and no longer have any place in occupational health and safety in this province. Instead, we're going to have a hand-picked, predetermined, selected body called a prevention council. This prevention council is going to do the work of all these other section 21 committees. Who's going to be on it? Well, they will be picked by the Minister of Labour and an additional layer of political patronage will replace the industry's own voices for health and safety in this province.

Once the minister selects his patronage appointments for the prevention council, he's going to then have that council pick a chief prevention officer for the province who will have significant and arbitrary authority under this act.

So here we have all industries across the province—regional, provincial—being replaced by a patronage panel that is answerable only to the minister. Tony Dean didn't recommend that we do away with this industry-driven council—not at all. But that's what's in the bill.

I know the minister is not here today. Maybe he's listening; maybe he'll read the Hansard afterwards, or maybe the parliamentary assistant will respond as to why this legislation does away with all the section 21 committees—in contravention, actually, of what the Dean panel recommended.

We know that the storyline is of course, as I said earlier, about the tragic death at Christmas 2010, but is

that the real motivator behind this Bill 160? I can tell you and I can tell everybody in this House, and everybody who is watching or listening, that there is a very high level of dissatisfaction with the industry, with the Minister of Labour and with the Ministry of Labour. They've been very outspoken with the ministry about what the ministry is doing and not doing correctly.

0910

I'll share this little story with the members of this House. A couple of years ago, I was attending a home builders' meeting. At that home builders' meeting, there was an inspector from the Ministry of Labour also attending. That inspector got up and gave a presentation to the contractors who were there, and he told them—this is the Ministry of Labour inspector: "All you contractors here are my targets of opportunity." "Targets of opportunity" is how he referred to them. He went on to explain how the Ministry of Labour was also training the Chinese government on how to conduct compliance efforts in the construction industry. I find that absolutely amazing, that a civil servant, a public servant hired by the people of this province, views contractors as targets of opportunity. He was not there to assist or to facilitate or to help and to prevent workplace injuries; he was there to find a way to lay a charge. That inspector's name was Charles Taylor, if anybody wants to know, if anybody wants to check into it and see what Charles Taylor is doing today and how many fines he has been levying.

I think that gives a little bit of an illustration of what's really going on here. Industry has been very vocal to the Ministry of Labour about its shortcomings, and the ministry has been silent. So for the ministry to silence that opposition, "Let's get rid of the section 21 committees."

I'll share with this House another story on another workplace injury that happened in Renfrew county just a little while ago. The company that was charged was Gulick Forest Products. Gulick Forest Products was charged by the Ministry of Labour in a workplace injury at the sawmill. During the court case—which was eventually dismissed, after extensive cost to Gulick Forest Products—a series of very serious allegations arose about misconduct and failure of due process by the Ministry of Labour inspectors and also the Ministry of Labour lawyers in that case—very serious allegations. Once those allegations came to light, the ministry eventually dismissed and dropped the charges, but Gulick Forest Products was facing a quarter of a million dollars in fines on that injury. I know that first-hand, of course, because myself and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke are now facing defamation charges from those same lawyers at the Ministry of Labour for raising that subject. That's how the Ministry of Labour acts. The member from Renfrew and myself are facing \$5.5 million in defamation suits because we spoke up in support of due process and stood up and championed the rights of a business in our area. That's what the Ministry of Labour has become: a very significant bully in the workplace. Industry is fearful of the Ministry of Labour, and the ministry is fearful of having bad press.

I'll tell this House as well that I went to the former Minister of Labour, the one just prior to the new minister, and I raised this with him. I raised this subject about Gulick Forest Products with the Minister of Labour before my defamation suit and asked him to inquire into the actions of the Ministry of Labour inspectors and the Ministry of Labour lawyers. After some conversation to explain the context, the Minister of Labour shrugged his shoulders and said, "The bureaucracy will do what the bureaucracy does." That was his response to my legitimate interest and concern about these serious allegations: "The bureaucracy will do what the bureaucracy does"—absolutely amazing, absolutely incredible, that a minister of the crown would take such a cavalier interest in his ministerial responsibilities. But of course he didn't intervene; now we face a defamation suit. But I'm sure a jury will find us not at fault for raising allegations.

Anyway, section 21 committees are now gone. We have this little facade being built up and created, and all these volunteer committees will be replaced with a political patronage council. I'm sure everybody here can hardly wait for that council to be completed. I'm sure we'll see that people such as Pat Dillon, the real Minister of Labour, the head of the Working Families Coalition, will be at its table collecting some additional funds from the people and the taxpayers of Ontario.

I also want to talk about—as a subset to this bill, there was a lot of talk about how we need to modify things, amend regulations to stem the underground economy, especially in construction. Of course, we know the underground economy thrives when the cost of doing business legitimately gets out of hand and where it can be more profitable to be below the radar, as they say. This bill does nothing to stem the underground economy. In fact, it does the exact opposite: It raises costs for legitimate businesses. We've seen it already with the increases in the WSIB premiums, increases in HST, increases in the regulatory burden, further increases here. So this bill actually pushes people further to the underground because the legitimate businesses just won't be able to comply with the expense of this. There's not a new dollar in here to assist industry at all; no. All the new training programs that will be required, the new safety manuals, whatever is going to be required by this prevention council will be shouldered strictly by the employer—not by the industry, not by the public; it will be shouldered by the individual contractor or employer, again pushing them further underground. That is something that the Tony Dean panel recommended be stemmed; they wanted this bill to have some teeth in it to stem the underground, and of course this bill does the exact opposite. So there are two parts, so far, of the Dean panel and the recommendations that have not been included in this bill.

0920

Then there's training. The Dean panel recommendations stressed and emphasized the need for greater training. Significant training was really such an important element of the Dean panel report, and in this bill we have

a single line item about training—one line, and that line says that the minister can set up training. There was widespread agreement in that panel on the need for training. Whatever that training's going to be, we know that it's going to be shouldered by the individual contractor, but it has one line.

The Dean panel also asked for a tracking system for that training, so that we would know who has been trained, so that they have some mobility and transportable recognition of their training. Well, there is absolutely nothing in this bill about tracking on that training. Now, I can understand why the Liberals might not want to get into electronic records for training, after we saw what they did with the electronic health records. They wasted \$1 billion in that fiasco. And now we have an agreement, a consensus report, saying that they need to get into tracking on workplace safety—not a mention in the bill whatsoever, not one mention of that electronic record-keeping, and no real mention of training, other than that the minister can set up training.

This bill also leaves most of its thrust unknown to everybody, because everything is left to the regulatory process. We all know that when the ministry actually gets around to creating these regulations, they never come back before the House for scrutiny. So we don't really know what we're getting with Bill 160, in that the details are not known here.

One of the big things in the Dean panel report: They said these changes could be cost-neutral. But there's so little of substance in here. We know that the training is going to be shouldered by the individuals. We don't know what the minister may do in that regard. We know that there will not be that electronic tracking, and we know that these regulations are going to add additional costs to our employers to help push them to the underground, exactly in contravention and contradiction to what the Dean panel's recommendations were for or about.

Those are a couple of things. I'd like to see the parliamentary assistant today—he's here in the House—maybe respond to some of those contradictions between the legislation and the recommendations. I really would be encouraged to see how the parliamentary assistant responds. But we do know that there's much at fault in workplace safety right now. Much of it rests at the feet of the Ministry of Labour, and under this new legislation they are going to assume greater authority for workplace safety, so they say, and take it out of the hands of industry. So we're going to have a number of political appointments, a number of bureaucrats, lawyers and civil servants sitting around deciding what's safe and what isn't safe in the workplace—people who have never been on a job site; people who, if they saw a pair of work boots, would trip over them. But these are the people who are going to be creating the training and the regulations and the edicts about workplace safety, and they have never experienced any of it.

I can tell you, Minister, and members opposite, that in my days on the job site as an electrician, I saw some

pretty stupid regulations that were meant to protect me from myself. If I followed them all, I probably wouldn't be standing here today. I disregarded a number of them because they were just absolutely, incredibly stupid, but those were the edicts of Ministry of Labour inspectors who, like I said, wouldn't know a pair of work boots if they saw them.

I would like the minister to respond to those components. I would like him to also respond why it is that industry can't take care of itself. All these interested parties—knowledgeable, experienced people—are no longer important in the process. I also want the minister to explain—Christmas 2009, this rogue contractor broke all the rules of the day, every rule, which led to the death of four people. How is this going to prevent another rogue contractor? He'll have difficulty answering that one because, of course, it won't; it won't do anything at all.

Nothing in this bill leads to a more respectful relationship, but also nothing in this bill safeguards the public interest from the new prevention council or this chief prevention officer. They have such arbitrary and complete authority under this bill. I know what I've experienced with the Ministry of Labour lawyers—their reckless attitude and reckless pursuit of a prosecution. How is that going to be diminished when we give them more authority, more unaccountable authority, more authority that is not really going to be looked at by anybody other than maybe Pat Dillon at the Working Families Coalition, if he gets another plum patronage job?

I think what we can see here, and what we've seen with the Liberals for the last number of years, is Pat Dillon and the Working Families Coalition being the true policymakers of the Liberal Party. There's this shadow cabinet over there. Many people may not see it, but it has its hand to play—Pat Dillon and the Working Families—on this piece of legislation.

We also saw it with Monte Hummel and the Far North Act. When the Premier was asked about the Far North Act, really the only person who was consulted on that one was Monte Hummel from the World Wildlife Fund.

We also see it with the environmental legislation. When the Minister of the Environment really wants to get input from stakeholders, he goes to Rick Smith at Environmental Defence.

In labour, when the government wants to get input, they create a little panel called the Dean panel, but really, who's driving the ship? Pat Dillon is driving that ship.

0930

So let's see if we get some answers. Let's see if we get some answers about these section 21 committees from the parliamentary assistant. I'm not even sure if he's taking notes or if he's awake, but I want him to explain to the people of this province why he is bringing forward legislation that actually contravenes the recommendations of the Dean panel report—actually contravenes the recommendations. Why has he left so much off the table, except greater control and greater arbitrary authority and more political patronage appointments? I know they

didn't talk about that when the minister did his leadoff the other day. There was no mention of those things. All he spoke about was how wonderful the report was and how he had adopted all the recommendations. Well, he didn't adopt the recommendations, and he actually contravenes very important elements of that Dean panel report. Nowhere in that panel report does it say we should have more political patronage and less industry representation—nowhere; not at all. But that's what workplace health and safety is going to get: more political patronage, less industry involvement, and of course nothing, nothing in this bill—oh, here's another one. Nothing in this bill is going to fix, of course, the problems at WSIB, and I'll tell you, as labour critic, that is a significant number of requests I get every week, every day, from people who are dealing with WSIB, and it's not a pleasant experience for those people.

But let me tell you this: All the people who are working at WSIB on the prevention side are no longer going to be having a job, according to this piece of legislation. There are over 100 people on prevention at WSIB. What's going to happen to them? I wonder, because prevention moves over to the Ministry of Labour now completely, and is no longer a part of WSIB—I can only think of what happened when the Liberals brought in the HST. Of course, they were going to save money with the HST, right? They were going to save us all money. They had 1,200 PST auditors at the time, retail sales tax auditors. What did they do? They said that they fired them, that they had to pay them severance, but they never missed a day; they were hired by the federal government the same moment they were fired, but at a huge cost in severances to the taxpayers.

So I'm just wondering if the parliamentary assistant will explain that to us: Are these hundreds of people in prevention at WSIB going to get fired, collect a big, handsome severance package and then be rehired at the same moment by the Ministry of Labour, or are they going to stay at WSIB in some other role and you're just going to hire more people? Let's have some explanations from the ministry on that. What are they going to do with that and how is that going to save the people of Ontario money? Or is it just more smoke and mirrors like the HST?

I'd like to put on the record that those are questions to the minister and to his ministry. The people of Ontario want to have them answered. The people in industry want to have some answers, and not these smoke-and-mirrors answers—real, legitimate answers. Don't give us this shrug of the shoulders and say, "Well, the bureaucracy does what the bureaucracy does." We've already had that from the previous minister. Let's have a minister and a ministry that stands up. Be honest with the people of Ontario. Be honest with industry. When we get that, then we can actually look at the regulations in the proper light, if and when they ever come back here.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: Chair, we are sharing time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I didn't hear that at the outset.

Mr. John O'Toole: Yes, he said he's splitting his time with me.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): No, the two of you stood up and kind of jostled around, and I called for further debate. But if I have the consent of the House—do we have consent to allow splitting of the time? Agreed.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you. Often early in the morning we're not fully paying attention to things—on my part, I'm saying—and perhaps Hansard will tell a different story.

I first want to start by thanking our critic in Tim Hudak's opposition party, the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. I think he did really conceptualize our concerns. I'm privileged, because I do have a copy—in the short time I have—of the expert panel, the Dean report, with me. As you can see, I have thumbed through it carefully in a couple of parts, which I will record, because I think our critic remains fundamentally concerned about whether or not this bill does as it purports to do.

You know, even in the simplest way, when I got the report—this bill was only introduced on March 3, and the report was issued on December 10, so they are kind of putting a bit of a rush on this, I gather. It's an election year; potentially, it's trying to satisfy some of the demands of labour. I understand that. But let's keep the fundamental thing in focus here. Our leader, Tim Hudak, is concerned about whether Premier McGuinty is focused on the results each day or the election in the next few days, but we're more focused on the rights and responsibility of workers and the protection of workers. The expert panel was asked, as a result of some controversial accidents, mostly in the construction-related industry—and actually, it's even more fundamentally important than that, because there's a huge issue, which I'll go through here in the few minutes I have.

Pardon me. I might ask for a couple of glasses of water, if I could, please. Thank you. Excuse me.

The bill is An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to occupational health and safety and other matters. Minister Sousa did a great job introducing it—a new minister. He has an excellent voice, anyway; it sounds like a radio voice. He read the notes very, very clearly, and was well understood.

If I read the preamble, the explanation notes in the bill—it's not really that large a bill, technically. It's 17 pages, so really it's about eight pages long, because it's printed in both official languages—as it should be. But if I look at it, at first blush I'd say that I'm amazed at how much power it's giving to the minister, or they're taking back.

The explanation says, "Section 4.1, which specifies the minister's responsibility for the administration of the act and sets out some of the minister's powers and duties in administering the act, is added to part II of the act." It

goes on to say, “The act is amended to allow the minister”—he wouldn’t know a pair of work boots from grass; that’s what the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington said— “to establish standards for training programs and to approve programs that meet the standards. The minister may also establish standards that a person must meet in order to become” approved.

It goes on. It says: “Section 6 of the act is amended to authorize a director to establish policies respecting the interpretation, administration....”

“Section 7.6, which allows the minister to establish training and other requirements that a member of a joint health and safety”—and,

“Section 8 ... is amended to require a constructor or employer to ensure that health and safety representatives receive training....” That’s very appropriate. I think it’s much like it is today.

0940

“Section 9 of the act is amended to allow either co-chair of a joint health and safety committee to make written recommendations....”

This is new here: “The bill adds part II.1 (prevention council, chief prevention officer and designated entities) to the act.” It “requires the minister to establish a prevention council responsible for providing advice to the minister....” That’s a delegated authority.

This would be very, very important. It’s sort of like a LHIN, the local health integration network. The LHINs are sort of designated authorities that really make decisions for the minister, but you can’t get to the minister. The minister says, “I can’t interfere with the LHINs,” but she appoints the LHINs. It’s the same thing here. It’s a shield so that you can’t get to the minister. It sounds cynical. In fact, we’ll have to keep an eye on that.

If I look in detail at just a couple of those sections—let’s look into the bill, into the deeper marrow of the bill itself. Under “designated entities,” it says, “designation by the minister.” This is what the preamble said and this is what it actually does:

“22.4(1) The minister may designate an entity as a safe workplace association or as a medical clinic or training centre specializing in occupational health and safety matters if the entity meets the standards....”

“(2) The minister may establish standards....” It goes on like that. What this bill does is it generally sets up a framework for allowing the minister to designate and set up certain things.

No one here would expect or accept that the minister would make things less safe, like the structure that fell down before Christmas where people were killed. It was reported somehow that perhaps these were—as our critic, Mr. Hillier, said—rogues, and you can’t regulate those people; well, they could be fined.

There were orders and powers within the existing law, and they could have prosecuted those unscrupulous contractors who were using people who perhaps weren’t trained, scaffolding that wasn’t up to the standard—that already exists. So what’s in this? There’s really not a lot in it, technically.

I looked further into the Dean report, as I mentioned, to find out if they’re actually doing some of the recommendations. Surprise, surprise; they’re not. This is a fairly comprehensive report issued on December 10. It was sent to the then minister—quite a good fellow as well; I think he’s running federally. Peter Fonseca: a nice young guy. I hope he enjoys his time there in opposition. He’ll probably be involved in the leadership because Michael Ignatieff will be thrown under the bus right after the election, probably.

This expert panel to conduct a review of occupational health submitted the following observations and recommendations. One would think, in the executive summary—some people are chatting here, so it’s hard for me to focus on what needs to be said.

In the brief time: “A Focus on Workplaces and the Highest Value Opportunities for Change”—I really think that former Deputy Minister Tony Dean meant what he said, and he’s trying to establish some responsibility and commitment to workers who may be injured in the workplace.

“The panel’s review focused on areas of workplace health ... that needed improvement. To ensure that there is real benefit to workplaces, the workplace parties must be actively engaged in”—well, I would say that there’s not a lot in the bill that actually addresses that specifically. He’s got the minister appointing these various people, who, as said earlier, were going to be—let’s be honest, pending the election—political appointments.

Everybody is sort of shaking their heads; I see that. But I want to see who exactly they are appointing, so I looked up another place. This is the 2009 WSIB annual report. How are they doing? How is that board doing?

I should make it clear, too, that I did work at General Motors for 31 years. Part of that time was in personnel. My undergraduate degree is in labour economics from the University of Toronto. I’m very genuinely interested in this and I know how important it is to have rules in the workplace for both sides, supervision as well as the employees.

I looked at this annual report, and the first thing I thought was, “Well, there’s a nice picture. Who’s the chair of that?” The chair is Steve Mahoney, who’s a former Liberal member of this House and a friend of Premier McGuinty. I’ve met him several times. I think the auditor had a few things to say about Mr. Mahoney. We’ll have to look that up too. Well, I have, and it has been recorded here. That’s just one example. I don’t impugn him personally but I think he made a few errors, errors in his ways. But you don’t have to take—it has been brought up in here by the auditor, not me. This is not something that I’ve made up.

I looked around, though, and I think one should pursue this further, so I looked at the whole board. Let’s go over that for a bit. Now, who’s on the board? Well, David Marshall is the president and CEO, January 24; Larry Barnett, health and safety. Here’s one right here: Patrick Dillon. Wait a minute. I thought—well, I’m only going from what the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox

and Addington, Mr. Hillier, said. He said that Pat Dillon was the head of Working Families, the coalition against anybody but the Liberals, really, and that's a sad state. I know Mr. Dillon as well; I've known him for quite a while, actually since 1996 or 1997, when we tried to change the apprenticeship ratio issue and Mr. Dillon was very upset. In fact, we were in the middle of hearings in Sudbury when I first met him. He appeared before the committee at that time, saying, "No, no, you can't do this." Well, it still exists. In fact, Mr. Hillier said that he's the adviser to the minister. He is. And he's the head of the Working Families Coalition, which is a very overt political interventionist group. I wouldn't use the word "terrorist"; it would be a bit inflammatory. But actually, it does appear to me that that's close.

The other part, too—I'm not going to impugn all these people, but I did look on there. I looked further. In fairness, this is not just a tertiary glance; this is an assessment of how good a job or poor a job Peter Fonseca and the current minister, Charles Sousa, are doing. I can't blame it all on them. You have to look at the Premier, the consistent leader since 2003. Well, not consistent, but certainly the leader. I would say, let's look at this. How's the 10-year summary? It's a good place to start, usually. This is the 10-year summary in the annual report. Look it up. It's online. It's all available. It's public information. It tells you an audited version of the truth: not edited, but audited—pretty similar words. In 2000—let's go back to the time of Premier Harris. In 2000, the liability at that time was \$5.6 billion. Liability is the unfunded of what is liability for the future, injured workers who have received awards. How are they doing on that file? Well, I happen to be looking at it here. What is the unfunded liability today? It has doubled. It's \$11.7 billion. They haven't done very well on that.

Another thing which workers should be frightened about, and I expect the NDP will discuss this: Let's look at the pertinent statistics. On, by and large, the average premium—now, you've got to understand what WSIB is. I'm going to take one moment and give you kind of a five-minute summary on it. WSIB is a legislative framework that allows the government to protect workers—allows. It sets up a legal framework to pay for injuries in the workplace. Now, let's follow it carefully; it's WSIB, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

0950

What are injuries? Fall off ladder, break leg—that's an injury, a broken leg injury. I thought we had a health care system that covered that. We do. But this is insurance. Wait a minute; insurance is private. They're investing in the market, playing various derivative funds and all that. I thought our health care system was public. Wait a minute here; it's not. This is insurance. It's health care—go to hospital, file the injury report, there's a claim made against WSIB and the WSIB pays through an insurance fund for the broken leg. Surprise. I bet there aren't five people in this House who know how it works, and I'm serious. I'm not pointing to any particular names.

Where does the money come from—this liability, or lack of money? Two things: The rate of increase in

injured workers is a measurement of how safe our workplace is, or is it? There are areas where it's more dangerous than others. A roofer, for example, is more dangerous than perhaps a hairdresser so they have higher rates of insurance, the premiums.

What are the premiums? First of all, there's not one nickel of provincial tax money in the WSIB—not one nickel. If you want to cover that liability, it's a tax on payroll. I'm not saying that—it's how the legislation works. The framework I talked to you about is—WSIB is funded by the employers. The employers buy coverage, called a premium, just like you do if it's car insurance, where you have a premium, or if it's home insurance or whatever else—insurance, insurance, insurance. They buy insurance against injuries. That insurance is a tax on payroll, basically.

Yesterday in the House the Minister of Agriculture—I couldn't believe it. She either doesn't know—and I won't say more than that. But she said, "You know, we've added farm workers to the WSIB." Do you know what? They've increased the premium on farm labour by 17% this year alone. I wish people would pay more attention to what actually goes on here. They've added them. Why? Why have they added them, would you think? Because there are fewer industrial workers. Remember, insurance is like a pyramid scheme: You've got to have more people paying than collecting. So they're adding groups that previously weren't covered to make the insurance scheme work. I told you, remember, that they've doubled the debt from \$5 billion to \$11 billion. That means workers somewhere down the line aren't covered unless we get a lot more people paying into it. The other thing is, you cut people off or you increase the rates of insurance. That's how it works.

I'm going to tell you here in this report—look it up online or call me; I'll send it to you. Unfunded liability in 2009 had gone from \$5 billion to almost \$12 billion, and the premiums have gone up as well. Not only that; the number of workers, the equivalent of full-time workers, has actually gone down. In other words, they've actually reduced the number of people who are entitled. If they had allowed the normal trend line to continue of not cutting people off—in my office, I hear about people being cut off or hassled. So they're cutting people off; that cuts down their liability, because they're no longer entitled to future entitlements.

There are two or three different types of awards you can get. You can get a FEL award, which is a future economic loss award, or a NEL award, non-economic loss, which is pain and suffering, for people that do fall off the ladder and break their leg, but they also hurt their back so they can't really work anymore. Some of them are assigned a pension, a partial pension, cash awards—there are different methods of payout here.

I've looked at the framework of legislation from Tony Dean's perspective, and I don't think they're doing what they said. At least, I will need a further briefing on the bill to know.

The second thing: I think the WSIB itself is in serious trouble, absolutely critical trouble. Why? Because a good

number of workers in the public aren't covered. Some work groups are covered under federal legislation. The banking industry is one case in point.

Now, I have become a little animated on this because I do want to stand up for the injured worker; I really do, having worked in an industrial workplace for 31 years, actually, at General Motors.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Don't hold back, John. Let it all out.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm going to let it all out.

Here's the deal. What bothers me: We all know that large companies now are funded—it's not some rich Mr. General Motors or Mr. Stelco; these companies are owned by shareholders, and those shareholders are basically pensioners. Pension funds are probably the biggest pools of capital, and those pension funds are to eventually generate revenue from this pool of money to pay off dividends, which are called annuities or whatever they're called; they're a form of a pension. It could be in several forms. It could be a LIF, a life income fund, or it could be an annuity.

The whole point here is, there are 300,000 people who have lost jobs in manufacturing, and they're not coming back. All this talk about green jobs is absolute baloney. If you're looking at what's going on in Europe, in Germany—very large, successful, technical industry throwing the green energy and the FIT tariff overboard. France, Germany—Japan is now faltering on it as well. Their plan here, green energy, is another serious miscalculation, a poor plan, for industry.

They say, "Well, green energy is so important." Yes, but actually, a report came out last week that shows that green energy loses jobs. Why? Because the cost of energy in the overall cost of production—

Mr. Phil McNeely: Bring back coal.

Mr. John O'Toole: They don't understand. They're complaining—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'm sure the member for Durham is going to get back to the bill that's on the table.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm trying to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'm sure you are.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm going to. What I'm trying to do is bring it back to: What are the jobs of the future? I feel so saddened, actually. What are the jobs of the future for our young children graduating from high school? Not everybody can become a doctor or a lawyer or, heaven forbid, a politician. Some of them actually have to have jobs in Stelco, General Motors, Chrysler and in mining and forestry.

There are 120,000 people in the forestry industry out of work. The member from Nickel Belt yesterday read a litany of people who have lost their jobs in northern Ontario. We've seen the impact of high-cost energy. Now, in the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario, they're going to harvest the metals out of the ground and process them in Quebec because the energy is cheaper. You don't think it's related?

Let's go back to the pension fund discussion. How are they going to pay off that \$11 billion? It's a tax on payroll, is what it is. That's what they're going to do: Right after the election, there's going to be another tax. It's going to be a tax on jobs. And then what happens? If they don't make money, the pension plans—that's all our futures, or the 30% of the population that actually has a pension. The pensions won't make money, and I'm telling you, this is what's happening now. That's why every pension—and you know this, too; you're the innovation minister. What are the jobs of the future? In your two-minute response, you can tell me what the jobs of the future are; I mean, in Canada. If you think they're at Research in Motion, Research in Motion has about three years left. If they're not bought out by Microsoft, it's finished. Apple has already taken over—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, they'll buy out the patent—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Durham: If you can tie all this into the occupational safety act, I'd appreciate it.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's actually about my concern for the jobs so that this deficit can be paid off.

In fairness, the former deputy minister, and I think he might still be the deputy minister, Tony Dean—I've met him several times over 15 years. In his report, I honestly believe he was asking the minister to step in and solve some of these structural problems in the WSIB. I hope Mr. Sousa is watching this morning, because I think you should be trying to fix this system and protect workers. I'm giving you the red light, the signal. This thing is in chaos. You have doubled the debt, you've got fewer people collecting and being entitled, and the only way you can fix it is to raise the money. How? Raise the insurance premium or reduce coverage—and that, to me, is a dilemma that stretches right across of most of Premier McGuinty's plans.

1000

You were in the insurance business, or I think on that side at one time, Mr. Speaker. How's auto insurance? They've allowed more tort in auto insurance, which means that if you want to get paid for your injury, get a lawyer. That's what they did. They didn't reduce your premiums; they reduced your entitlements, and the same thing is going to happen here. They've got these so-called—I think they're called the CPO, the chief prevention officer, who they're going to blame for the things that aren't working instead of blaming Premier McGuinty.

I can only say that our critic, Mr. Hillier, has brought up a few points—and I'll keep it a little simpler, in fairness, in the few minutes I have left. I may ask for more time, because it doesn't appear that anybody else wants to say anything.

The bill does nothing to prevent employers from entering the black market and would, in fact, drive employers to the black market by creating more uncertainty and bureaucracy. If you increase the premiums, more of these home renovation people go underground; they don't pay at all.

The bill creates yet another bureaucracy, and I think the head of that will be Pat Dillon. This fellow—nice person; this isn't a personal thing—is on the wrong track. He's on the wrong track, this guy. Working Families? Get over it.

The bill contains numerous new obligations and regulations for industry. "Blame industry" is what it's about. As with the other recent Liberal bills, a substantial portion of the legislation is left to regulation, which means we really don't know substantively what they are going to do.

So I call on the Minister of Labour to have public hearings. Let's air the facts on the status of WSIB. The organization, the multi-billion-dollar organization, has been somewhat tainted by some of the decisions made recently, as well as Mr. Dean's report. Let's see that if there are 12 recommendations, then there are 12 recommendations being followed up in the report, not some kind of loosey-goosey framework that gives the minister the powers he needs and doesn't really directly implicate what I would call ensuring safety for workers in the workplace. That's all Tim Hudak has asked us to ask for: demand hearings and look at some of the things that this bill exposes—both the employer, who's going to get nailed paying it, and the employee, who's going to perhaps be denied benefits.

These are troubling outcomes for legislation here in this last part before the budget. If there are any teeth in this at all, we'll see something in the budget here in March, and I'm going to be looking for it. If there's nothing in here to help the WSIB get out of the ditch, then we know the future is not very bright under Premier McGuinty.

That's how I leave it to you today: If you want to know the future, look to the past. The past behaviour is a good indicator of future behaviour. They have pretty well ruined every file they've touched. They have—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: Now they're laughing. They've had 10 years. They've doubled the debt, they've doubled the taxes and things are no better.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I listened intently to the member from Durham. He's always entertaining, and interestingly is backed up by Dave Killham, the executive director of the Workers Health and Safety Centre, who has sent out a memo regarding this bill that is absolutely opposed to it. It basically says directly that it "could eliminate the independence of the Workers Health and Safety Centre and place it under the" sole control "of Queen's Park."

This is a very frightening move. This has nothing to do with the Dean report and their recommendations, and that's very, very clear. This has nothing to do with that. This has to do with putting the minister in charge of what should be controlled by the workers in their places of work and what already has a framework that, although not working seamlessly—nothing does—certainly is better than putting it under the control of a Liberal minister.

I believe that the member from Durham is also correct. This is a government in decline; the polls show that. So,

desperately, they're trying to make appointments. Desperately, they're trying to cling on to some degree of power in the bureaucracy by making sure that Liberals are in these places. The member from Durham went through that point by point, line item by line item, and unfortunately, he's correct.

When you have the executive director of the Workers Health and Safety Centre coming out in opposition to the bill, when you realize that this would take away control from workers in their places of work and give it to the government, you should be very, very concerned, particularly when this is a government that just took away the right to strike from transit workers.

This is not a government that is doing anything to support workers' rights or union rights. This is a government that is clearly in direct opposition to those very rights. This government has taken away the core right, the right to strike, from the transit workers, and now we're going to put them in charge of workers' health and safety? I don't think so. I think it's actually quite frightening; very frightening, in fact. And they should be very much aware that that kind of framework, of course, is possibly going to be taken over by another government, which makes it even more frightening.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I only have two minutes to briefly respond to the comments that were made by today's presenters, both the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and the member from Durham. I thank them for their comments.

The expert advisory panel on occupational health and safety prepared a report, dated December 2010, with 46 recommendations. Our legislation is a direct response to those recommendations.

I think the most important point is that we want to integrate the system so that if there is a problem in the future, we'll be able to handle it and the ministry will be directly responsible for things that happen in the future.

We're committed to these recommendations and we're going to implement all of them. It's more than the other parties have done in the past or would do if they had the opportunity to deal with this issue in front of us today. Let's remember: This is a good thing. It's something about health and safety, and it's good for our workers.

I don't have much time, but just focusing on section 50 of this act, the chief prevention officer is allowed to protect vulnerable workers, and vulnerable workers have new protections put in place, which I think the member who spoke earlier should look at. I also want to point out that the new chief prevention officer can better coordinate the prevention system.

We're creating a new prevention council, with representatives from labour, employers and safety experts, to advise the chief prevention officer and the minister. We're removing the powers from bureaucracy and placing them directly with the minister.

We're also enabling the Minister of Labour to set new training standards, revamp the reprisal process and de-

velop codes or practice that help business with compliance.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: In the time I have, I want to concentrate a few remarks in the area of the special concerns that small business have.

The minister made reference to the fact that one of the things that came out of the process that brought us to the creation of the bill was the fact that there was a subcommittee struck to report on the special concerns of small business.

The recommendations they provided to the expert panel are three basic ones. The first is the issue of the recognition that there needs to be some vehicle that would represent the needs and interests of employers and workers in small business. I think that this particular part requires a great deal of effort on the part of the government because of the fact that, historically, and certainly in the recent past, we've seen that small business has been left out of the equation.

It comes down to some very practical things. Many of these people we're talking about under that umbrella are businesses with fewer than five employees. There is no HR department. There is nobody who is assigned to those kinds of things.

So when the second recommendation they make is for the creation of focused and integrated programs, I would remind the government that these are individuals, in many cases, and certainly very small businesses, and they need something more than the issue of compliance: They need assistance. This bill must address those issues.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The minister—the member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Could have been a minister. Thank you, Speaker.

Just a couple of comments. The bill does indeed give a lot more power to the minister than ever before. In some cases this is a good thing, is an argument I make. Because we have direct connection to the minister, we're able to question him or her on a regular basis, and that could give us the more accountability that we're looking for.

It may not always be the case. Part of the problem around this is what the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington alluded to, and the member from Durham as well, and that is that as we move the control to the minister, the member from Lanark and all the other places said that this is absolutely bad and wrong because it gives them the power to appoint people, and to appoint who? In his mind, Liberals, who are not nice, not good, and that would be a problem because it would certainly reflect the interests of labour and not so much the contractor. I'm not sure the Liberals would do that, because the Liberals are just as close to the contractors as the Liberals.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So my sense is that they would be sure to have that balance. That's my sense. But

I worry about that. I worry about not having an independent prevention council that is independent of any government, whoever is there. I worry as much about this as the member from Parkdale–High Park, who said we might be frightened of Liberal centralized control; imagine what it would be like if you had a hostile government who would not be too friendly to injured workers and workers in general. Then we're stuck with a government that has centralized control and would be willing to hurt injured workers and workers in general. That frightens me even more.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Durham, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. John O'Toole: I do want to reply to all of the members. Parkdale–High Park: She was quite insightful and on the money, I think. Scarborough Southwest, the parliamentary assistant: I appreciate him being here and taking the time. York–Simcoe, of course, is a very strong voice for small business, and Trinity–Spadina, a very strong voice for Ontario.

Here is the real issue, though: I think that the parliamentary assistant—in fact, the member from Trinity–Spadina has it right. The devil here is in the detail, and it's a matter of trust. When public figures break trust, the public then becomes cynical and less certain and vacillates and is troubled. I think, quite honestly, with all due respect, that's how I feel about Premier McGuinty just now. I've watched, and he has become less certain of our future. This is troubling, as a leader, for us to feel that way.

This bill here really sets up a framework. It's a regulatory framework. There are 46 recommendations; we know that. Now, if you look at them, they all say, "set up this chief prevention officer." Almost all of them start with that. Well, we'll have to see who the appointments are. That's what the member from Trinity–Spadina—I would say we need to have jobs in the province. We need to work with the industry and we need to protect the workers in that industry. I'm not sure—I told you where we've come with the WSIB; it is over the cliff. This bill doesn't fix it. It doesn't put the brakes on some of the things that are going on there now. That's troubling. This bill itself: I hope the minister will go to hearings and see if it tests out, if it road-tests, as has been talked about. We'll be paying close attention because, you know, we're the—

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

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Christopher Bentley: We're delighted that page Julian Dusko-Bernyck has his aunt Christina Root and cousin Claudia Root observing question period today.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's my great pleasure to introduce, in the members' gallery, Liang Chen from the University of Toronto, our candidate in Scarborough–Agincourt. She's joined by her husband, Louis Florence, from the University of Toronto as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): On behalf of the member from Etobicoke North and page Ira Sharma, I would like to introduce Nishtha Sharma, Rakesh Sharma and Ishani Sharma, who are in the members' gallery. Welcome.

On behalf of the MPP for Richmond Hill, I would like to introduce Kim Gavine, executive director of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation. Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Acting Premier. Acting Premier, tonight is your annual Liberal Party dinner in Toronto. We suspect you'll do what you always do and leak contents of the upcoming provincial budget to Liberal insiders first, instead of the Legislative Assembly or the general public. The finance minister has received the Ontario PC caucus pre-budget submission—outstanding work by our finance critic, the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka—where the PC Party calls for you to finally give some relief and respect to Ontario families who pay the bills.

Minister, as you recall, last year your sneaky eco tax was nowhere to be found in your budget. You tried to slip it in on Canada Day, when families weren't looking. I ask the Acting Premier: Will you at least show some respect for Ontario families this year and just be up front? What sneaky tax hike do you have up your sleeve for 2011?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Leader of the Opposition is implying—and I understand he said today—that he thinks there will be tax increases in the budget. I think that what he has forgotten to tell people is that we have made, consistently, tax decreases for the families of Ontario: \$12 billion over three years in tax cuts and other tax relief for Ontario families. Some 93% of Ontario families will get a permanent tax cut as a result of our tax reform package, and 90,000 people will no longer pay personal income tax because of our tax reforms.

The member opposite seems to be making a comment on record. I would say, based on his record, people can expect nothing but cuts to service from that member.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: So we have the Liberals now saying that they've delivered tax cuts for families. You tell us that smart meters are saving families money. I'm looking for Dalton McGuinty confirming that the Leafs are going to win the cup in 2011.

Come on, Minister. Last year, you tried to sneak in the eco tax. You didn't have the courage to actually put it in

your budget. Liberal members opposite are practically salivating at their desks with ideas for new tax grabs on the backs of families. You have Liberal MPPs calling for a new school board tax and a water tax. You have members calling for a carbon tax. Please tell us: Which one will it be, or are you going to try to keep it secret until after the next election?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I look forward to introducing a budget later this month that will build on the Ontario child benefit to cut taxes for working Ontarians by \$1.2 billion. I look forward to introducing a budget that will build on our tax cut for small businesses—18%, the largest cut to small business in history. I look forward to building on our record of lowering taxes for Ontarians of modest means—19% in the 2009 budget. But most importantly, I look forward to building on our record of education and health care, to build a better education system.

What all Ontarians want to know is: What will that leader and his party do? They are going to shut down full-day learning. They will close hospitals and lay off nurses. We're not going back there. The people of Ontario want a vision of leadership, and that's what Dalton McGuinty and his government are providing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm waiting for him to mention the plague of locusts as well. That's probably next in the Liberal spin.

You know what the facts are, Minister? You always say you're not going to increase taxes, and then Dalton McGuinty's government brings in a tax increase of some kind.

Let's look at what your members are saying. Your Minister of Research and Innovation—how do I put this politely?—who is infinitely quotable, says, "It is time for all of us to start to get comfortable with two words: carbon tax"; your Minister of Consumer Services said, "Certainly a carbon tax is something to look at..."; and the chair of your climate change advisory committee said that he's "a huge advocate of a carbon tax."

Don't you understand, Minister? Families actually need relief from the constant McGuinty tax hikes. Why are you talking so much about increasing taxes on Ontario families?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I welcomed the support of Jim Flaherty and John Baird when we cut family taxes. They get it; they understand it.

That member and his party are talking about something that hasn't happened. I want to talk about what has happened. They closed 39 hospitals on their watch. It wasn't a plague of locusts; it was a plague that nearly undermined our public health care system. Twenty-six million student days of education were lost in this province because of their slash-and-burn approach at a time when the world economy was growing. We have laid out a plan to protect public education, build on our successes in public health and lower taxes for all Ontarians.

The one thing we haven't heard from them is a plan. Why? Because they don't want Ontarians to know that they are going back to slash and burn, closing hospitals, closing schools and harming the environment. Ontario will reject that.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Acting Premier. He did use "plague of locusts." I could have won the pool on that one. We'll wait for the cancellation of Christmas next.

Minister, let me tell you something. When your leader, Premier McGuinty, isn't busy taxing, he's busy opening the gates to runaway spending and Liberal waste. While budget season seems to be the only time that he ever actually talks about restraint, his talk is cheap.

Your last budget was a dramatic failure. You said you were going to freeze public sector wages, but your plan has gone badly off the rails with increases that are simply out of touch with the abilities of families to pay the bills. Since your public sector wage freeze has become such a disaster, how can we believe any promise you make in your budget about fiscal constraint?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Ontario has the lowest collective agreement settlement rates—lower than the private sector, lower than municipalities and, yes, lower than the federal government right now, and we will be speaking more about that.

What Ontarians want to know is: When you eliminate the health premium and cut \$3 billion from health care, how are you going to continue to operate hospitals?

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The Leader of the Opposition wants to cut another \$3 billion from taxes. That means they will close full-day learning. Make no mistake; they are not committed to that by any stretch of the imagination.

There's a lot of bluster from over there, a lot of information that doesn't meet the test of accuracy, but one thing is absent: a plan—because they don't want Ontarians to know that they're going to close hospitals, lay off nurses, close schools and undo the great strides this province has made over the last seven years.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I think the minister knows the reality that Ontario families have, sadly, learned the hard way, and that's that Premier McGuinty is simply hard-wired to increase taxes and waste taxpayers' money on bigger and bloated bureaucracies.

Premier McGuinty trying to convince us that he's got his spending habit under control is like Charlie Sheen trying to convince us that he has finally kicked his drug habit. I'm more likely to bet on Charlie Sheen than Dalton McGuinty to cut taxes in the province of Ontario.

Last spring, Minister, you made a big show about trying to get the public spending under control. You had a phony wage freeze that has gone badly off the rails.

I ask you: Will you follow the Ontario PC recommendation to fix the broken arbitration system and ensure that at the end of the day Ontario families can actually pay the bills?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: As somebody who ran the largest addictions program in Ontario for eight years, I think it's deplorable that the Leader of the Opposition would stoop to questions about the people in this province who are fighting addictions every day. It's absolutely scandalous.

Let's talk about that. So now he's going to close addictions programs. Later today, we're going to debate mental health issues—an important debate, but that member wants to make fun of people with addictions instead of focusing on the issues.

Instead of making fun of people with addictions, instead of undermining people who are working hard to achieve sobriety and become contributing members of society, tell us what you're going to do. Put it on the table. Mike Harris had the courage to do that. Mike Harris laid it out a year and a half early. And do you know what he did? He closed hospitals. He closed schools. He compared nurses to hula hoops. The people of Ontario see through that—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): We're just going to take a minute to get our breath.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: What a bunch of silly nonsense coming from the finance minister, who has no plan to get spending under control and has up his sleeve another underhanded tax grab to take more money out of the pockets of Ontario families.

You'll remember last time, Minister; you secretly had in your 2010 budget a plan to cancel the mandatory review of these bloated health bureaucracies called LHINs. Since that time, the Ombudsman revealed that your LHINs held secret, illegal meetings where they talked about closing ERs, like in Fort Erie and Port Colborne. The number of executives on your LHIN sunshine list continues to grow. The LHIN in your own hometown wanted to spend \$10,000 of health money to bring Disney's magical kingdom to their annual conference, the kind of Mickey Mouse decision they only backed away from when we caught them.

Instead of using the back pages to cancel the LHIN review, will you put on the front page an end to this bloated health bureaucracy and put the money into front-line care for Ontarians?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The only place he'll be Premier of is fantasyland. Talk about secrets: He was part of a government that left a hidden \$5.5-billion deficit when they left office. Talk about secrets: They are going to cut \$3 billion from health care. And they're not even being secret about full-day learning: They have said that it's a frill; it's not something that's a priority. We disagree.

This government has laid out a plan that will cross a variety of issues: education, health care—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The question was asked, and I think all of us would like to hear the answer, particularly those on the side that it was asked by.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have laid out plans that have lowered taxes for 93% of Ontarians and enacted them; they voted against that. Ontarians will turn to this government for a reasonable plan to get back to balance that builds on education and health care, preserves those values, those things that are important to the people of Ontario.

SMART METERS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Two studies show that smart meters are costing most people more money, but the Minister of Energy continues to insist that people are saving. Where is the minister's proof?

Hon. Brad Duguid: In those very studies—indeed, a study from Hydro One indicates that about half of the people they have had online for some time now are seeing benefits, and about \$5 a month is the range. As I've said, the savings are modest but they're savings nonetheless.

The other thing that Hydro One's work has revealed is that, indeed, in a survey of 2,000 or 3,000 of their consumers, 80% of them have indicated that they are changing their energy usage patterns. That's a good thing.

There was a time when the NDP used to believe in standing for conservation. There was a time when the very member opposite would have supported efforts to try to encourage people to move off of peak usage. It appears those times are gone.

I ask the member to look back to what he believed in the past and maybe see if it's somewhat reflected in where the NDP wants to go in the future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I believe in offshore wind power. This is a Minister of Energy who doesn't, so I've had it with the lectures.

Today, the Ontario Energy Association—
Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My, my, they are cranky, Speaker.

Today, the Ontario Energy Association called on the government to send even stronger price signals. On Monday, the minister told reporters, "At this point in time the program's new, so we haven't set our peak and non-peak prices at a level that is a huge differential." Does he plan to raise those peak rates and, if so, when?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I did have a little trouble hearing the member's question but I think he talked about the report from the Ontario Energy Association. I want to thank them for their report because, indeed, the Ontario Energy Association had a great deal of input into our long-term energy plan and has been very supportive of our long-term energy plan and the directions we've

taken. They've made—and I've only had a chance to scan the report—about 12 recommendations to us, which we'll certainly take seriously.

We're going to continue to work with the energy sector and the Ontario Energy Association to build a clean, reliable and modern energy system. They're supporting our efforts to do that, and we welcome input from all in those efforts.

Now, I did ask the Leader of the Opposition to contribute to that discussion. I sent a letter to ask her to contribute to that discussion about a month or so ago, and I got absolutely nothing back.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Final supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I always take it as a bad sign when the minister won't answer a question.

Because there might have been a lot of noise and he didn't hear the question, I'm just going to go back and say: So minister, do you plan to raise the peak rates for time of use or not? And if so, if you're going to raise them, will you tell us when?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I know that member understands how prices are set in the province of Ontario and I know that he understands that the Ontario Energy Board will come forward every six months with their regulated price plan. That's what's going to happen in the spring, so he'll get those answers in the spring.

One thing I do want to share with the member—I think it's really important because his party no longer seems to be supporting investments in the smart grid—this morning, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and myself made an announcement in partnership with General Electric in the town of Markham: a \$40-million investment in a smart grid centre. It's going to create 146 jobs.

Ontario's not only a leader in renewables; we're not only a leader in building a clean energy powerhouse; we're also a global leader in building the smart grid. That's something that's going to benefit us today and it's something that's going to benefit future—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. New question.

1050

SMART METERS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I just wish you were more concerned about investing in people's homes and businesses to help them cut their energy bills. I think that would be more welcome—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Excuse me; the question is to the Minister of Energy?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It seemed to continue and flow for me, Speaker.

Families in Hamilton and Niagara are being asked to pay even more for smart meters. The Ontario Energy

Board approved another increase in smart meter charges in that area. Are other utilities next?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Once again, I'm getting the impression that the NDP thinks we can install four and a half million smart meters across this province and there's no cost to it. There are costs. There are costs to building a clean, reliable, modern energy system. There's no question about it. But the fact is, other jurisdictions around the world are following our lead, modernizing their—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Once again, I say that those who ask the question may want to hear the answers.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Other jurisdictions around the world are indeed following our lead: Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, Austria, Spain, France, Italy, New Zealand, Ireland, Malta, California, Texas, Maine, New York, Ohio, Virginia, Florida and Alabama, to name a few. Why does the NDP think families in Malta and Alabama deserve a more modern energy grid than families here in Ontario? Why do you think those families deserve to have a modern—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm glad that Alabama is finally catching up to us.

The Premier and his Minister of Energy said that smart meters would definitely save people money. A billion dollars—or more—is a lot of money. It could have been spent on direct conservation, like home energy retrofits. That would have made a lot of sense.

Instead of helping people conserve and save money, isn't this more about raising rates through the back door?

Hon. Brad Duguid: His leader stood in this House and criticized the very investments we were making in the program he just talked about. You can't have it both ways.

The investment in smart meters—and the member should know this—will accrue revenues of about \$1.6 billion back to energy consumers over the course of the next 15 years. He should know that that's a good investment. It's modernizing our energy infrastructure.

Ontario is ahead of the rest of the world, but others are following close behind. I'll say it again: Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, Austria, Spain, France, Italy, New Zealand, Ireland, Malta, California, Texas, Maine, New York, Ohio, Virginia, Florida and Alabama, and those are just a few.

We're ahead of them, but we believe that Ontario families deserve a more modern energy system than the people of Malta, the people of Alabama and the rest of the world. We're going to make the investments we need to—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: A minister who is willing to shut down the home energy savings program is in no position to lecture this House about energy efficiency.

Families in Hamilton, in Niagara and across Ontario are being told to pay more: more when they turn on their lights and more for the meter that's already costing them. There's one way to figure out whether the \$1 billion in smart meters was a worthwhile investment: New Democrats think that it's time—and it's long overdue—to call in the Auditor General, open the books, ask the right questions and get the answers.

Will the minister agree and support our call for the auditor to evaluate his smart meter program?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The NDP continue to try to have it both ways. On one hand, they talk about being in favour of conservation. On one hand, they talk about wanting to modernize our energy grid. But when it comes down to making the investments, they run; they hide; they don't want anything to do with that.

Building a clean, reliable, modern energy system isn't easy. It takes investment. It takes effort. The NDP may think you can deliver that without investment, without effort, but the people of Ontario—Ontario families—are going to see right through those guys. They know that what we're doing here in this province to build a clean, reliable and modern energy system is worthwhile; that it's something that's going to benefit them in their future. It's going to help get us out of dirty coal. It's going to help build a cleaner, healthier future for their kids. We're creating thousands of jobs as we're doing it. It's going to help create a more prosperous economy—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. New question.

SMART METERS

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Last week, the Ontario PC caucus revealed that the cost to install your smart meter tax machines was now over \$1 billion. It rivals your eHealth boondoggle in Liberal waste.

Then yesterday, on top of all that, we found out that Hamilton and Niagara families are going to get a 33% increase in the bill to pay for your smart meter tax machines. So instead of the relief that you want to give to families, you're jacking up the rates on Niagara and Hamilton families to pay for your smart meter tax machines.

Minister, when will you get in touch with what's happening across the province and pull the plug on your wasteful smart meter tax machine experiment?

Hon. Brad Duguid: That diatribe contains about as much credible information as the first question that he asked, when he got up with information that was totally incorrect and made accusations that, frankly, were pretty mean-spirited about our character over here and what we're doing on a particular issue. He was dead wrong. He put out a press release, continued the incorrect information, which I'm sure he knew was incorrect, and he still has not to this day apologized.

What that does, in my view, is it tells us what kind of character this Leader of the Opposition has, when he's

wrong, when he makes accusations that impugn motives or people's characters, and he does not have the courage or the integrity to take them back, apologize for what he said earlier—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Stop the clock. We're just going to take a breather.

Are you all ready to continue?

Interjection: What about withdrawing?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): What about I decide what we'll do up here?

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'm not impartial. The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, I'd like to tell you that I'm not impartial.

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Obviously, the Minister of Energy is becoming unravelled here a little bit. It's not surprising, considering this is the last person on earth who claims that smart meter tax machines are saving families money. Nobody believes this voice in the smart meter wilderness. Dalton McGuinty's smart meter tax machines are taking more money out of Ontario families' pockets that they can't afford, and that's why you should call a halt to this latest attack on the pocketbook of Ontario families.

Quite frankly, Minister, I don't need the Premier to lecture my mom to get up at midnight to do her laundry. I don't expect the Premier to lecture seniors in this province to get up and do the laundry on Saturdays. I don't think it's the role of the Premier—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Stop the clock.

Come to order. Would the government benches come to order? The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. The member for Oxford. The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, I'm warning you.

Just to clear the record, it is "I am not partial."

Continue your supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I don't need the Premier lecturing families to have all the kids showered and fed and ready for school before 7 a.m., when the higher charges come in, and if they dare to disobey Premier Dad, he's going to nail them with higher hydro rates. I think that's wrong. Why won't you unplug your expensive hydro meter experiment and—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Minister of Energy?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member brought up his mother. One of the things that certainly my parents taught me is that when I'm wrong on something, when I accuse somebody of doing something that's incorrect, I apologize. You come clean with people. You withdraw it, or you correct the record. That's just common courtesy. I keep going back there, but I really think that that's something that indicates character in people.

1100

My parents taught me that being honest is a very, very important quality, and when I make a mistake—and I do,

from time to time—I apologize. I come clean with people, and I'm very honest if I do say something to somebody that's incorrect.

All I'm asking is that the Leader of the Opposition think of those things, because I'm sure his mother taught him many of those same qualities.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have another question for the Minister of Energy, and I'm pleased that he is taking a position in support of honesty today.

Ontario Power Generation has launched an ad campaign promising to complete the refurbishment of the Darlington nuclear plant on time and on budget, which the ad says they did with their last three major nuclear projects. According to the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, every nuclear project in Ontario's history has gone over budget.

Why is the minister allowing OPG to so blatantly mislead Ontarians?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'd like you to withdraw that last comment.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Sorry, Speaker. I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Minister of Energy?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I know the NDP do not support nuclear power, but I think Ontario families would want to know: What are they going to replace it with? It's half of our baseload capacity.

I know it's a long-standing philosophical position that, for years, they have supported. I think the people of Ontario have moved on from those days. We have a very good experience with nuclear here in this province. It provides half of our baseload capacity. It supports 70,000 jobs across this country, and most of them are here in the province of Ontario—jobs one would think that the NDP would care about. Workers are working very hard to ensure that we keep the lights on in this province.

If we want to have a reliable energy system going forward into the future, if we want to have a strong economy over the course of the next 10 or 20 years, we're going to have to keep working with our nuclear sector to, indeed, refurbish our units, which is something that needs to be done—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The minister seems to have forgotten his response to an earlier question this morning.

OPG is trying to convince Ontarians that it can build, or rebuild, a nuclear reactor on budget by trying to rewrite Ontario's history of nuclear delays and cost overruns. The Minister of Energy is responsible for advising and directing this government-owned corporation.

Will the minister demand that OPG pull these ads and promise Ontarians that they—Ontarians—won't pay for the inevitable cost overruns of the Darlington rebuild?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The NDP have no idea about the contribution to this economy that the nuclear industry is

making: 70,000 jobs across Canada, the majority of which are here in Ontario. We support the nuclear industry here in this province. We need to refurbish those units because we need those units for our baseload capacity to ensure we can provide a reliable source of power for Ontario families and businesses for the next 20 years.

These are important investments. Yes, they're significant investments, investments I guess the NDP would not support, but what do they support? They seem to be moving away from wind energy. They don't seem to be supporting investments that we've made in renewable power. They're not supporting our investments to modernize our energy system. They're not supporting our investments when it comes to conservation. They don't support natural gas power. There's not a lot left. We're going to have to get out the—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. New question.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS STRATEGY

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I had the privilege of sitting on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, where members of all parties learned and listened by travelling across the province. The issue of mental health supports for people who need them is something that means a great deal to me, and it was made even more so by the heart-wrenching stories that we heard. We heard from families, service providers and mental health consumers about their experiences with the system, and we heard about what needs to happen in order to make the system meet the needs of the consumers it serves.

Minister, can you tell us what the government is doing in response to the recommendations of the select committee, which were intended to build a better system to support Ontarians with mental health challenges?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for her question and for her unwavering commitment to people with mental health and addiction challenges.

The select committee's non-partisan approach and willingness to delve into very difficult issues was unprecedented. It's the kind of approach that an issue like this deserves, and I do want to take a moment and thank the chair, our member from Oakville, and all members of the committee for the work that they did.

In addition to the select committee, my predecessor as Minister of Health, the member from Don Valley East, established the minister's advisory committee to advise us on the development of a 10-year strategy. Together, these reports are helping us develop our 10-year mental health and addictions strategy.

Mental health and addictions is complex. It involves many ministries, and it involves community partners as well. We are taking the time to get it right, but we are committed to releasing it this spring.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Thank you to the minister for the update on the status of the response to the select committee's recommendations.

In part of my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, which is in the South West LHIN, I have been hearing concerns about changes to the way that mental health services are being delivered. It seems there are some who are interested in maintaining the status quo and ensuring that services get to people the way they always have: through institutions and in residential settings. Can the minister please provide clarity to this House about what is happening with mental health services in my communities?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I appreciate the opportunity to address this issue.

I, too, have heard concerns from people who are more interested in protecting the status quo than responding to the evidence that tells us that community-based supports are very often better for people, providing care for people in their community and close to their families. That's why we're investing more in community-based care; in the South West LHIN, we've been able to increase funding by 61% on communities.

But I do want to say that both the select committee and the minister's advisory group identified stigmatization of vulnerable people as the most important issue that we must address, immediately and together. I find it absolutely appalling that the Leader of the Opposition would further stigmatize an already vulnerable group, especially on the day that we are debating an opposition day motion about addictions and mental health.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Acting Premier. We know that a carbon tax isn't the only tax you're looking at hitting Ontario families with: The member for Don Valley East introduced both a water tax bill and an education tax bill in this Legislature. Ontario families know there isn't a tax you don't like. Which of these three can we expect to read about tomorrow?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: None of them.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: So does that mean we'll find out about it after the next election?

Ontario families can't afford a carbon tax, a water tax or an education tax, but then Ontario families couldn't afford the health tax, the HST, eco taxes or your expensive energy experiments, and that didn't stop Premier McGuinty. At the end of the day, Premier McGuinty is hard-wired to tax and will tax again. The only question is, when and where will the out-of-touch Premier strike next?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: There will be no tax increases in the budget.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): New question.

1110

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, tonight the Toronto District School Board is considering TV advertising targeted at students in 74 high schools. Does the minister support the Toronto school board's plan to commercialize education?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy to respond because it gives me an opportunity to again remind the members of this House that we have significantly increased the support of students in the Toronto District School Board. We will continue to do that. And I'm sure that the honourable member also appreciates that we are in the process of considering how school boards can raise funds, whether through fundraising, adding fees and in fact corporate sponsorship.

We have not yet published the corporate piece. I think that parents in the Toronto District School Board are very interested and have an important role to play in having the school board understand whether or not they think this is an appropriate venue and way for the school board to raise funds. But I'm happy that I am able to remind people in the Toronto District School Board catchment that our commitment to education funding has—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The Toronto school board is about to sign a seven-year contract to allow television ads in 74 high schools, all to raise about \$1,000 per school. The McGuinty government has obstinately refused, and you have obstinately refused, to establish guidelines for school fundraising, and now Ontario's largest school board, starved for cash, is being forced to sell access to students to marketing firms and big companies.

Why won't the minister speak out against the introduction of television advertising in schools before it's too late?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I had the privilege of being the chair of a school board in the 1990s, and I can say that at that time, school boards were starved for cash; they were.

What I can say now is that our government has increased funding to school boards by 40%, and we've done that in the face of declining enrolment.

With respect to the guidelines for students' fees, they have been put out for consultation. We are getting feedback. We are going to be posting guidelines for fundraising and we are also going to be dealing with corporate sponsorship.

What I think is important is that parents in the Toronto District School Board make it very clear to the people they elected—they elected them just last October—and have them know how they feel about this proposal. This is the role and responsibility of school boards, and I think they have an obligation to pay attention to what parents

and people in their communities are saying about how they're raising funds.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, yesterday the latest graduation rate was announced, and the Leader of the Opposition said that the increase in the graduation rate is due to the fact that our government has been watering down the curriculum and lowering the bar. He said yesterday that we've made it easier for students to pass standardized tests. He claims that students will be in for a rude awakening when they graduate.

Would the minister explain to my constituents what these assertions made by the Leader of the Opposition are all about? Is the increase in the graduation rate really the result of school being easier for students?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is an important question, and I was so disappointed when the opposition basically slapped our students' quest yesterday, first when they said that those students who work very hard and achieve a graduation diploma over five years instead of four don't deserve to be counted. We are not of that mind. They do deserve to be counted.

The other slap was that because there are more successful students, the curriculum must be watered down. To the members who are heckling me today, I would draw your attention to the PISA test—the international body that tests students in Ontario. What they have said is that our students in the province of Ontario are among the top five in the world. That's an international, independent body. So they are in denial about the success of our students—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My constituents will be pleased to know that we are supporting our students and teachers. We all know how hard our teachers work to prepare our students for the future.

Minister, I've been hearing from my constituents that there is some confusion about how the graduation rate is calculated. There have been assertions by some that the graduation rate has been inflated, that the government is just painting a rosy picture that is not actually the case in Ontario. What can I tell my constituents about this? Are Ontario students actually achieving better, or is the graduation rate being calculated to inflate the numbers? My constituents want an answer.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: The answer is very simple: If students enter a high school and they graduate, they're counted. We don't distinguish whether they take four years or five years. They are successful. They have worked hard. Their parents are proud of their accomplishments, and we are proud to stand behind them and say, "You matter to us. We count you. You are part of the 81% of students in Ontario who have graduated." That will be a part of our number.

One thing that we're doing, as well, to ensure that students continue to be successful is full-day kindergarten. We know that when our youngest learners are supported, they are more than likely to graduate. The opposition are prepared to have have and have-not schools. They are not committed to full-day kindergarten. That is clear. Our commitment is that all schools, by 2014, will have full-day kindergarten.

It would be a have and have-not world if Tim Hudak were the Premier of Ontario. Families in Ontario voted the—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): New question.

CURRICULUM

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Minister of Education. This week, the McGuinty Liberals once again revealed just how out of touch they are with Ontario families. After the Minister of Research and Innovation said that parents opposed to sex ed being taught to their six-year-olds were homophobes, both the Premier and the Minister of Education refused to say that he was wrong. Will the Minister of Education finally stand up today and condemn the comments from the Minister of Research and Innovation?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What I am prepared to condemn is any plan that will create a crisis in education. A lack of commitment to full-day kindergarten will create have and have-not schools in the province of Ontario. That is a crisis in education.

When the opposition refuses to recognize the achievements of students who have worked hard for five years to graduate, that, in my view, is a crisis.

They are absolutely intent on maintaining their policy of the past, and that is to create a crisis; that is to beat up on our students and our teachers. What I can say to the member opposite is, that is not a part of our plan. We have supported students since we've come to government, and that will continue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: The McGuinty Liberals just don't have any respect for Ontario families. They tell us that they have a more intelligent understanding than parents. They stand by when one of their own insults parents and communities all across this great province.

Minister, is the reason nobody over there will condemn the comments from the Minister of Research and Innovation because all Liberal MPPs agree with them?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What we condemn is a lack of commitment to all of the students in the province of Ontario. Every student deserves the commitment of their government. Certainly, parents who have children in McNab Public School in Arnprior, Good Shepherd School in Brampton, or Mohawk Gardens Public School in Burlington are parents who want to know that their children will be treated fairly and equitably, that they will

be able to access a wonderful program that will ensure student success going forward.

1120

Their plan is for a two-tiered education system; our plan is to invest in students—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington: I've heard enough, so a warning.

Minister?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: They're about a two-tiered system. They don't like the response because it puts them on the spot. It requires them to—

Interjections.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Are you going to have full-day kindergarten for every student in Ontario or are you going to have a two-tiered system of education?

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry—it's such a long title. Minister, a short question: Why did you not support the community of Wawa in its bid to hold on to the wood of that community and allow them to restructure the Weyerhaeuser plant?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I think, as most of the members of the House know, we have a wood supply competition that's going on in the province of Ontario, one where we want to see, in the short term, our wood being put back to work.

We brought forward a wood supply competition about a year ago; 115 applicants came forward with proposals. It's certainly a complicated and long process, but one where, indeed, we are in the process now of being in a position to make some announcements. We've had some very good announcements all across the north, which are creating work in each of those communities and also retaining jobs. It's a wonderful thing in that sense.

There are challenges, of course. There are applications that are out there that we've not yet been able to respond to.

As the member also knows, I'm not in a position to speak about applications on a specific basis. We in fact set up the system very carefully under the watchful eye of a Fairness Commissioner to make sure that the recommendations that came forward were done in an absolutely fair and transparent way.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You say, "wonderful"? That's not the definition that Mayor Nowicki would give. They're not happy. They don't think this is wonderful. In fact, you sent them a letter on February 7 saying, "No, you have lost out in the wood competition process." That has effectively hamstrung that community from being able to figure out how to restructure that mill so they can get back up and running again.

My question to you is very simple: Why do you not allow the communities to hold on to the wood that they

previously had in their communities so they can re-structure and look forward to a brighter future that truly would be wonderful?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Again, the wood supply competition was set up, making available about 10 million cubic metres of wood across the province. Some 115 applications came forward. We are very pleased about the fact that, indeed, there's a number of very successful applicants. Decisions that were being made are obviously very challenging as well, because it is a complex process.

Again, we set it up so that the minister did not make decisions based on a partisan basis. I think that was very, very important to do. We are continuing to work with all the communities, including those communities that have not been successful with their applications. We are working with them. We are offering them opportunities for a debriefing, and we are going to continue to work with them.

We recognize—as certainly I do, as an MPP for a riding that has so many operations that obviously are looking for a bright future in the forestry sector—how challenging it is, which is why we are going to continue to work with each of those communities, including the community of Wawa.

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Mr. Bill Mauro: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. It's clear that youth receiving support and protection from Ontario's children's aid societies are some of the most vulnerable kids in our province. While we acknowledge that the government is taking steps to improve and modernize our child protection system, resulting in fewer kids entering care and more youth given the chance to succeed, we also know there are unique challenges faced by aboriginal communities with respect to child welfare.

In my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care provides a range of responsive individual, family and community programs and services for all Anishinabek people.

In addition to the work that goes on at Dilico, government has a significant role to play in supporting the needs of aboriginal children across Ontario. What is our government doing to improve the quality of life for aboriginal kids and their families?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Our government has made it a real priority to understand the challenges faced by aboriginal communities and to take action to support these needs. I've heard from chiefs and councils, teachers, foster parents, front-line workers and public health nurses that the challenges faced by aboriginal children and youth are unique and require an approach that recognizes that fact.

The appointment of John Beaucage as aboriginal adviser is part of our government's commitment to achieve better outcomes for aboriginal children and youth in need of protection, both on and off reserve. Mr. Beaucage continues to guide discussions with aboriginal leaders

and front-line service providers, and offer advice on aboriginal child welfare.

I'm currently working with John Beaucage to host a summit in April 2011 that will determine how we can work together to improve prevention approaches and the delivery of child welfare services to aboriginal children and youth right across the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Mauro: Thank you, Minister. Those investments are critical and their effects will be felt by aboriginal youth and their families in my riding and right across the province. But it's also important to recognize the importance of designated aboriginal children's aid societies.

Dilico embraces a holistic approach to the delivery of health, mental health, addictions and child welfare services to complement the strengths, values and traditions of Anishinabek children, families and communities. Quoting their website, "Our vision is balance and well-being for Anishinabek children, families and communities."

Can the minister please tell the House how our government demonstrates its commitment to supporting the designation of aboriginal CASs?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to acknowledge the great work being done by Dilico and all of our aboriginal child welfare agencies.

Having aboriginal CASs is important to us, and that's why we ended the previous government's moratorium on new CASs and have designated two new aboriginal CASs. My ministry's regional offices are currently working with a number of aboriginal service providers that are seeking designation as aboriginal CASs. We are providing \$3 million this year to aboriginal service providers to help them with capacity-building during the designation process. In the past four years, we've given almost \$9 million in funding support for this process. Dilico has been allocated over \$25 million to support and protect vulnerable kids and families, and that is a 148% increase since 2003.

We want all of these kids, all aboriginal children across the province, to achieve their full potential. We're working with community partners to make sure that we deliver the future for them that we aspire to for all of our kids.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. John O'Toole: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, it seems that every day we add another chapter to your government's book on your expensive energy experiments. In January, the C.D. Howe Institute reported that you spent a billion dollars exporting Ontario power to Quebec and the United States, giving them discount power while Ontario families are paying skyrocketing prices for hydro. Next, we saw your government backtrack on a moratorium on offshore wind development. Finally, we witnessed thousands of mostly

rural residents being told the microFIT project cannot be connected to the grid.

Rather than wasting your time on these failed energy experiments, why don't you focus on the clean, reliable power offered by Darlington's nuclear project? Nuclear energy supplies over 50% of energy in Ontario. Minister, will you make a commitment to the Darlington new-build project here today? Make that commitment.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member's from Durham, for crying out loud. Where have you been as we've been talking about our commitment to these two new units over the course of the last year? He's from that community. He should be paying attention to the announcements after announcements, the speeches after speeches, the number of times in this Legislature that this government has committed itself to that project.

But what we're not going to do is what his leader wants to do. His leader said earlier that we should purchase those units without regard to the price. Early on in the process, it would have cost us billions more than we will end up paying. They're impulse nuclear shoppers. We're going to be very responsible. We care about the prices that we pay. We're going to be making sure we get a good deal for Ontario taxpayers, Ontario consumers. There's no question; we're moving forward—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's revealing that you make a lot of speeches and a lot of promises, but you don't do anything. That's the problem.

Wasting time and money on expensive energy experiments like wind and solar power isn't being fair to the people or the consumers of Ontario. We need clean, reliable and safe power for the future, instead of your expensive energy experiments, which have driven up the price of energy to families in Ontario by over 75%. How can you expect Ontario families to take your word when your actions tell a completely different story?

1130

Minister, all I'm asking you to do today is make a clear, unambiguous commitment to the new-build nuclear at Darlington, starting here, right now, today.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thought I just did that, but we'll keep doing it. We're very committed to building these two new units.

But he really ought to be talking to his cousins in Ottawa, because we were very much along on this purchase when the federal government decided they were going to restructure AECL.

It's very clear that while we're working hard to make sure we get a good price for Ontario families, their priority is to try to get a good price for Stephen Harper. That's not where we're at; that may be where they're at. They may be shilling for the federal government on this.

We're standing up for Ontario consumers, to make sure we get a good deal for Ontario consumers, make sure we purchase these two new nuclear units and make sure we stand up for the 70,000 people in the nuclear in-

dustry. We may be the only government left in this country doing that, but we will purchase those new units.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to Minister of Consumer Services. Seniors, some wheelchair-bound, in a seven-storey Stoney Creek condo were without elevator service for three weeks. They prepared for a two-week elevator repair but never imagined a full week's wait for a TSSA inspector. They were told that the TSSA was unavailable to inspect because they were all away at a conference.

Why would the minister—

Interjection: Over here.

Mr. Paul Miller: Well, you change ministers every day.

Why would the minister allow any agency's entire inspection team to be shut down for several days?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I always look forward to a question from the member from Hamilton East on an issue like this or any other.

I'm not familiar with the situation. If you want to talk to me about it—what you've described so far sounds to me as if it's unacceptable. Seniors in a large building should not be without elevator service for a week. I'm willing to look into it, and I'm willing to work with the member to get this issue resolved.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you, Minister, but I have to do my supplementary.

The TSSA has just appointed its first chief safety and risk officer to review, analyze and prepare public reports on the safety activities of the TSSA. He will review and analyze any safety matters that he, the TSSA board or the Minister of Consumer Services identifies as being in the public interest.

Will the minister direct the chief safety and risk officer to investigate this loss of service for these seniors, and will she—sorry; we've changed ministers—will he guarantee that no one else will suffer a loss of service like this again?

Hon. John Gerretsen: As the member well knows, the TSSA is primarily concerned about safety in a number of different areas. They have a tough job; they do a good job in most circumstances.

I'm very pleased that, recently, they have employed the services of a chief safety officer. Undoubtedly, I will be asking him to look into this situation as well, and we will try to get this resolved as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your supplementary question, but we want to make sure that our member gets a final question as well.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, source protection committees

are hard at work across the province on plans to protect their local sources of drinking water.

The Trent committee in my own riding of Northumberland–Quinte West is a great example. They have engaged in the community, enlisted local assistance and outlined every step of the process.

Still, some residents are concerned about a previous comment made by the member from Simcoe North that committees are sending threatening and intimidating letters.

Minister, is it true that these plans will negatively impact rural property owners?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my friend from Northumberland for the question, because he understands that one of the most important things we can do is to keep our sources of drinking water safe. We do that by having a plan that works from the groundwater up.

So we have, across the province of Ontario, our source water planning protection committees, which are not made up of anonymous people but are made up of citizens: very competent, very professional and very committed citizens who understand that they play a vital role in ensuring that our sources of drinking water are kept safe in the first place. So I reject the allegation from the member for Simcoe North that these people are anonymous. That is not true.

I want to thank the member for Northumberland, because I know that in his community some \$333,000 has been committed by our ministry, through our stewardship funding, to early actions, to fund remediation around the Trent River and in the Trent River watershed. I want to thank the member for the work that he has done in supporting that effort from the groundwater up.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There being no deferred votes, this House will recess until 3 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1135 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Debbie Gordon to the Legislature today. She is wearing two hats, one as a member of the campaign to save the Maskinonge River and the other as a member of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation. Please welcome Debbie Gordon.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: A bit later, I will be introducing a private member's bill that actually was originated by a gentleman who joins us in the east gallery today and who is a former page: Alex Don, who is here with his mother, Irina. Also with us are Fernando Costa, who is his guidance counsellor at Assumption high school; David Medhurst; Ken Lewenza, the president of the Canadian Auto Workers; Nancy Kirby, president of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association; Barbara Klassen, who is a trauma program coordinator at Hamilton General Hospital; Paul Cianciolo, the principal of Assumption high school; and Tony Ferguson, who is

the father of Alex's Australian friend. They have joined us today to witness the introduction of a private member's bill that was initiated by the work of Alex, a former page here five years ago.

Mr. John O'Toole: I would like to recognize Caroline Schultz, who is the executive director for Ontario Nature. She lives in my riding of Durham and is here today with the Oak Ridges moraine/greenbelt group.

As well, I would like to recognize Liang Chen, who is the next member from the riding of Scarborough–Agincourt.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ISRAELI APARTHEID WEEK

Mr. Peter Shurman: I rise today to once again denounce Israeli Apartheid Week. Despite our efforts last fall, we are still hearing stories of student intimidation and hatemongering under the guise of so-called educational programs in support of Israeli Apartheid Week.

Last autumn, this House unanimously passed my resolution to ban the use of this violent, prejudicial term. I was delighted to see that all MPPs of all political stripes stood together to condemn that word "apartheid" for what it really is: hate-filled. Sadly, a unanimous resolution by this assembly sends a message but has no force in law.

I stand in this House today to condemn again this vicious week that has caused students to be intimidated on their own university and college campuses and prevented peaceful and productive discussion about the issues in the Middle East, a region in turmoil. The Ontario Legislature seldom has the opportunity to comment on issues that exist in other jurisdictions, but it is clear to me that this is an issue which is spilling into our educational institutions, from the university level through college and now even at the high school level.

In my riding, I have heard from people about the harm that this annual event causes, potentially physically and certainly emotionally. I have committed to the residents of Thornhill that hatred will not be tolerated in any shape or form and that, as their elected representative, I will do my job to ensure that we stamp out hatred in all its forms.

I ask this House to support me once again in condemning the use of the term "Israeli Apartheid Week" and to join me in bringing an end to hatred in Ontario.

LEADING WOMEN BUILDING COMMUNITIES AWARDS

Mr. Phil McNeely: On Monday, the minister responsible for women's issues, the Honourable Laurel Broten, visited Ottawa–Orléans to join me in recognizing 18 women whose efforts have contributed to the greater well-being of their community and fellow residents.

The Leading Women/Leading Girls Building Communities Awards honour women and girls who actively demonstrate excellent leadership in areas such as athletics, international work, civic projects and school initiatives. My office received a number of nominations this year, representing a diverse group of women who share a common purpose: to make their community a better place to live. I was honoured to be able to recognize these women one day prior to the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. On a day when we celebrate the achievements of women all over the world, it gave me great pleasure to celebrate the achievements of women in Ottawa–Orléans. I'm sure you will join me in congratulating them and thanking all the leading women and girls in our respective ridings who have been recognized through this important program.

This year's recipients in my riding are: Geraldine Dixon; Catherine Jellett; Christine Flammer; Marie-Claude Doucet; Emily Leahy; Rachel Lalonde; Kellie Ring; Gayle Downing; Anaëlle Raffray; Julie Lizotte; Moji and Shola Agoro; Alexa Brewer; Johanne Lacombe; Mary Lou Maisonneuve; Mashooda Syed; Nathalie Lafrenière; and Debbie Orth.

Our communities and this assembly owe all of this year's recipients our sincere gratitude.

ALUMINUM SMELTER

Mrs. Julia Munro: I welcome today an important resident of my local community: Debbie Gordon, who for many years has worked tirelessly to help clean up and preserve our local environment. She has worked hard on many issues, such as the Oak Ridges moraine and the campaign to save the Maskinonge River.

An important concern in our area for many, many years, and one that Debbie has worked on tirelessly, is the cleanup of the Thane Developments aluminum smelter site in Georgina. Cleaning up this property is a question of money, as much as possibly \$4 million, and who should pay.

I don't claim to have the answers, but I know someone who did: the Premier. A letter that Debbie wrote to our local paper in 2007 outlines his promise. She writes that in 2002, he "personally promised me, if elected, he would clean up the abandoned aluminum smelter on Georgina's Warden Avenue. Advocate editor John Slykhuis and Carol McDermott of the South Lake Simcoe Naturalists were witnesses to that promise. That promise has not been kept."

If the Premier doesn't have the money to keep this promise, why did he make it in the first place?

JACK FREER

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise today to bring attention to this House and to the people of Ontario of a monumental event in the life of Jack Freer. Jack Freer, this Saturday, will be celebrating 60 years of doing barbering in East York.

He started being a barber in East York at the age of 15, when he apprenticed, and he apprenticed at the corner of Cosburn and Woodbine Avenues. He worked for someone else, but over the years, he bought out that business and set up his own.

He started being a barber in East York 60 years ago, when it was mostly rural, when there were a few houses—the first few houses that were being built after the war. He has continued until this very day and has seen a huge change in the community, from being one that was rural to one that is part of the city of Toronto urban fabric.

He has cut the hair now of four generations of East Yorkers. This coming Saturday, he will be celebrating with friends and customers as he launches year 61. Over all of those years, he has made us all look a little bit better, he has made us all look a little bit sharper and he has made sure that people in East York just have that cut above some of the others.

We salute him this coming Saturday. Anybody who has an opportunity to come to Jack's barber shop at Cosburn and Woodbine I'm sure would be more than welcome.

CANADIAN FORCES STATION ALERT

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with you and my colleagues an amazing experience I had last month. I had the opportunity to visit the Canadian Forces Station Alert, which is a unit of 8 Wing Trenton, located in my riding of Northumberland–Quinte West.

Alert is the most northerly permanently inhabited location in the world. It's located only 817 kilometres from the North Pole, and believe me, it's cold. February average temperatures are around minus 37 degrees Celsius—but they tell me it's a dry cold.

Alert experiences polar nights from October to February with 24-hour darkness. I had the great fortune of being there during a full moon, which lit the scenic background to be one of the most spectacular views I've ever witnessed in my life.

I didn't think it was possible for me to be more thankful for what our servicemen and women do, but after this experience, I can truly say that I have even more admiration and gratitude for their unconditional dedication.

The base has provided me with some great photos of this trip, which can now be enjoyed by all on my Facebook page.

I want to take this opportunity to convey my deep gratitude to Colonel David Cochrane and all who were involved in making this the most memorable trip of a lifetime.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today with concerns over comments the Liberal Minister of Natural Resources, Linda Jeffrey, made to representatives from the township of Melancthon at a recent meeting.

1510

Late last week, the township received a submission to amend their official plan and zoning bylaw to allow for a 2,300-acre limestone quarry. This is the largest application ever submitted in the province.

The township, anticipating that a quarry application would be filed in the near future, proactively met with the minister last week during ROMA concerning this pending application, as this issue is of great importance to the community. When meeting with the minister, the township's council insisted on a thorough review of the application following the most rigid standards available through proven science and technology.

When meeting with the Melancthon delegation, the minister said, "It is too bad that this has split your community apart. It is your job to get your community together, get them to think long term about rehabilitation, because this will not be going back to agriculture, but maybe you could get a nice golf course." A golf course? Twenty-three hundred acres is enough space for 15 golf courses. This statement leaves us with the impression that this Liberal minister had already chosen a side, even before the application for the quarry was filed.

I share the mayor's and Melancthon council's concerns, and disbelief, quite frankly, regarding these comments. It is wrong for this minister to have chosen a side without allowing the MNR to complete a thorough and comprehensive review of the application and to have jeopardized the application, because residents are concerned that the minister is not impartial.

**UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
HEART INSTITUTE**

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I am pleased to rise today to speak about the University of Ottawa Heart Institute's annual telethon, which I was proud to be part of this past weekend. This was the heart institute's 20th annual telethon, which raises funds in support of cardiovascular research and improves patient care and outcomes both in Canada and around the world. The University of Ottawa Heart Institute is the only genetics research centre for heart disease in Canada, and I'm very proud that it is located in the riding of Ottawa Centre.

This year the telethon raised an incredible \$5.85 million because of the generosity of a very kind city. I want to personally congratulate everyone who organized and took part in the event on this monumental achievement. Not only was the event a major success for the institute, but it demonstrated a remarkable level of community engagement.

Dr. Robert Roberts, the president and CEO of the heart institute, stated that it was a phenomenal day for his organization, but perhaps more important was the knowledge that the community is completely behind the institute. Dr. Roberts and his team recently discovered 13 more genes that contribute to heart disease, a discovery that was made possible through funds raised at events such as the telethon.

Other members of the heart institute pivotal to making this event a success were Alan Rottenberg, the chairman; Paul LaBarge, vice-chair of the foundation; Barry Stanton, director of development; and Tom Hewitt, who is the president of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute Foundation.

FARM SAFETY

Mr. Rick Johnson: Next week marks Canadian Agricultural Safety Week. With spring just around the corner and farmers looking forward to getting out to their fields, this week is intended to heighten safety awareness for everyone involved in the agriculture sector.

Many farms in this province are family operations. Where the home doubles as an industrial worksite, safety must always come first. By planning and taking measures, we can lessen serious injuries that can have devastating and even fatal results.

As the lead agency for farm safety, Safe Workplace Promotion Services Ontario, formerly the Farm Safety Association, delivers excellent safety awareness programs to agricultural workers and farmers across the province. Our government has been working with them for over 10 years to help keep Ontario farm families aware and safe. Our goal is to reduce the occurrence of workplace injuries and illness on farms and in horticulture and landscape operations.

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week gives us the opportunity to reflect on work we have done over the years to improve our farm safety record. Through our continued efforts, farm-related incidents have been on the decline. I invite all members of the House to join me as we recognize Canadian Agricultural Safety Week and strive to one day eliminate all workplace injuries on farms across this province.

LAKEHEAD THUNDERWOLVES

Mr. Bill Mauro: Last weekend, for the very first time in the school's history, Thunder Bay's Lakehead University Thunderwolves won the Wilson Cup, which is the OUA championship for men's basketball.

During the semifinal action, the Thunderwolves defeated the University of Ottawa 71-69 and followed that up in the finals with a 77-62 victory over the top-ranked team, the Carleton Ravens, the first loss in league play of the year for the Ravens.

Led by Coach Scott Morrison, the Lakehead Thunderwolves are now off to Halifax, where they'll make their second straight appearance at the national championships.

I've been a fan of basketball for a long time and I played the game for many years, so I'm especially excited by the Thunderwolves' victory. When I was in high school, I remember watching the great Lakehead Norwesters teams of the 1970s. The current Thunderwolves have brought back that tradition of excellence. They've shown that they can take on the best teams in

Ontario. It's fantastic to see our men's program back competing at a high level.

I want to congratulate the entire team for their hard work and their excellent performance. A special congratulations to the local standouts Andrew Hackner and Matt Schmidt, who have contributed to seeing the first OUA basketball championship banner hung from the rafters of Lakehead University.

Tipoff for the Thunderwolves' first game at the national championship is 2:15 p.m. this Friday, against the fifth-seed Trinity Western Spartans. I'll be cheering for you, and so will the rest of Thunder Bay.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Pat Hoy: I beg leave to present a report on the pre-budget consultation 2011 from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move the adoption of its recommendations.

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Michael Prue: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr45, An Act to revive 1312510 Ontario Ltd.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOVICE DRIVER "P" PLATE ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 EXIGEANT UNE PLAQUE "P" POUR LES CONDUCTEURS DÉBUTANTS

Mr. Flynn moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 161, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to require vehicles driven by novice drivers to display markers or identifying devices / Projet de loi 161, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour exiger que les

véhicules conduits par des conducteurs débutants affichent des marques ou des moyens d'identification.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act by adding a section to the act. The new section prohibits novice drivers from driving a motor vehicle on a highway unless markers or identifying devices indicating that the vehicle is being driven by a novice driver are displayed on or in the vehicle.

It's important to note that the bill is co-sponsored by the members from Newmarket–Aurora and Timmins–James Bay, but more importantly, to note that the bill actually was the work of Alex Don, whom I introduced earlier, a former legislative page from Oakville and now Burlington. I think he's a perfect example of how young people can involve themselves in politics.

I urge members to pass this bill.

DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION AU DIABÈTE

Mrs. Mangat moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 162, An Act to proclaim the month of November Diabetes Awareness Month / Projet de loi 162, Loi proclamant le mois de novembre Mois de la sensibilisation au diabète.

1520

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: This bill will officially proclaim November as Diabetes Awareness Month in Ontario in an effort to raise public awareness of diabetes and the steps that can be taken to prevent or manage the disease.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RENDEMENT SCOLAIRE

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I am very excited to rise in the House today to announce that the graduation rate for the last year was 81%.

Il s'agit d'une réalisation dont nous pouvons tous être fiers et qui aurait été impossible sans le travail soutenu et le dévouement des élèves, des parents et des éducateurs de l'Ontario.

Year after year, we have seen a steady increase in the graduation rate. When we took office in 2003, only 68% of Ontario students were graduating from high school. That means almost one in three students were not graduating. With a focus on student achievement and supporting our students, almost 20,000 more students graduated in 2009-10 than would have graduated had the rate stayed at 68%. This represents an increase of 13 percentage points over the 2003-04 rate. In fact, altogether, about 72,000 additional students have achieved their high school diploma since 2003.

We've made education a priority, and we have increased funding by more than 40% since 2003. We understand that all students do not learn at the same pace and that all students learn differently. That is why we support programs that meet the needs of all Ontario students.

Our student success programs include initiatives like specialist high-skills majors, dual credits and expanded co-op. This year, approximately 28,000 students are involved in over 1,000 specialist high-skills major programs in 540 secondary schools across Ontario. There are also approximately 10,000 students in dual credit programs, an increase of 33% over last year. Now, these programs are different; they are hands-on, and they allow students to customize their high school experience to match their strengths, interests and career goals.

Our new 12 and 12+ initiative also helps re-engage students who have left school or who are not attending school. As of this academic year, 70% of those who have returned are taking three credits or more, and they continue to work toward graduation.

In February, we introduced new school board requirements to strengthen the structure, clarity and consistency of the programs that are provided for excused pupils participating in the supervised alternative learning program.

We are delighted that Ontario students are succeeding and graduating from high school, and I'd also like to take this opportunity to recognize our outstanding educators who work directly with the students to help them reach their goals. We applaud their innovation, their determination and their commitment to energizing and enabling Ontario students.

Ontario students are recognized as being in the top 10 in the world in reading, according to the Programme for International Student Assessment study that was released in December. The study also showed that Ontario students are performing very well in math and science.

Notre gouvernement est résolu à aider tous les élèves, sans exception, à réussir et à leur donner la possibilité de réaliser pleinement leur potentiel, à l'école comme dans la vie.

The results speak for themselves: More students are succeeding and earning their diplomas than ever before, since our government came to office.

The future prosperity of Ontario depends on the strength of our students. Building a well-educated, high-skilled workforce is a top priority in today's knowledge-based economy and it is a top priority for our government.

Merci, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Responses?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: It's my pleasure to provide the official opposition's response to the minister's statement. We in the PC caucus are steadfastly committed to strengthening Ontario's public education system. We believe firmly that the future prosperity of our province is dependent upon the quality of education we provide to our children.

I would like to remind this House of the PC Party's outstanding and distinguished record of improving education in Ontario. I would like to remind you: We were the party that successfully reformed education funding in Ontario. We eliminated the gross inequities and inequalities that the Liberal Party supported. In Ontario today, students receive equal funding regardless of where they live. In Ontario today, school boards are no longer unfairly taxing families by raising property taxes year after year. Because of our commitment to education, the days of large, affluent urban boards being able to offer better education than small rural boards are over.

The minister spoke about student success. We are the party that established the Education Quality and Accountability Office. We are the party that committed ourselves to ensuring that parents and teachers are aware of how their students are performing. Our long and distinguished record of success in education is indisputable.

This brings me to the minister's statement here today, which, for the record, was filled with half-truths and deliberately murky statistics.

Firstly, let me say how disappointing it is to have a Premier and a minister who are so frightened of losing the next election that they intentionally attempt to dupe Ontario families. I am quite glad that the media called the Premier on his attempt to misinform Ontarians about graduation rates. We hear from our—

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Misinform?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Burlington, there's one that I actually missed, that I should have called you on. I do wish you would tone down the rhetoric and have a more legislative approach to your remarks.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I speak the truth.

I'm quite glad that the media called the Premier on his attempt to misinform Ontarians about—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): No, we're not going to go there. Withdraw that, please.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

We hear from our education stakeholders quite frequently about how this government's determination to meet their artificially high standard of an 85% graduation rate is hurting Ontario students. University of Western Ontario professor Dr. James Côté contends, "Artificially set graduation numbers are merely self-fulfilling benchmarks established largely for political gain and not indicative of any real success." This is what is happening

here today. I think we should reflect on this profound statement by an expert in education. Clearly, the minister's numbers are meaningless. We know that principals are pressured to go behind the backs of teachers and increase grades in order to meet the Premier's expectations. This government has lowered the bar purely for political reasons. Shame on you.

1530

Universities and colleges are continually pleading with the government to do a better job in training and educating our students. Students are graduating without skills needed to succeed at the post-secondary level. The Premier is okay with this as long as he can include them in his undependable statistics. We in the PC Party are not. We believe that students who have not earned a diploma should not receive one. The Premier, on the other hand, is only concerned with meeting his artificially set graduation rate target. It's our youth who are hurt by this, because this government is allowing them to leave high school unprepared.

This government's commitment to social promotion is undermining the education system. Well, you know what? Talk is cheap, and Ontarians won't be deceived by your government playing fast and loose with figures. Education is too important to play petty political games with. The PC caucus is determined to fix what this government has broken.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Response? The member for—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Rosario, be positive.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Let's just take a deep breath again, okay? The member from Trinity-Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I know that some of my long-time colleagues want me to be positive, because they now have Sarah Thomson running against me. She is very concerned that I am just always in opposition, and that if she were in government she would do so much more than Marchese.

I want to try to be as positive as I can. You Liberals are nicer people on the whole—you are—and I like some of you more than others. That's a fact. And it's true, within your limited means and your capacity to give to the educational system, given that you've given so much away to the corporations, including cutting \$1.2 billion in income taxes and \$6 billion in corporate taxes—given that you've done that, as much as you've given to the educational system, you're giving so much away. You are. So I am always troubled by my desire to be nice and to find positive things to say about all of you, individually and collectively, but I struggle; I really do.

When I hear the minister saying, "We have given more than the Conservatives did," in part that is true. Let me tell you some of the problemos that you are leaving behind, because some of you would rather not hear it. I love the minister when she attacks the Tories. "You don't support full-time JK and SK. You want to create a two-tier system," she says of them. When I say to the minister

that parents are fundraising to the tune of \$600 million out of their own pockets through an indirect tax, and that that's creating a two-tier system, she says, "Oh, no, that's not true." So the Tories are creating a two-tier system somehow by not accepting full-time JK and SK, but the Liberals are not creating a two-tier system when they have rich families raising a whole lot of money for their kids and a whole lot of poor families that can't, and in her mind that's not creating a two-tier system. I just don't get it, do you? So how can I be nice? That's the question. When I put to you these real, factual questions and you pretend not to hear them, how can I be nice?

The other problemo, a big one, is that a lot of special education kids are falling through the cracks. We're talking about kids with special needs across Ontario. We are talking kids in Scarborough, kids in Thunder Bay, kids all over in Windsor who are not going through an IPRC—identification placement review committee—because you don't have the professionals to do it. You don't have the experts to do it. What do we do? We let the teachers do it because they're so good at identifying problems, and we'll let them do a little program for those kids.

They can't do it. Not every teacher is a special-education teacher. They can't do it. You are allowing mothers and fathers to suffer on their own, leaving them to their own wits and leaving those poor kids suffering in an integrated classroom where they're not getting the extra help that they desperately need.

Then you say, "We have given more money than any other government in the history of this place." Please. You have to stop me from laughing. You have to help me not to laugh so much here during the day, each and every day.

Then you talk about credit integrity. Look, the OSSTF has been telling us for the last three years that they are feeling the pressure to "adjust failing marks." From the same article, teachers are concerned about a system which "allows late assignments to go unpenalized, plagiarized essays to be rewritten, absolute guidelines to be repeatedly extended, unsubmitted work to be accepted after the semester is over, and obvious failures to be overturned." Some 40% of our high school teachers are telling us, and you don't hear it?

Then you come in this House saying, "Our numbers are going up, and more and more are graduating"? You're not hearing the problems that we have: You're graduating students who are not actually doing very well. Teachers are passing them on because they're under pressure to meet your political obligations. That's the problem. University and college professors are complaining that kids have not improved their literacy levels since whenever. Yet you make it appear like kids are doing better academically year after year.

All that's going up are your numbers, not the skill sets of our students. Please help me to be nice to you. Bring something forward that I can support. Don't do this each and every year. It gets tiring.

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by some good citizens of Cambridge which reads:

“Whereas gasoline prices have increased at alarming rates during the past year; and

“Whereas the high and different gas prices in different areas of Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship on hard-working Cambridge families; and

“Whereas ... promises of Liberal Premier McGuinty adversely affect the trust between Ontarians and their elected representatives;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“(1) That the Ontario McGuinty Liberal government immediately freeze gas prices for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate; and

“(2) That the Ontario McGuinty Liberal government and the federal Martin Liberal government”—

Interjections.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: It’s an old petition. I didn’t say it was up to date.

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

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: —“immediately lower their taxes on gas for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate; and”—

Interjections.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Well, you guys like the high price—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): We’re not in debate here; we’re in petitions. Please, read your petition. On the government side, please listen.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: “(3) That the Ontario McGuinty Liberal government immediately initiate a royal commission to investigate the predatory gas prices charged by oil companies operating in Ontario.”

As I agree with the contents of this petition, I affix my name thereto.

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My petition is to support extending the Ombudsman of Ontario’s jurisdiction to include the Tarion Warranty Corp.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas often when homeowners seek restitution and repairs from the builder and the Tarion Warranty Corp., they encounter an unwieldy and bureaucratic system that often fails to compensate them for the high

cost of repairing these construction defects, while the builder often escapes with impunity;

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

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

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

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

I couldn’t agree more, and I’ll give it to Beau to deliver to the table, and I also sign my name.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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

“Whereas all Ontarians have the right to a safe home environment; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario works to reduce all barriers in place that prevent victims of domestic violence from fleeing abusive situations; and

“Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act does not take into consideration the special circumstances facing a tenant who is suffering from abuse; and

“Whereas those that live in fear for their personal safety and that of their children should not be financially penalized for the early termination of their residential leases;

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

“That Bill 53, the Escaping Domestic Violence Act, 2010, be adopted so that victims of domestic violence be afforded a mechanism for the early termination of their lease to allow them to leave an abusive relationship and find a safe place for themselves and their children to call home.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it via page Emily.

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I have a petition to, “Say no to Highway 407 terminating at Simcoe Street:

“The province’s plan to terminate phase-one construction of Highway 407 at Simcoe Street, Oshawa, is a mistake. It is a plan that does not make economic sense, will create end-of-line gridlock, will be detrimental to our rural community and have a significant negative effect on

commuters, businesses, tourism, public transit, the historic hamlet of Columbus and all citizens of Durham region.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend the Highway 407 extension eastward and not terminate it at Simcoe Street.”

I’m certainly in agreement with this. I hope it works this time.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Pat Hoy: “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 serving 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 pass it to page Oliver.

PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas supported-living residents in southwestern and eastern Ontario were subjected to picketing outside their homes during labour strikes in 2007 and 2009; and

“Whereas residents and neighbours had to endure megaphones, picket lines, portable bathrooms and shining lights at all hours of the day and night on their streets; and

“Whereas individuals with intellectual disabilities and organizations who support them fought for years to break down barriers and live in inclusive communities; and

“Whereas Bill 83 passed second reading in the Ontario Legislature on October 28, 2010;

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

“That the Liberal government quickly schedule hearings for Sylvia Jones’s Bill 83, the Protecting Vulnerable People Against Picketing Act, to allow for public input.”

I obviously support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Simon.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition 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 in support and send it to the desk with Michael.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr. John O’Toole: It’s important that we had a visitation today from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, and this petition applies to that.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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 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” our beloved Oak Ridges moraine.

I’m pleased to sign it, support it and present it to Alexandra.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today from Pam Hillis from 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 will sign this petition and give it to page Braden.

PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Frank Klees: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas supported-living residents in southwestern and eastern Ontario were subjected to picketing outside of their homes during labour strikes in 2007 and 2009; and

“Whereas residents and neighbours had to endure megaphones, picket lines, portable bathrooms and shining lights at all hours of the day and night on their streets; and

“Whereas individuals with intellectual disabilities and the organizations that support them fought for years to break down barriers and live in inclusive communities; and

“Whereas Bill 83 passed second reading in the Ontario Legislature on October 28, 2010;

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

“That the Liberal government quickly schedule hearings for Sylvia Jones’s Bill 83, the Protecting Vulnerable People Against Picketing Act, to allow for public hearings.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition in full support of its intent.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: “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’ll sign this and send it along with page Holly.

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ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

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

“Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario’s economy and deserves investment;

“Whereas PC MPP Bob Bailey”—my seatmate—“has introduced a significant tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural goods to food banks, helping farmers, food banks and people in need; and

“Whereas over 25 million pounds of fresh produce is either disposed of or plowed back into Ontario’s fields each year while food banks across Ontario struggle to feed those in need;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call MPP Bob Bailey’s private member’s bill, Bill 78, the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, to committee immediately for consideration and then on to third reading and implementation without delay.”

I agree with the petition. I thank the Food for All Food Bank in Prescott for providing it to me, and I’ll send it to the table with page Oliver.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John O’Toole: It’s a real pleasure. I have another petition from a group of my constituents in the riding of Durham that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values;

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

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

“That the Minister of the Environment”—he’s here today—“revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared” immediately “until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the” adverse

“health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines in the province of Ontario.”

I'm pleased to sign and support it and give it to Holly Rose, one of the pages here on her second-last day.

OPPOSITION DAY

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS STRATEGY

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, in recognition of the crisis that Ontario families are facing in finding mental health and addictions treatment for their loved ones, particularly children, calls on the McGuinty government to table a mental health and addictions plan that reflects the recommendations made by the select committee, within 60 days.

It's addressed to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mrs. Elliott has moved opposition day number 2. Debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: First, I want to thank the member for Whitby–Oshawa, our Ontario PC deputy leader and health critic, for bringing this important motion here today. It was her commitment to Ontario families that led to the creation of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions in 2008. Together with the member for Dufferin–Caledon, on the other side of me, they helped produce a report on mental health and addictions that was unanimously approved by the Legislature this fall. I commend both of my colleagues for their outstanding leadership on this important issue.

The select committee then sat for 18 months. They heard from 200 concerned Ontario families and travelled from Thunder Bay to Windsor, Sioux Lookout to Ottawa and all places in between. The report made 23 recommendations to improve access to mental health and addiction services in Ontario, calling for, among other things: an assessment of acute care psychiatric beds for children and adults by region; that health care providers and staff are given proper tools to have a greater sensitivity of the mental health and addictions needs of their patients; and a task force to review Ontario's mental health legislation.

Let's consider why this is all important. Imagine being the parent of a teenaged girl who suffers from a mental illness like paranoid schizophrenia. She is prone to lashing out, becomes violent for no apparent reason and has become addicted to prescription drugs. Imagine that family struggling to find a way to navigate a system far too bureaucratic and filled with red tape to allow proper access to the care that their daughter desperately needs. You'd stay awake at night worrying that once she turns 19 years old there is no easy transition from youth to adult services; in fact, quite the opposite. You know, as a mom or dad, that there's a good chance she's going to

struggle to find employment, to find housing, to find the health care that she needs. Sadly, the people who struggle with mental health and addictions issues often commit crimes to fuel their drug habits and end up in jail.

The facts are that mental illness is the strongest contributing factor in youth suicide. Sadly, in our province today, 110 children and youth commit suicide in Ontario each year.

Often those who suffer do so in silence, like Joey Votto of Etobicoke, who was forced to take time off baseball after suffering from depression following the sudden death of his father. He got the help he needed from friends and family and went on to become the 2010 National League MVP. And then there's Clara Hughes, who was living in Hamilton when depression nearly ended her Olympic dreams. But again, with support she was able to battle back. She became the only woman ever to win multiple medals in both the summer and winter games and is now tied for the most medals ever won by any Canadian. Both these success stories and the struggles of the families are the reason Ontario needs a real, thoughtful mental health and addictions plan.

The report on mental health and addictions was adopted by this House 168 days ago, yet it sits gathering dust in the Minister of Health's office. That is no way to show respect for the caregivers, the families and those who suffer far too often and far too long in silence.

Today we ask the McGuinty government to join the Ontario PC call for a real plan for mental health and addictions in Ontario. Families who face a crisis in finding help for their children and loved ones need a helping hand and they need relief. I look forward to support from the members opposite for the motion standing in the name of the member for Whitby–Oshawa to do the right thing and table a plan in this Legislature that reflects the recommendations made by the select committee, and to do it within 60 days.

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

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank the members of the select committee for the important work they did in developing their report. Most importantly, I want to thank the Ontarians who lent their voices, shared their experiences and gave the committee important insight into the needs of those with mental health challenges.

The select committee was established and at the time trumpeted as a non-partisan effort, an example of co-operation and collaboration working towards a common goal. But today we see that the Hudak-Harris Tories can't help but dismantle the spirit behind the intent of what was a non-partisan endeavour.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: The members are well aware that addressing the issue by way of an opposition day motion is not in keeping with the traditions of this House which would allow for an issue to be profiled by all parties in a collaborative way. It appears that the opposition is now attempting to take credit for the shared efforts of the select committee.

Most appalling is that today we saw the flippant attitude by the Leader of the Opposition—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Simcoe North.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: —the attitude that he has towards individuals and families affected by addictions. To trivialize a serious disease in order to get a headline published demonstrated a lack of empathy and real understanding of a very serious issue. In fact, Pat Capponi, the lead facilitator of Voices from the Street and a psychiatric survivor, said, “The travesty of the Leader of the Opposition using the public meltdown of Charlie Sheen as a joke, when removing stigma remains a key challenge, demonstrates his lack of understanding of the issue and a lack of consideration for those who are suffering. We are not a joke,” she said, “we are people, and we deserve better leadership, especially at this critical time.”

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The opposition cannot, on the same day, try to take leadership on an important issue and at the same time further stigmatize people who are already struggling with addictions across the province.

Our government has come together to help those affected by mental health challenges through the extensive work that we have done and are doing to create a plan. Unlike the opposition, we will have one of those. The member for Whitby–Oshawa knows that we’re working on a comprehensive, 10-year mental health and addictions strategy, for she was copied on a February 2 letter from my colleague the Honourable Deb Matthews, who updated her on a comprehensive plan.

In the letter, Minister Matthews explained that she, through her minister’s advisory group, had heard from over 1,000 delegates to help guide the advice. In addition to this important work, my own ministry has completed a mapping exercise which provided information on needs, services, funding and wait times across the province—because our government believes in evidence-based policy.

We have an abundance of excellent information that’s informing a complete, comprehensive, 10-year mental health and addictions strategy, and it is incredibly important that we get this right. It is our intention, as confirmed by both the Premier and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, that this strategy, which we intend to be both thoughtful, comprehensive and reflective of all the advice we have received, will be delivered this spring at the latest, not according to an arbitrary and obviously partisan motion.

The fact that the opposition want to force an arbitrary deadline on something that is so important further demonstrates their lack of commitment to men, women and, most importantly, children and families who are depending on the vital outcomes that this strategy will provide.

I can remember when the last PC government implemented a children’s mental health funding freeze for their

entire two terms of office. Our government is the first government in more than 20 years to actually demonstrate a commitment to enhancing child and youth mental health services. After so many years of neglect under the previous government, I’m proud to say that it’s our government that provided two base funding increases, an additional \$64 million. We now invest approximately \$400 million for child and youth mental health. We also invested \$5.9 million in the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health.

Children’s health advocates acknowledge the progress we are making. Children’s Mental Health Ontario recently wrote that our government has “shown a commitment to transform the child and youth mental health system in more fundamental ways that would improve accessibility and outcomes.”

Our government knows that there is more to do to strengthen mental health and addiction supports for all Ontarians. We are committed to children, including those who are the most vulnerable. We are listening and will continue to listen to experts, front-line providers, parents and those with lived experience.

We look forward to sharing our plan, a plan that will reflect all that we have heard and that will reflect and build on some of the good works already under way in our province—like the doubled funding for the Ontario child and youth telepsychiatry program, which allows for over 1,400 consultations in rural communities; like the work we have funded by the Parents for Children’s Mental Health and Kinark’s family navigator pilot project, which will provide information and supports to parents; like the anti-stigma program across the province called The New Mentality, which engages youth to speak about mental health; and Working Together for Kids’ Mental Health in four communities to help support professionals across sectors to better understand, effectively identify and appropriately respond to early mental health needs.

But we know that there is much more work to do to improve the lives of children and families facing mental health issues to provide them with the supports and services they need to live full and rich lives. I can tell you that on this side of the House, we have our sleeves rolled up and we are doing the work that needs to be done to make a real and meaningful difference in the lives of Ontario children and their families.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party. We are in full support of this motion by our colleagues from the Progressive Conservative Party, and in fact really celebrate the fact that the member from Whitby–Oshawa has brought this forward.

It’s absolutely tragic what’s happening in Ontario right now, particularly in light of this committee that did such good work and brought in 23 recommendations that have fallen on deaf ears on the government side. The government says they’re working on it. They’ve had eight years, and they’ve had seven months since the com-

mittee gave its report. We're about eight weeks away from this House rising, for heaven's sake. When is the action going to happen? Clearly, it's going to be an election promise. We can see that one coming. But our children who suffer from mental health issues and addictions in our communities needed action eight years ago, and they're still waiting.

I recall a woman who came here as part of a group called the Tragically OHIP. They were talking about the plight of their children and the lack of ability for families to get help for their children. In her particular case, her daughter was suicidal and suffered from depression and addictions. Certainly, this is a common profile for many of our youth. This was a middle-class family who owned their house and didn't have a mortgage. By the end of the treatment spectrum for their daughter, they had a huge mortgage on their house because they had to send their daughter to a private facility to get treatment for her. That is a common story. There's really nothing in Ontario right now that would have filled her needs. This is tragic. There's one example.

Victim Services Toronto were here the other day asking why they haven't had a cost-of-living increase in 20 years. This is a front-line service that deals with victims of crimes and domestic abuse. Again, in 20 years, they haven't had a raise, and they're not going to get one from this government.

More to the point—and this is a point I want to make right up front—not only is this government not taking positive action; this is a government that is slashing the services we have, such as they are, which are pathetic to begin with in terms of the amount we could have and should have.

OPSEU was here yesterday. They held a press conference at Queen's Park, delivered through our leader, Andrea Horwath—stacks of cards asking the McGuinty government to walk the talk on mental health, because they know there's an epidemic of service cuts in mental health across the province.

Here are just some of the cuts to existing mental health services:

Ontario's only residential rehab program for children and youth, Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences in Whitby, is cutting 28 child and youth counsellors, under the watch of this government. This program has successfully treated children who have had between three and seven prior hospitalizations before ending up in Ontario Shores. These child and youth counsellor positions are essential, as you can imagine, to the well-being of their young clients.

In Sarnia, a 14-bed facility for girls is about to shut its doors.

Children's Mental Health Ontario represents more than 90 community-based mental health agencies. At pre-budget hearings, they told this government that parents are told they will have to wait 7.5 months, on average, for services. Can you imagine what that means in the life of a family? What family who has the means to do so is going to wait seven and a half months for services for a

suicidal child—I'd love to hear an answer from this government.

Because of lack of funding, children's mental health agencies are expecting to lose the capacity to serve 2,000 children in the next year alone. That's under the watch of the McGuinty Liberal government.

We're not even talking about proactive, positive measures; we're talking about a government that's bringing in cuts to services.

Cuts to mental health services are also happening in London, in St. Thomas, in Brockville and in Toronto at CAMH.

This is dreadful. This is a state of emergency. This is appalling. This is immoral. This is unethical. This is a situation right now where children are suffering. One might even say that children may be dying because of the lack of care—7.5 months for children with addiction and mental health issues, with suicidal ideation and other problems? You know, we were hopeful, the New Democratic Party. We were hopeful when we saw for the first time, it seems to me—since I've been elected, anyway—a real all-party committee that travelled, that extensively held hearings; 18 months of work this committee put in.

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In this situation, where we're looking at cuts and we're looking at problems, we're looking at lack of coordination and other issues—and, of course, they heard from Ontarians across the province about the lack of services for their children and others with mental health and addiction issues. I'm going to talk about the others with whom I've had personal experience within my own riding of Parkdale–High Park. Some 18 months of work this committee did. We were extremely excited about the recommendations, all 23 of them, that the all-party committee agreed on. Yet what did we get? What did we get from this government? We got a little bit of action. We got Bill 101, the Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act. But I have to tell you that even in this one case the work was rushed. It didn't consult with relevant stakeholders and it's left with many, many gaps in the supposed solution. I hear about them all the time from front-line workers. That's all they've done—that's all they've done. What about the other 22 recommendations? They didn't get that one right, but what about everything else that this committee looked at?

The Progressive Conservatives are absolutely correct: What about a timeline for you as government? What about a timeline for action on your own committee's recommendations? Was all that work for nothing? Imagine the taxpayers' dollars that went into travel time, time away. That could have been money spent for front-line services. That could have been money spent, and it should have been the groundwork for a government policy that acted on all 23 of those recommendations. In fact, in Parkdale–High Park we were very excited about it because we have our own Parkdale drug strategy program that's been bringing together front-line workers for those who have mental health and addiction issues for years now. We've been meeting. We've had educational

events. We've done, after Senator Kirby's impetus, five-cent-a-drink events. We've done a great deal, and mainly and mostly what we were hoping would happen is that we would upload, in a sense, some of the good work that had been done at the city of Toronto in looking at a response to addictions—and they have a four-pronged approach.

We were looking and hoping that this would be uploaded to the province because the province had no policy for addiction whatsoever. Of course, addictions and mental health are twin sisters, if you will. Then, when we saw the report, we thought that finally something was happening. In fact, I proudly brought in the committee's report with the recommendations to our Parkdale drug strategy. Around that table sat CAMH, St. Joe's, St. Christopher House, Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre and many, many others of our service providers. They were excited about it: 23 recommendations. They all felt this was extremely positive, a great step forward. Then they waited, and they waited, and they waited, and they're still waiting.

We're used to waiting in Parkdale–High Park because we've been waiting a long, long time. Remember, Parkdale is where, when the institutions were, in their words of the day, setting patients free, often with a prescription and no money, to go out into the community. Even now, we have front-line caregivers who say they don't even have enough beds for those who are serious suicide risks in my community. Anybody here who has ever worked in the field of mental health and addictions will know that that halcyon day sometimes comes in the life of somebody who has been severely addicted to drugs or alcohol when they say, "You know what? I want to get help. I want to stop this. I want to stop this downward spiral and I need help. I know I can't do it alone." Many of the homeless folk that I used to have in my church—we had a whole separate service for people with mental health and addictions issues, and many of them would say, "Okay, I'm ready." Then you get on the phone and try to find them a bed in a detox centre. If you were lucky enough to do that—and, trust me, there are precious few beds for women at all in any centre, but if you were lucky enough to find them that bed, then the next step is rehabilitation. Seven-month, eight-month waits, if we were lucky. Of course, if you have money, you can get immediate care, but for most people who've been on the spiral of addiction, either alcohol or drugs, they don't have the money to pay for private care. They need public care, and it isn't there. I can tell you it's not there, and it's certainly not there with immediacy.

You know what happens to most of them? I can tell you. I'm speaking on behalf of the 11th and 14th divisions right now in my ridings. I can tell you that the police become the front-line caregivers for those people, if you can call them that, and then a lot of those folk end up in prisons. I don't have the figures at my fingertips to tell you how much it costs to imprison someone every year, but I can tell you that this is not the compassionate response to mental health and addiction issues. That is

what's happening: Most of those folk who are in a spiral, who end up homeless, end up doing petty crime, end up in emergency wards, end up in prisons—prisons that usually cost in excess of \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year to house them there. They don't get better; they get worse, and then they're out on the street again.

Even the police have told me, "We're sick of this. Where are the beds? Where's the rehabilitation? Where is the response of a compassionate, caring community to people who suffer from mental health and addictions issues? Why are we the front-line service response team for those who get themselves into serious trouble?" And I said, "We're making progress at Queen's Park. We had an all-party—truly all-party—committee that came out with some excellent recommendations," and they said, "Great. When are they going to be put into place?"

We waited and we waited and we're waiting, and what do we get? We get one small little bill that's badly, badly written, and that's had—and I can tell you in my community from some service providers—some pushback already. All those recommendations, 18 months, all that time, and this is all we get. No wonder the Progressive Conservative Party is giving a timeline to this government. No wonder, because lives are at stake here. Lives are at stake, like my friends whose daughter had to be sent out of province, but I can tell you that she's the lucky one because her parents had means. They could mortgage their house; they could send her away to a private facility that cost a fortune.

I can tell you that when you walk around the streets of Toronto, you will see the evidence of this government's inaction. You will see folks sleeping on grates. You will see people who are too frightened and too sick to go to shelters. They can't last there; they get beaten up, so they prefer to sleep on grates. If you go to any church in the downtown core you'll see out-of-the-cold programs; you'll see food banks. The numbers are hugely up. We now have more food banks in the GTA than McDonald's. This is the evidence of this government's inaction. You see deep cuts to those service providers that are still out there. You see people, like OPSEU here, asking for action and getting none. That's the reality of care, or lack of it, to those with problems.

I think of many who have lost their lives over the years, many whom my church worked with directly, one on one. Their names are important. They were real people. They had real lives. They had real stories, and they ended—and they needn't have; it was needless deaths—because, again, the facilities were not there. The facilities were not available, and the facilities are still not available.

I'm speaking of downtown Toronto. I'm not even speaking of the extreme lack of response in northern Ontario and the First Nations communities, where addiction rates are soaring. I'm not even talking about those. I'm talking about downtown, relatively wealthy Toronto, where even here you can't get the help you need if your child or your senior or anyone gets seriously ill in your family.

I'm going to leave some time for the member from Kenora–Rainy River, because I know that he will want to be part of this conversation, particularly talking about First Nations and the northern gap in care. But suffice to say, two points: Number one, we support this; of course we do. We wish it wasn't six months; it should be three months. They need to act in the next eight weeks actually, if we're going to get any action out of them.

1620

Also to say—and this is the important point—that not only is this government not acting on the 23 recommendations, but they're actually making cuts to services that we already have. Pathetic and small though they may be in terms of the immensity of the problem, this government is making cuts, and they know they are. OPSEU was here telling them they were, and provided lots and lots of evidence to that effect.

So please—I know they won't, but the plea goes out for all those families, for all of those individuals who suffer from mental health and addiction issues across the province, for all of those who can't get the care they need, for all of those who end up, more expensively—because this is, of course, penny-wise and pound-foolish again, which is what this government is famous for: Don't spend the money now, but spend the money later on prisons and the justice system and emergency care. Don't spend the money where it's really needed.

Please act on your own recommendations. Do it now. Don't make an election promise; we know how those go. Do it now, pass this, and get busy.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Isn't it interesting? Isn't it interesting that after the Minister of Children and Youth Services speaks—and, quite frankly, I would be a little embarrassed if I was a Liberal after hearing her speak—not another Liberal member is willing to stand up on the record on this issue? I was really disappointed that the minister—

Interjections.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I was very disappointed that the minister chose to say, “We don't want a deadline.” Why don't you want a deadline? What are you scared of? It's a very benign motion. It says that we want a plan. We're not calling for immediate action; we just want to see your plan. Sixty days—you've already said that you want to have something come forward this spring. Do the math. I don't understand what you're afraid of.

If you don't want to do it because it's a PC motion, do it for the families who have been waiting for services, do it for the families and the children, and those who are saying, “Not only do you not have any treatment options available, but we can't even assess your child for the next two years.” Do it for them, because, quite frankly, when we were participating in the select committee, those are the families we heard from, and you know because there are members sitting across the aisle who were part of this select committee.

We were proud of this work. Every single word in this report was discussed, was debated and ultimately was agreed upon, so why are we so worried about a 60-day deadline? What is preventing you, other than, quite frankly, the pending election, that you won't table something that makes the families and children think you're actually going to do something about mental health and addictions services in Ontario? Plain and simple: Mental health services in Ontario are all across the board. The services you get depend on where you live. It's not right, it's not fair, and families are fed up. We need to start acting on some of these reports that have come forward.

Seven months ago, the select committee brought forward their report. The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care at that point said, “Wait. I want to see the ministerial advisory committee report.” Fair enough. The ministerial advisory report—three months ago. You now have the reports, the access to the experts that you so desperately wanted before you made any reaction. Seven months, three months—how much more time do you need? We're simply asking for you to table your plan in the next 60 days.

Families don't know where to turn right now. They are at a loss. They saw some light when the select committee brought forward their report, and we talked about how it was all-party support. They saw some light when the ministerial advisory report came forward. Why can't we now say, “We have the information and we have the resources. Let's actually bring forward some action plans”? The wait-lists are too long and parents are frustrated.

As I said, the motion today is simple. Just table your plan—60 days. It's not an unreasonable request. We all need deadlines to make sure that we actually bring forward our plans and show people.

The minister's reaction, saying, “We don't want a deadline from the Progressive Conservatives,” I find offensive. Fine; don't do it for the Progressive Conservatives. Do it for the families. Do it for the organizations—

Interjection: Do it for the children.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Do it for the children. It's time to stop stalling. It's so frustrating.

Here in Ontario, we have more individuals with mental health and addictions issues than we do with cancer and heart disease combined. Mental health and addictions issues need the same serious attention that we are giving to cancer and heart disease. Why are we treating them differently? Why are we always asking children and families who have mental health and addictions issues to stand at the back of the line? “Just wait; we'll get to you eventually.” Well, you haven't. That's the frustration. That's why you see private companies like Bell stepping up with their campaign “Let's Talk.”

It's time for government to actually step up and lead. We've seen the private industry do it. We've seen the families lobby together and share their stories—which, quite frankly, are very personal stories and I'm sure very challenging for them to share—with the committee, with the public, to make sure that the awareness is there and that the stigma starts to dissipate.

I don't understand. We have to stop making excuses as government, as legislators. We have an estimated 200,000 Ontarians suffering in silence who can't afford to wait any longer. We're not alone asking for a plan. We're not alone asking for action. Just do it, and do the right thing. We deserve it, the children of Ontario deserve it, and it's time.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: This past Sunday, I was at the annual police communion breakfast, and the Lieutenant Governor, David Onley, spoke. He spoke about the critical need to start to pay more attention and to make sure that people with disabilities get the support they need. I spoke after him, and I was inspired by what the Lieutenant Governor said. I said, "You know, Lieutenant Governor, one of the groups in our society—amongst us in our families and neighbours, there's the hidden disability issue, where people with mental disabilities, mental challenges, are silent and are not visible. So we have got to understand that when we talk about people with challenges and disabilities, there are also those who suffer in silence, and those are the ones we've got to start to pay more attention to."

I just want to say that this is not about unions, it's not about pay raises and it's not about political parties and their motions. It's about—and I think a lot of members, in honesty, have said that. I do agree with you. There are, undeniably, heart-wrenching stories with families, children, elderly people. We all, as MPPs, see this. But I think it has to be understood that all of us have an obligation to start to pay incredibly more attention to this issue that, in our rushing-by days, we don't and we haven't.

Sure, it's the job of the opposition to push this government. The only thing I don't accept is—look, I sat here for eight years when the other party was in power. I can't remember one instance that this was ever raised in eight years. So, sure, you're not perfect—and remember that. We are trying our very level best to try to put some resources into it.

One member talked about cuts. I know that much more resources are needed. It would be endless. But I think we've doubled the amount of money since 2003 that we've put into helping people with disabilities—doubled the amount of money that has been invested in people. In 2003, there was \$399 million paid for community mental health services; in this past year, there was \$682 million—from \$399 million to \$682 million. This is another illustration of how difficult and—even with that extra resource, we know that we have to put in more.

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One member said, "Well, you just passed the narcotics bill, and you rushed it. You didn't put enough into it." Now all of a sudden we're saying, "Oh, you've got to rush this right away because we have got to get this before us." This is sort of talking out of both sides of your mouth.

This is two penetrating series of issues that we've got to deal with, and the complexity—the human complexity.

It's not the union complexity. It's not the wages complexity. It's the families, the mothers and fathers who are 80 years old and have a 45-year-old mentally disabled child at home. It's still their child. How do you help that 45-year-old? How do you help the six-year-old? How do you help the people with language disabilities, people who are suffering multiple disabilities besides their mental disability?

The all-party committee did great work. We all know that. Let's keep going down that road that we're on, rather than starting to diverge into petty partisanship. Dare we do that?

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes, you certainly do know about that.

So let us get this work done, as the minister said. There are many dedicated people in the vast variety of service providers. I know I have one great organization in my riding, Delisle Youth Services. They just opened up a new drop-in centre, as a result of a Trillium grant, at Yonge and Eglinton. There are incredible people who want to do this work. We are trying to do what is right for them. We are trying to do it in a comprehensive, lasting way that's not rushed and not piecemeal, but really works at the fundamental level of people—mothers, children, fathers, grandfathers—and not just unions and wages. Let's roll up our sleeves and work together on this critically human issue that we all have a responsibility to do something about.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a privilege to rise today to speak on a subject that is of such great importance to the people of Ontario, including in my riding of Leeds–Greenville. I can think of few issues in our society today that touch so many lives as mental health issues.

I have to say off the top that we are making progress in lifting the shroud of silence that for too long has kept those suffering with mental illness alone and in the dark. The outstanding work of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions was a major step forward, and I applaud all the members for their efforts. They set aside partisan differences because they recognized that the situation out there has to change when it comes to understanding, diagnosing and treating mental illness.

Yet despite all the work by the committee, it's clear that this government just doesn't get it. After all, today we're debating a motion by my colleague the member for Whitby–Oshawa for one reason: The government has failed to grasp the opportunity by acting on the groundbreaking work of the committee. Seven months after the all-party committee tabled its report and the 23 critical recommendations in it, we still haven't seen a plan from the government opposite. I can't understand their reluctance.

Certainly, when I held a community mental health round table in my riding on October 15 of last year, the message from the 80-plus people in the room that day was that it was time to act on the committee's recom-

mendations. If ever we in this place were to question how big an issue mental health and addictions treatment in Ontario is right now, the turnout at my event certainly was a clear answer that we had better get moving. I was so proud to have two caucus colleagues, the member for Whitby–Oshawa and the member for Dufferin–Caledon, with me that day as we welcomed a cross-section of those on the front lines in mental health care in Leeds–Grenville. What we heard from people that day was that the system in place now to help those suffering from mental illness works not because of government and the support of government, but in spite of government.

Workers all across my riding, including those from my local branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, are doing great things to treat those, but too many people are falling through the cracks. People are going undiagnosed and untreated. Yes, it's terrible in society. We're paying a price, but we need to get moving. We have to have some action from the Legislative Assembly.

With this motion, we're calling on the government to give them the support structure they need by coming up with a plan to implement those 23 recommendations. Quite simply, what my two colleagues who were in Brockville with me heard that day was that communities are already in crisis and we can't afford to let those recommendations in that report gather dust on the shelf.

For my part, the people in Leeds–Grenville, when it comes to mental health services, have been pretty lucky. We've had a long history of providing treatment. We've had a great facility, the Brockville Mental Health Centre, in our community. It has been there, as many people know, for more than a century. We're so concerned with what's happening in Brockville with some of the jobs that are being moved or left in limbo, some of the services that are being transferred to the facility, but I've sat and I've talked to officials of the South East LHIN and asked them to step up and ensure that those facilities and those programs are going to remain for those who are in need in my riding. Sadly, the LHIN has been silent on all of my requests.

Frankly, when it comes to the Brockville Mental Health Centre, we're not unique in terms of getting the cold shoulder from this government. In fact, I was looking at a recent Brockville Recorder and Times newspaper story from February 15, 2002. Mr. McGuinty was the opposition leader when he visited Brockville looking for votes. He was making all kinds of promises, including one to complete the correctional centre and forensic unit currently under construction at the Brockville Mental Health Centre: "I would honour both those commitments. I'm encouraging the government to get moving on these things." That's what he said. Like so many things with this Premier, he says one thing and does another. I know it's unparliamentary. I'd just love to use that "lie" word but I can't and I won't. I'll withdraw—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): You will withdraw it. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Clark: But you know what? It's not too late for him to save face. One of the many crises we're

confronted with in mental health is the number of women in Ontario jails who suffer from a mental illness. A study found that just over 18% of the nearly 9,000 inmates in provincial jails had some psychiatric disorder. Another troubling statistic: Of the 575 female prisoners, a startling 31% were mentally ill. Unfortunately, the resources to treat them are out there, and that's why our community, led by Senator Bob Runciman, MP Gord Brown and myself, the chamber of commerce, the Brockville Mental Health Centre and OPSEU are all working together on this secure treatment centre for women. I'm calling on the government to do the right thing, to support our initiative, but more importantly, get moving on the select committee report.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise on this issue today, and to be honest with you, I'm of two minds. Any chance any of us have to talk about the work that needs to be done on mental health and addictions is an opportunity that we should seize, so I'm thankful that this issue is getting the debate, is getting extra debate time, that we're talking about it, because to be frank, as much as we like to go at each other as the opposition and the government and we like to criticize each other, nobody gets into heaven on the work that they've done in the past on mental health and addictions in Ontario. It's that simple. When we went out and talked to people around the province of Ontario—and I thank the members who served with me from all parties—people told us some pretty rotten stuff, those things that they dealt with on a daily basis.

We were able—for a few months anyway, for 18 months, maybe more—to set aside the partisan differences that often scar other issues, that often don't allow progress to take place on other issues. We were able to set that aside. So when this comes back, I guess it's the non-partisan experiment we had is meeting the harsh reality of partisan politics today. That's a shame, because I think what else came out of that exercise was that people not only liked what we did and what we came up with, they liked the way we conducted ourselves. In fact, if truth be known, I think they'd like this place to be conducted a lot more like the select committee was conducted. I think people felt that the input they provided was listened to, was acted upon, and what colour or what stripe you happen to be was simply not important.

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I really find that we're getting to a point in this where I'm still able to maintain a level of optimism because I know that the public expects us to conduct ourselves in the future on this issue the way that we conducted ourselves in the past.

Things are going the way that I anticipated they would go. I was Chair of the committee. I was able to table the report on behalf of the committee in the Legislature in the fall of last year. We knew we were going to get the report from the advisory committee around Christmas; I think it came in a week before Christmas. And we knew

that the Ministry of Health would then take both of those reports and come back with a plan in the spring. The minister, on numerous occasions, in public, has committed to do just that. Whether that happens on the 49th day or whether it happens on the 63rd day is really irrelevant to me. What I want to make sure is that it happens and that it happens in the spring of this year.

It seems to me that not one member of this House, I would hope, would be able to not support the motion, including or excluding the “within 60 days.” I think the first part of the motion we have before us is supportable by anybody in this House. I think we’ve all said it ourselves. If there’s a bright spot in this whole thing, this could be the first election in Ontario history where you’ve got three parties competing for the electorate’s votes based on what they’re going to do about mental health and addiction. That’s got to be good for the field and that’s got to be good for the province. More importantly, that’s got to be good for the people who have dealt with these issues in silence for far, far too long under all three parties.

The finger-pointing that’s going on, I’m not sure if it’s needed. I know it’s the way things are done around here but I’m not sure if it’s a way things should be done in the future. You talk about people disengaging from government. I think the select committee not only offered some hope to the people who were dealing specifically with mental health and addictions issues; I think it offered some hope for the future of government as well.

I’m anticipating that the minister is going to honour her commitment to bring forward a plan that’s based on the report that came out of our committee. I expect that she will do it this spring. She fully intends to do it this spring, as I understand it. Whether that’s on June 3 or whether it’s on May 20, I think that that’s not really the argument for this House.

At the end of the day, what I think I will do is I will support this motion. Having said that, if the report comes back and it’s a wonderful plan and it comes back on the 64th day, I won’t lose any sleep that it came back on the 64th day. What I would lose sleep over is if we got a report issued or a plan issued that wasn’t a substantial plan and wasn’t a plan that was able to meet the needs of the people in the province of Ontario, who have told us that they won’t tolerate this any longer.

I would ask all members to maybe keep in mind that what got us to this date wasn’t partisan politics, it was working together, and I hope we can continue to do that.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I think we all realize we’ve got a motion here that all of us, in my view, can get behind: “to table a mental health and addictions plan that reflects the recommendations made by the select committee within 60 days.”

Of course, it’s incumbent again to recognize the hard work of this committee, pulling together so much research and information—years of research. There were 230 presenters and 300 submissions. The committee

toured some facilities and put together 20 recommendations in what I consider quite a comprehensive report. We’re asking government to respond to these recommendations and stressing the importance of a comprehensive mental health and addictions approach for Ontario.

Just before Christmas I attended a Trillium announcement in my area. It was a little over \$62,000 for the creation of a fundraiser, a coordinator for our local branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association. It impressed on me, just within the riding I represent, the intricate web of addictions and mental health services and drug-related programming that is available and is also very confusing for people who need these kinds of services. As the committee pointed out, one of the main problems of Ontario’s mental health and addictions system is that there is, in fact, no coherent system. We do know there is a tangled web of services. There’s 10 different ministries involved, 440 services for children’s mental health, 330 for adult mental health or community mental health, 150 substance abuse treatment agencies and 50 problem gambling centres.

I know that because I was involved in setting up a lot of these programs. I spent 20 years in this business, in treatment service development, specifically with addictions alone. Unfortunately, people fall through the cracks. They have trouble figuring it out. They don’t have access to adequate assessment, referral or coordination. They get frustrated and give up. They can’t navigate this kind of a system.

There is a solution coming from the committee: Put together an umbrella organization; Mental Health and Addictions Ontario is the name that’s been given to it. Again, having spent 20 years in this business with an organization that’s now called the Canadian Centre for Addiction and Mental Health—at that time, I was on the addictions wing with the Addiction Research Foundation over here at 33 Russell Street. I was just on Russell Street this afternoon. I can tell you that during those 20 years, as a research organization we tried just about everything.

Reflecting on those years, what I feel is of uppermost importance in this field, and specifically the addictions field, is prevention: disease prevention, health promotion. It’s cheaper than treatment. Treatment is reactive. Treatment can be an endless money pit. It’s very important, in my view, to take that position. It’s difficult to push that in a Ministry of Health, for example, or a ministry of illness that focuses on treatment and focuses on illness. I think maybe 1% goes towards prevention.

So I commend the work. I stress the approach of prevention. Get out in front of this rather than cleaning up the mess afterwards. If this government doesn’t do anything about it, I’m pretty sure the next government will.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I’m privileged and honoured to enter the debate about a very important issue: mental health and addiction.

First, before I start, I want to congratulate my colleague the member from Oakville for his leadership in

this matter. I had the privilege and honour to go with him a few months back to an event at the London Convention Centre. There was a convention about mental health and addiction, and he was the keynote speaker. I listened to his speech. It was an amazing speech. Many people applauded him and came and talked to him about this issue, about his findings and the committee's findings.

I know this shouldn't be a partisan issue, and I'm saddened to see the opposition parties using this platform to attack the government and use it as a political wedge and also engage the vulnerable people among us in society in this political debate.

In 2003, before I got elected, when I was running for office back then, I remember the ex-leader of the Liberal opposition, Mrs. McLeod, came to London. We went to a mental health and addiction centre and talked about this issue because it was very important to us. I believe the head of the centre back then asked us to release a report that the Conservative government refused to release and was holding on to. When we got elected, we went back to the very same place with the report. I remember that the head of the place brought a huge box of ice and he started breaking the ice. That was what he wanted. That was symbolic to us. It was a good introduction to deal with mental health issues and addiction in the province of Ontario by releasing the report, which means we were breaking the ice between us and all these agencies across the province of Ontario who had been struggling for a long time to deal with mental health issues.

1650

I still remember, when I was outside this place, a party member who was a minister back then—his solution for the homeless and mentally ill and addicted people on the streets of Toronto and many places across the province of Ontario was for them to be jailed. That's a solution the Conservative Party had in their minds.

This issue is very important to all of us. Let's continue to work together.

I want to commend Mr. Caplan. When he was Minister of Health, he formed a committee to bring all the members from across this place to work together in a non-partisan way to find a solution, to go out to the public, to stakeholders, to specialists across the province of Ontario to find a solution.

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: When the honourable member was speaking, I never said a word. I hope she listens to me.

This is an important issue to me and to all the people in this place—to have a constructive debate. In the end, we're looking for solutions; we're looking for a way to help the vulnerable people among us. We need to help the vulnerable people, the mentally ill and addicted, in the province of Ontario. Our duty as elected officials in this place is to find a permanent solution, not just an overnight solution. That's why the debate is taking place: to have more discussion, because in the end it's our duty and obligation as citizens and elected officials to find a solution for the vulnerable people among us. Again, I'm

sad to see this issue come to this House in a partisan way and as a platform to have the opposition attacking the government and holding them hostage—according to them, in order to release the support tomorrow.

As my colleague Mr. Colle clearly said a few minutes ago, when we came with a bill about drug addiction, they said that we were rushing the bill and that we should study it more and we should do more. Now, when we talk about very important issues, they want it yesterday, not today. We want it not yesterday; we want it a year ago and years before.

It's important to us to find solutions for all the people. It's important to have all the people working together to find a permanent solution, beyond the politics.

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I'm happy to take part in the debate today with respect to this very serious issue, but I find it regrettable that some of the comments that are coming from the members opposite are taking away from the real issue, which is mental health and addictions.

Although mental illness and addiction surrounds us, it remains, for the most part, an invisible issue. We're all aware that it exists, yet almost nothing is being done to address the needs of those suffering from a mental illness or struggling with an addiction.

The province of Ontario is in dire need of improving and ensuring that mental health and addiction services are available to families when they are needed. Sadly, that is not what we have today. Instead, we see families struggling to find care for a loved one, even a child, often just to be placed on a wait-list. Mental health and addiction is all too often the skeleton in the closet, and we have an opportunity to act, in a realistic way, on the recommendations of a very important report.

Here are some disturbing facts: One in five Canadians will experience a mental health illness during their lifetime—that's roughly 500,000 youth—and of these, only one in four will actually get the help they need.

Here's the reality: Mental illness affects everyone. Everyone either knows someone who has a mental illness or may themselves have experienced some form of mental illness in their life. It's time for society to release those seeking help from their perceived shame on these issues.

On December 4, 2008, my colleague the member from Whitby-Oshawa took an enormous step forward in addressing the stigma that surrounds mental illness and addiction. She introduced a resolution to strike an all-party select committee to develop a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy for Ontario. As we know, the resolution did receive unanimous consent, and so the committee began its work. And on August 26, 2010, after tireless hours of work, this select committee released their final report. The report confirmed what mental health experts and stakeholders have been saying for years: that many people fall through the cracks or simply give up looking for help because of the complexity of the current system.

Currently, about 10,000 of our youth are waiting for mental health services. It's immoral to deny these people the help they need when they muster the courage to finally request it. We need to really think about what is happening while these individuals helplessly wait for help that they desperately need, often without hope of receiving it. The wait is actually increasing the severity of their mental illness, because they feel like there's no one out there who cares. They feel isolated.

According to Children's Mental Health Ontario, it takes about six months before 90% of the children and youth identified as suffering are eligible for treatment. Do you know how much a person's situation can deteriorate in six months? We're talking about a person getting the support they need right at the beginning, at a relatively low cost, and comparing it to the potential escalated crisis, maybe even hospitalization, and obviously at a much greater cost. There is a great human cost and a financial cost to doing nothing.

I talk about cost because we all know that our current health care system is unsustainable, and we need to ensure that we do everything possible to keep costs at bay. Prevention and early intervention certainly adhere to this. Our health care professionals and volunteers are stretched to the limit on this issue.

The report recommended the creation of Mental Health and Addictions Ontario, which would be responsible for the planning, coordination and delivery of mental health and addictions services. Under the current system, mental health and addictions are funded and provided by at least 10 different ministries. Addictions programs are especially scarce in Ontario, with most Ontarians having to seek rehabilitation programs outside of our province. This is, of course, not only inconvenient for those who want to support their loved ones at a challenging time and can't do it, but it's also extremely costly and it's often accompanied by long wait-lists.

You simply cannot release a report and give Ontarians who have been waiting for support the hope that change is coming and then do nothing. There are recommendations from the committee's work that should have been implemented by now, that come with little or no cost. I know the government is working on a 10-year comprehensive strategy, but this government has the opportunity to make mental illness visible instead of invisible right now, and that's absolutely the right thing to do.

I sincerely hope that this 10-year plan won't just reiterate the current problems but that it will actually take steps to change them. And I don't mean years from now; I mean immediately. Ontarians with mental illness have been waiting far too long, and they simply should not have to wait any longer. This is a matter of life and death.

I applaud the committee. They set aside their party politics to develop this report, and I encourage the members opposite to once again park their politics at the door and support this motion today.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to take part in this debate for a number of

reasons. But let me start by addressing some of the comments from some of the Liberal members opposite, who seem to feel that if you bring a resolution calling upon the government to state its program or state its plan, somehow this is terrible partisan politics. Well, the last time I checked, governments are elected to govern. Governments are elected to make decisions. Governments are elected to put forward a plan.

1700

The select committee that did this work did incredible work. They really did first-class work in going across this province. They put together a very good report, a report that is detailed, that is thoughtful, that has a sense of history to it and also a sense of vision to it. I think the people of Ontario rightfully expect that something is going to happen from this report, and that's what this resolution is asking for. Having done all of this good work, having gone to community after community, having spoken to some of the people in this province who are the most underserved, the most neglected and, in many cases, the most forgotten, I think there's an onus this government to do something with that.

It's one thing to pat yourself on the back for the production of a good report; it's another thing totally to do something about it. This resolution is asking for this government to finally do something.

I want to speak from the perspective of a particular group of people. I want to speak, first of all, from the perspective of the people in northern Ontario because, probably, no part of the province is more underserved in terms of mental health services than the communities and the people across northern Ontario. Routinely, children from my constituency who need to access mental health services are told, "Well, you'll have to go to Winnipeg for that"—routinely, that happens. Many, many communities simply are not served, or, if children are served, it's sort of an adjunct to something else that a social service agency does. Treatment centres that are here in southern Ontario are not found in my part of the province; they just don't exist. The search for children's psychiatric services or the search even, in some cases, for mental health counsellors is something that will take you four or five hours' travel to even access the most basic of services.

In a province that pats itself on the back and is constantly talking about how well off and wealthy it is, I think most of us would regard that as a travesty, that those kinds of services aren't available in the context of all of the patting on the back and the thumping of the chest. But that is the reality, and that reality is unacceptable.

I think what members are saying is that it's unacceptable for this Legislature to strike a special committee, for that committee to go out and do the research work, come back and present a detailed, thoughtful report, and next to nothing happens with it. Alas, that is the situation we're in.

The only thing we've seen from the government so far is something which speaks to a small sliver of what was

contained in the report—a very small sliver. That small sliver continues to leave out some of the people who are most in need of services. Really, what the government has presented so far is their legislation and their plan dealing with those people who are addicted to certain forms of prescription medicine.

But the plan—even that small sliver—almost totally leaves out aboriginal people in the province, and let me tell you, there is a very, very, very serious addiction problem in a great number of First Nations in this province. For this government to present what it calls a plan to deal with the addiction to prescription medicines but then leave First Nations totally out of that equation is unacceptable as well—totally unacceptable.

The sadness of this is that this problem, in some First Nation communities, is of a crisis proportion: communities that do not have access to addiction programs, communities that don't have access to addiction counselling, communities that don't have access to detox programs, and communities that do not have access to any of the follow-up mental health services that would be part of a strategy of combating the addiction to prescription medicines. First Nations have none of those—none of them. It's not that they have a bit here, a bit there; they have none of them.

Yet when this government brought forward its approach—and I was here the day the minister stood and said, “Oh, this is wonderful and we're really going to respond to the report”—I could not believe that aboriginal people were totally left out of the government's response. It's almost as if some of those aboriginal communities, in this government's mind, are not Ontario citizens. It's almost as if this government thinks that “Ontario citizens” excludes First Nations. As far as I can tell, most of the First Nations were here first, long before us. If we're talking about long-standing citizens, the First Nations are the longest-standing citizens in this province. And the issue for First Nation communities is absolutely critical.

Now, I know someone actually approached the minister of native affairs with this, and his response was, “Well, that's a federal responsibility.” The federal government may have some responsibilities, but it just seems to me outrageous that this government would claim to have a strategy, a response to people's addiction to prescription medicine, and then totally leave out First Nation communities, where the addiction is more severe and more serious than anywhere else. For the life of me, I just cannot figure out what the defence of that could be or how you could defend that position.

I want to give credit to a number of First Nations who, since the government presented its response, its plan to deal with addiction to prescription medicine, have come forward—some might say have had the audacity to come forward—to suggest what needs to happen. First of all, they say, the prescription medicine that First Nation peoples are addicted to—if they're from Fort Hope First Nation or from Neskantaga First Nation or from Summer Beaver First Nation or Round Lake First Nation or

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig, one of the things that chiefs and councils all point out is that the prescription drugs aren't manufactured in the community. No; the prescription drugs come from outside, and they come from outside in a very well organized, well orchestrated program. The chief of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig has said, “Look, we know from what we've been able to see that there is a very organized crime operation in Thunder Bay that works very hard, first of all, to get people in our First Nations addicted, and then secondly to provide the funnel of drugs into the community.” They also believe that there's an organized crime element in Winnipeg that is part of that as well.

But their point is that since this problem doesn't originate from within the First Nation community, this problem originates from other urban centres in Ontario, it's just wrong for this government to say, “Ah, but Ontario has no responsibility to those First Nations where people are addicted to prescription medicine.” When the problem originates from outside the community and is shipped into the First Nation, how can the government of the province say, “Ah, but there's no responsibility to First Nations people”?

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The other thing that First Nations have pointed out is that in most cases, in most of these First Nation communities, their basic primary health service consists of a nursing station. There might be three or four nurses in the nursing station to, say, serve a First Nation community of 1,000 people. One or two of the nurses will be dealing with acute care issues. One might be dealing with public health issues and one might be able to devote some of his or her time to issues like addiction or community mental health. But one nurse working part-time in that field cannot possibly address these kinds of addiction services. That nursing station, I repeat again, has no access to detox services, has no access to follow-up mental health services, has no access to follow-up counselling and support services, none of those things.

Some communities with very, very limited resources are doing the very best they can to interdict the supply of prescription narcotics before they get into the community. They spend their own limited funds appointing special constables, performing searches at the First Nation airport when planes land or performing searches on the winter roads when the winter roads are operating. They get no funding from Ontario for this—none. They're on their own. In many cases they're using volunteer resources.

In Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig, which is a community that has put together something of a treatment program, a limited treatment program, they get no funds from the province—nothing. They use the limited resources that are available from their nursing station. They work with Tikinagan Child and Family Services. They work with Nodin Counselling Services. And they string together as best they can, with their own resources, a very limited residential program to help individuals who are addicted kick the addiction, and then follow up from there.

When I was in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug just a few short weeks ago, the point they made is they do not have any resources for follow-up support, for follow-up counselling, for those people who are courageous enough to come forward and say, "I'm addicted; I want to go through the residential program; I want to kick the addiction, but I need help in the follow-up." They have no follow-up resources, they have no counselling resources and no support resources. They get absolutely zero health funding from the province.

Maybe this government thinks it can ignore this problem because First Nations people will just be stuck on the reserve. Well, let me tell you, that isn't happening. Just today in this Legislature, there were representatives of the United Native Friendship Centre here talking to various members of this Legislature. They made a point, the point being that the majority of aboriginal people now either live in towns or cities or are moving to towns and cities. If someone is addicted to prescription medicine and they come from Round Lake, or they're addicted to prescription medicine and they come from Fort Hope or they come from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, they don't leave their addiction in the First Nation when they move to Thunder Bay or when they move to Red Lake or Dryden or Sioux Lookout, or when they move to Toronto. They don't leave their addiction. They bring their addiction with them.

This thinking that the province can announce—and again, this was just a small sliver of the report on mental health and addictions—a small sliver of a plan to deal with and to address addiction to prescription medicine and then leave the First Nations of Ontario completely out of that strategy is really short-sighted thinking—really short-sighted thinking.

As I spoke to representatives of the United Native Friendship Centre today, they were very clear. They said, "Look, this problem may be serious on reserve. It is becoming more serious off reserve." People who cannot get services on reserve are going to, in one way or another, come to urban centres, only there it's probably going to be more expensive and more difficult to arrange to provide services because the services that are available very often are not culturally appropriate or, frankly, geographically available to First Nations when they're forced to move to Thunder Bay, Kenora, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Sudbury or Toronto. When people do move to the urban centre, they very often feel cut off from whatever the formal strategy or formal service plan is in that urban setting.

One of the reasons I'm going to support this resolution is because what the government has presented so far is grossly inadequate—grossly, grossly inadequate—and is unbelievably inadequate in terms of the First Nation peoples of this province and in no way can be defended by this government.

So what needs to happen? Again, just dealing with that small sliver of addiction to prescription medicines, not dealing, for example, with the issue of FASD, which is another serious addiction problem which creates all sorts

of downstream health and social issues, but just dealing with that issue of prescription medicine and the addiction to prescription medicine, it seems to me that this province has to put together a strategy which includes First Nation peoples. This province has to pay attention to that.

I suggested earlier that one of the issues has to have a law enforcement aspect to it. It is far too easy for organized crime in a very organized, strategic and manipulative way to transport prescription medicines, drugs—OxyContin, Percocet—into remote First Nation communities and entice people into addiction and then feed that addiction. The law enforcement resources aren't there. That needs to happen. It may require some real thought on the part of the Attorney General and lawyers at the Attorney General as to how to do that effectively. That's the first part.

The second part: We need to see some actual treatment programs established. I would say to the Minister of Health and some of the other government ministers, you might want to go to Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug and see what that community has been able to do, what that First Nation has been able to do with very limited financial resources and absolutely no help from the province. It might serve as a very good example of what could be done and what approaches could be taken. I'd say that the Minister of Health should have gotten there yesterday to look at that.

The third thing that needs to happen is, very simply, First Nations like Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, which are doing some of the work, which have taken leadership, need some support and finances so they can provide the follow-up services.

It's wonderful for someone to have the courage to come forward and say, "I am addicted to Percocet. I am addicted to prescription narcotics." That takes huge courage for someone to do that, and then it takes incredible courage and stamina for someone to go through a residential program which involves all the pain of withdrawal. But that is for naught if communities don't have access to the follow-up mental health counselling services and the follow-up counselling services. The Minister of Health, and I think the Minister of Community and Social Services, would do well to go to a community like Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug and look at what the need is.

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We're not talking about vast sums of money here. We're talking about communities that are doing it on their own now with very limited funding. All they need is a little help to bring this to a successful conclusion.

The third part of this that I think needs to happen—and again, I'm just talking about the addiction to prescription medicines like Percocet. The next part that needs to happen, in my view, is that government's got to look at what are the social conditions, what is the lack of overall mental health conditions in communities that drive people, that situate people such that they could become addicted. Why is there an over-prescription of these kinds of medicines? Where is the over-prescription

that allows organized crime to literally ship in huge quantities of these prescription narcotics into some of the most vulnerable communities. How is that happening? It seems to me that some very basic work needs to be done there.

That is just one small sliver of the report, but that small sliver that the government has announced is very inadequate by anybody's estimation and that's why I will be supporting this resolution.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I certainly am pleased to rise today to talk about the motion brought by the member for Whitby–Oshawa, though I must say I am disappointed that we're doing it in the form of an opposition day motion. As a member of the select committee, I will say quite sincerely that the 18 months that we spent as a committee, an all-party committee, was probably what I consider the most important work that I've done in this Legislature since I was elected in 2007. The non-partisan aspect of our deliberations was something that was of great importance to me.

As a physician, when I was practising, I used to have Monday morning in the emergency room at Women's College. Year in, year out, I saw many people suffering from mental illness, I saw many overdoses, I saw attempted suicides, but I had always seen the issue from a somewhat detached medical point of view. The experience of being on the select committee was, of course, completely different. We heard the points of view from survivors, from families; it was incredibly moving for all of us.

I'd like to commend, first of all, the former Minister of Health, the member for Don Valley East, for in fact putting our committee together. I think we all know that that was a private member's resolution from the member for Whitby–Oshawa. It was accepted by our government. The members of the committee from the Liberal caucus—some of them are not able to speak today but we, each and every one, contributed with heart and mind to the ultimate ability.

So the member for Oakville, our Chair, the members for Guelph, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Scarborough–Rouge River, Peterborough and myself from the Liberal side contributed to the very best of our ability, as did the members for Whitby–Oshawa, Dufferin–Caledon and Nickel Belt. I don't doubt their sincerity in wanting to see our 23 recommendations being moved forward and I share that. I'll certainly be supporting this motion.

But I do have to say that I do doubt the sincerity of their leader. When we hear from the Leader of the Opposition during question period a remark on someone who is clearly in a disturbed mental state, treating that individual's addiction as a joke, I feel very disheartened. This is certainly making a partisan issue of one that should not be partisan. So I was interested to hear that in fact David Kelly, the executive director of the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs, has said since that incident this morning, "The

negative impact on children and families in Ontario from substance misuse and addictions requires all of us to come together and address this health issue as opposed to trivializing the struggles of people who live with this disease every day. Ontario is a stronger, healthier and more productive place when we can help people and families cope with substance misuse." I certainly agree with Mr. Kelly, and I would have hoped that we could continue in this spirit in this place.

There certainly were alternatives to bringing an opposition day motion forward, a resolution. I know that the member for Whitby–Oshawa is anxious to see our government's plan. I have every reason to believe that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has been working very, very hard on that particular plan, and there is a commitment that a plan will be brought forward this spring.

I think it was the member for Haldimand–Norfolk who listed how many ministries are actually involved in mental health and addictions issues in this province, and there are at least 10. Our Minister of Health and Long-Term Care clearly needs to consult in moving forward with not only those 10 ministries but all the multiple stakeholders, because we want to get this plan right. We've been criticized that we acted too fast on one aspect of our recommendations, and we are now concerned that we will ensure that the rest of the plan is comprehensive and will be an excellent plan when implemented.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure today to stand and listen to the various approaches to this opposition day motion calling for action on an important issue. I want to thank, also, the member from Oak Ridges–Markham. I have great respect for her as a physician, and also, she has recognized the work of all the members on this select committee. Having worked in the past on select committees, I know what thorough and rewarding work can result.

I guess it's good to focus on what we're trying to achieve, and I think remarks that aren't always helpful—some of it we act out in opposition and in government to put things on the record that stake out territory, stake out ownership. And in the spirit of the member from Whitby–Oshawa—I know her to be very kind-hearted. Her initial motion in the first place that put this issue on the table came from that spirit. I know the work she has done in our community, and I'm not just here as a cheerleader for Christine. I just know that she means sincerely what she says and does want action. Let's leave it at that and let those words speak for themselves.

I can only say that when I look at the work that's been done by many over the years—I remember some years ago reading a very profound article by Dr. Kirby when he issued the report *Out of the Shadows at Last*. I sort of followed it, because in each of our families—it's almost like a cancer—all of us have some contact, directly or indirectly, with persons who suffer from chronic disease of whatever sort, and we recognize mental health as just

one more of those issues that has not been given the proper attention. I think we all agree with the fact, as Out of the Shadows at Last implies, that it has been a shadow on all of us really.

Much has been studied—and I liked the comment from one of the participants who is here today. Sarah Cannon is here, and she is the executive director of Parents for Children’s Mental Health, as well as Chris Bovie who is here from Ontario Shores. Thank you for joining us and listening to the most sincere debate that you’ll often hear on these opposition day motions. It gets consistent attention in a very open forum.

Sarah Cannon’s remarks were, “This crisis has been studied and solutions identified. It is time now for the provincial government to act on its own recommendations.” I attribute this to Sarah Cannon, as I said before.

I want to thank my legislative intern, Charles Thomson, in the OLIP program. I gave him the task to quickly educate me on a couple of issues this week, and I commend him for the excellent work he’s done. He’s a young, enthusiastic graduate student of some sort when he completes. He pointed out a couple of studies to me which I think are very pertinent to the discussion.

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I just think in my own community, as each of us do, of stories we’ve heard and people we’ve met and touched to some extent or been able to help. This article is from a report addressing integration and mental health addictions.

I often think clearly of Ralph Price, who’s deceased, but he was a doctor in Blackstock. He was a very kind and compassionate physician who often dealt with pain and pain management and the consequent addictions.

This report here says, “Currently in Ontario, there is no provincial strategy or framework to guide this process of mental health and addiction integration. There is uncertainty about what integration should look like and how it should be achieved. That is why our organizations recommend a provincial policy framework to guide the integration of mental health and addiction services.” I could go on.

There’s another report here, the 10-year study from the ministry—10 years. It’s Respect, Recovery, Resilience. This is another attempt, in this climate of an election year—that’s the reality. There’s been an 18-month study, there are 23 very genuine, well-supported, unanimous recommendations, and it’s time for action. Yes, there are sidebar debates on this. I understand that. But the important thing is, it is a call to action, and action in a climate where pretty soon this House won’t be sitting. There will be a budget in March, hopefully, and the budget will claim that there’s not enough money to do anything except the high election issues.

Interjection.

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m not being partisan here. Member from Northumberland–Quinte West, listening is the better part of learning.

All I’m saying is that really what you have to do here is realize that if it’s not in the budget in March, there’s

not a nickel more for those vulnerable individuals and families. That’s the plain story here. After that, it will be political rollout time for pre-election announcements which aren’t helpful.

This 10-year plan takes you through three elections, the current government and two additional governments. The time to act is now.

When I look in my riding at the good work being done by front-line physicians, there’s a very interesting article by Jillian Follert in recent Durham region media. It’s called “The Doctor is in at Oshawa Homeless Outreach Centre.” It’s about the Gate 3:16 centre, which deals with street people, vulnerable people, often people with addiction issues, and the very uncomfortable way they have had to live because they’ve fallen off all of the caring lists. This doctor, I think, is to be commended.

“Dr. Vincent Ho is getting ready to see his first patient of the day.

“But instead of walking into an exam room at his practice in Bowmanville, the family physician is at a homeless outreach centre in Oshawa.” That’s what the front-line people are doing.

It goes on to say, “Despite Canada’s universal health-care system ... family doctors aren’t accessible” for many times of the day.

The article goes on to say, “It’s also common for Gate clients to be without a health card or other identification, because it’s been lost or stolen,” or simply misplaced. “The ability to drive or take transit to a doctor’s office”—the hard-to-serve people is what we’re talking about.

What we’re asking for is action. So I thank Ms. Elliott and others for the work they’ve done. I look forward to the vote today to allow that to move forward and do the right thing for vulnerable people.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate this afternoon. I can say at the outset that one of the most positive experiences that I’ve had in my public life was the opportunity to sit on this select committee, tour Ontario and visit many communities to hear some very brave testimonies about mental illness and addictions.

I want to talk a little bit about a personal thing: my own father, who died at age 63 because of alcoholism. I think one of the things that assisted me was certainly the very brave people who came forward. Now, many years later, I can finally talk about this, and I did take the inspiration from many of those people who came before us at the select committee.

People know that my son is now serving as a page. He never got an opportunity in his life to meet his grandfather, so now it’s my story to him, and those pictures, and we can finally as a family, I think, take the time to talk about this.

Certainly the other visit we made was to Sandy Lake. Sandy Lake is a very isolated First Nations community in northwestern Ontario. To hear the account that 85% of the population in Sandy Lake is addicted to Percocet and OxyContin and to see the tragedy and the lack of hope

and opportunity is something that, through the recommendations of the select committee, I'm hoping we can do something about.

This is a little like building this block by block by block. We have good examples in Ontario of issues that have been addressed by having governments of all political stripes build on a continuous basis. I think of the strategy for cancer care in this province. I think of our cardiac care strategy in this province. I think of our strategy for diabetes. We're doing that, as I said; building it on a block-by-block basis. I think it's very important that we do build our strategy for mental health care in the province of Ontario, not in haste but through a thoughtful consultative process to make sure that we get this right. It's critically important that we do that.

I want to raise another family that went through the tragic experience of having their daughter commit suicide last November. This little girl's name is Daron Richardson, and the reason I know about this case is that her father is Luke Richardson. Luke Richardson is an assistant coach with the Ottawa Senators but played his junior hockey in Peterborough with the Peterborough Petes. Luke Richardson and his wife have had to bear what—I don't know how a family can do it. I have a picture of their daughter with me here today, a remarkable young girl, 14 years, and now Luke Richardson and his wife have taken it upon themselves—in fact, in February in a game between the Ottawa Senators and the Philadelphia Flyers, they started the purple decal campaign with scarves and decals to promote a youth mental health awareness campaign for everybody throughout the province of Ontario. This is to bring about interventions, particularly for young people in Ontario who find themselves challenged with these issues and how we can help them. Through the Ottawa Senators Foundation and the Royal Ottawa Foundation for Mental Health, the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and the Canadian Mental Health Association, they're coming together to put those dollars for mental health.

Indeed, I intend to support this resolution this afternoon. I think it's a very important resolution and certainly provides a framework to go forward. Having said that, I know our colleague, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Honourable Deb Matthews, is certainly very aware and wants to make sure that we have a comprehensive policy in place to meet the needs of mental health in this province.

Having said those few words, I want to thank my colleagues this afternoon for giving me the opportunity to participate in what I consider one of the most important debates that we've had around here in the last little while.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to have a moment in which to make a couple of comments.

First of all, I want to say how proud I was of the initiative of this Legislature to take on the role of a select committee and the work that it has done. Today, what we are looking at is a request for a plan.

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When I see the wording of this resolution, it reminds me of the sense of urgency that accompanied the people who came to visit me two weeks ago, three organizations in York region who provide children's mental health services. Their plea to me was simply to convey the urgency that they feel as providers of care in York region. York region has always been underserved and so they have battled with that, but they also need desperately the kind of recommendations to come to fruition that are in this report.

It's an opportunity for me to convey to you that sense of urgency that exists, frankly, across the province, not just in York region.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: For many of us on this side of the House, this is a very personal and highly motivated piece of legislation. I want to thank all the people who were involved in it.

I foster parented and adopted children. My son is a rather remarkable young man who worked through his whole life dealing with a rather complex family. Having a gay dad, he ran into a lot of homophobia and some very difficult things, given the communities that we grew up in, but he struggled with fetal alcohol syndrome his whole life, which he was born with.

Sometimes I think that we sometimes misrepresent each other's words and views here in ways that I find very hurtful and very detrimental. Mental health issues are pretty critical, and I'm sad in the sense that this motion is here today, while I'm going to support it, because I think this was above politics until it became an opposition day motion, because I don't think we need to be reminded of the importance of this.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am very pleased to offer some concluding comments on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus with respect to today's motion. I am very appreciative of the comments that have been made, particularly by my fellow members of the select committee: the member from Oakville, the member from Peterborough and the member from Oak Ridges—Markham.

I, too, find it regrettable that this is being brought in the form of an opposition day motion. It's not meant to be a divisive issue or a partisan issue. The fact of the matter simply is that there aren't that many opportunities for us to be able to discuss this issue in the Legislature, and that's why we're bringing it forward.

I have tremendous respect and admiration for my fellow members of the committee, and I agree with them in that I think, probably, the greatest contribution that I have been able to make to this place in the five years that I have been here is the work that I did do on the select committee.

As the member from Dufferin—Caledon indicated, this was something that we all spent our time on. This wasn't

something where we just listened to people and then we gave the report off to somebody else to write. Every single member of this committee wrote every single word of this report, and I'm proud of it, and I know that my fellow committee members are.

If you look, really, at the impetus for this motion today, I would really like to refer to the report and just read a paragraph from the introduction that states the case for today's motion. It says:

"The select committee held a frank discussion about the fact that it often takes a crisis to accomplish a major social or political change. We are convinced that this crisis has arrived. However, it is one suffered silently, as those experiencing a mental illness or addiction are ignored, stigmatized and lack the social power to demand change. These individuals are expecting us to finally take action. We, in turn, expect our recommendations to be adopted. We strongly encourage the Legislature to endorse our recommendations and advocate for their implementation."

In fact, that's all this motion was intended to achieve; nothing more and nothing less. I would say that some of the things that we're seeing that are happening out in the community—by business; by the tremendous work that companies like Bell Canada have done, with their "Let's Talk" campaign with Clara Hughes; by the Royal Bank of Canada coming forward and endorsing children's mental health.

The community is already stepping up to the challenge. We need to step up to that challenge as a government. Yes, I am a little bit impatient; I have to say I am, because we have a serious crisis right now. We've got children in crisis. The rate of not just teenage suicide, but suicide among children as young as 10, is increasing at a rapid rate, and we need to do something to stop it.

All I'm doing today is urging the government to move forward. I take it in good faith that it's been said that it is going to be done this spring. Whether it's within 60 days or this spring, all I want to do is move forward with it. I thank all of the members who are going to support this motion.

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to be able to add to the debate here this afternoon. As many of my colleagues on the select committee have commented, I am disappointed that what was the most collegial effort that any of us have ever experienced has become a politicized opposition day motion. I really don't think that was necessary.

It's a difficult motion because in some ways neither yes nor no is a really satisfactory answer. It's more complex than that, because if we look at the beginning of the motion, which is to make sure that we have a long-term plan for mental health and addiction, then absolutely; we all want that. The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and her colleague the Minister of Children and Youth Services have committed that we will have a plan this spring. Absolutely, the preamble to the motion, we all agree with.

Should it be based on the work of the select committee? Absolutely. I would note that there's also work that has been done by the minister's advisory committee on mental health and addiction, which tabled their report, as you know, in December. I think it's also useful to comment that we need to take into our thinking the minister's advisory committee which the former Minister of Health, David Caplan, set up, because they were the more expert advice. In some ways our select committee emphasized the community and the consumer input, and the minister's advisory committee with some of the more technical input. The Minister of Health and the Minister of Children and Youth Services need to bring that all together into a whole.

As I say, the ministers have committed that we will have it this spring, so the artificial deadline that is in the motion—to me, it's quite irrelevant whether this plan shows up in 35 days or 65 days or 95 days. The important thing is that we are going to have that this spring.

The other thing that I wanted to comment on, though, was the fact that some of the earlier speakers made it sound as though nothing has happened since the select committee report was tabled. I think it's worthwhile to talk about some of the things that I've personally been involved in.

As the members of the select committee who are here will know, one of the things that we were able to do was to tour CAMH. When we toured CAMH, we met in the old admin building and then we moved on to see both the old residential facilities and the new phase 1 redevelopment, long-term treatment residential facilities. We were able to see how those new treatment facilities were so much more humane, so much more homelike, so that people who were recovering from mental illness and addiction had an opportunity to do so in a much more congenial living situation.

I had the pleasure of being able to go back to CAMH. The committee members will be interested to know that since we were there, that old administrative unit has been demolished. There are three new buildings rising in that building where we visited. Some of the services that are going to be in there are exactly the services that the select committee asked to see.

For example, there will be 12 new beds, the first of their kind in Canada, dedicated to youth dealing with both mental illness and addictions. Every member of the select committee knows that one of the things that we heard a lot about was concurrent disorders and the lack of treatment for concurrent disorders. That's being taken care of.

There are going to be 48 inpatient beds for geriatric mental health issues. Again, the committee members know that we heard a lot about geriatric mental health and the lack of treatment facilities for that.

There will also be outpatient programming and supports.

There's going to be a whole new area and treatment capacity for outpatient addiction and outpatient mood and anxiety disorders. So a whole host of things that we asked for are being put in place.

Locally, in Waterloo-Wellington, for the first time ever there are long-term acute treatment beds in my LHIN at Grand River Hospital. That's made a tremendous difference to families in my area who can now access treatment. At the Freeport campus, beds are being transferred from London. I know that's been difficult for some people, but they are long-term-treatment beds, and the clients, the consumers and their families are ecstatic that they can get treatment close to home.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mrs. Elliott has moved opposition day number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There being no more business today, this House is adjourned until 9 of the clock on Thursday, March 10.

The House adjourned at 1751.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, P.C., Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Oraziotti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB) Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB) Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie Oshawa Kitchener–Conestoga Elgin–Middlesex–London Scarborough–Agincourt	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Beaches–East York Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Ramal, Khalil (LIB) Ramsay, David (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord London–Fanshawe Timiskaming–Cochrane Northumberland–Quinte West Davenport Guelph Burlington York West / York-Ouest Thornhill Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Vaughan Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Carleton–Mississippi Mills Toronto–Danforth	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex Perth–Wellington Simcoe–Grey	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) Yakabuski, John (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Kim Craitor, Bob Delaney
Garfield Dunlop, Peter Fonseca
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Maria Van Bommel
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Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle
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Sylvia Jones, Amrit Mangat
Norm Miller, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio
Maria Van Bommel
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France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
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Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / 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
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Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel
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