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**Official Report
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**Journal
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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 23 March 2011

Mercredi 23 mars 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 23 March 2011

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 23 mars 2011

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational 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 21, 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 Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Questions and comments? Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: You had me a little bit worried there with questions and comments, Mr. Speaker.

It is my pleasure to add my voice to the debate on the Occupational Health and Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, Bill 160.

I am worried about some of what's in this bill. Of course, not all of it is worrisome; some of it is things that I could support. But some, especially when it has to do with the prevention council and officer, leaves me very uncomfortable. Basically, what I'm worried about is the new structure. The way it will work is that the Ministry of Labour will be directly responsible for the prevention officer's work, for the budget of his office and his council, and, ultimately, for what they do. I see this direct link as sometimes being something good, but sometimes being something bad.

I would much rather see a more arm's-length type of a relationship for a prevention officer that would give the prevention officer the opportunity to go public, to not only report directly to the minister, which basically

means that some of the recommendations the rest of us may never know, the rest of us may never see. He or she would report to the minister, and basically it would be the minister, with the help of his or her colleagues, who would decide what the rest of us see, what gets implemented, what gets worked upon and what gets buried. When it comes to health and safety, to me, this is not the way to go. Transparency, accountability, the opportunity to see it all: This is what brings confidence into the system; this is what basically, ultimately, will lead to the best health and safety for all of the workers of Ontario.

At the end of the day, I think the direction of the bill is a direction we can all support. We all want everybody to come home safe after their shift; there's no doubt about this. We all want our workers to work safely and go back to their families, friends and loved ones at the end of the workday, workweek, etc.

The direction is good. It's how we get there. How do we maximize this? How do we make sure that if there are best practices learned, if there are lessons learned, those lessons are shared, even if they don't really please whoever happens to be in government at the time, even if it doesn't please whoever happens to be Minister of Labour at the time? This can only happen if you have some kind of arm's-length relationship, if this officer has an opportunity to go public to show whatever report or whatever is learned—there should be an opportunity for all of us in this House to see it.

I can't help but draw a comparison with the French language commissioner. We in the French community, and in all of Ontario, are very happy that the position of French Language Services Commissioner has been put in place. Mr. Boileau has done a fantastic job for the people of Ontario in doing investigations and bringing forward his reports. His relationship is very similar to what we're about to create. He reports to the minister responsible for francophone affairs, but he often reports about issues that are outside her ministry, and then we sort of run into trouble.

I can give you the example where he did a special report on Peel-Halton French language services. This special report was well received. It gave concrete and achievable recommendations with deadlines, and his report was submitted to the minister. The report was made public; I was able to read it and so was everybody else. The problem became that the deadline was December 31, 2010, which has passed, and his recommendations were not acted upon and we did not see the action we should have seen. Frankly, there is very little I can do and very little anybody else, besides the minister in charge, can do.

We are about to set up the exact, same reporting relationship that we already know is troublesome in other ministries, if we talk about francophone affairs. Why would we want to set up something like this when experience has already shown us that it doesn't work in the best interests of the people of Ontario?

I would like that changed. I want whatever is learned to be shared with everybody, whether the minister of the day agrees with it or not. The chief prevention officer should do the work pretty much the way that it is described in the bill, but I would suggest that he or she report back to this Legislative Assembly—that he or she report back to all of us—so that we know the work that has been done, the recommendations that have been written and the favoured path forward, and together we can ensure that health and safety are priorities and the recommendations are acted upon. Because at the end of the day, we all want the same thing: We want our workers to go home safely after their shift.

Why is it that we have a new bill in front of us that would choose to use a structure that has been tried before and been found to be less than perfect? We know there are better reporting mechanisms out there that would lead to better outcomes and to better quality health and safety at the end of the day.

It is troublesome, and it is something that I hope the government will look upon seriously. It's something that is easily changed. We're talking about changing a reporting relationship that brings transparency and accountability, and that strengthens the health and safety of everyone in Ontario. We are here to serve the people of Ontario. Why not put forward bills that use best practices, that use the experience we have to make sure we end up with the best possible health and safety bill that could be and we move forward in a way that assures us, no matter which government is in power—because we know it will change over the years—no matter who is minister—because, again, we know they will change over the years.

0910

Not everybody looks at health and safety in the same way. Every party represented in this House look at health and safety through a separate lens with different results at the end. The prevention council and the chief prevention officer will stay there. They will continue to do their work. They will become experts in the field and develop best practices. But if those best practices have to be put through a minister and a party that have their own lens as to what health and safety should look like in this province, then we may, at the end of those filters, not end up with the ultimate health and safety for everyone in Ontario. I truly believe that every worker in Ontario should be protected by the best laws. They should be protected by the best structure that will lead to the best outcome, which is a safe worker who goes back to his or her family, friends and loved ones at the end of the day.

There are so many issues that are contentious when you talk about health and safety. I have people coming to my constituency office—and I'm sure you do too—about health and safety. When we look to occupational diseases

in Ontario, a lot of changes have taken place. A lot of people are slowly but surely being successful in taking bits and pieces of protection away from our workers, and they do this by reinterpreting the wording of our laws.

Here in Ontario, we cannot take legal action against an employer for damages. What we do is put in a WSIB claim. If you're a worker who works in a workplace that is covered by WSIB, the right to take legal action has been taken away, but in exchange for this, we have put into place WSIB, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. If a claim has been accepted and you become eligible for non-economic loss—known as NEL—or loss of earnings—known as LOE—or survivor benefits, if you pass away, or other expenses, all of this is what we traded away. You traded away the right to take legal action because WSIB gives you protection.

The problem is that the words we put into those laws are now being used against them to the point where you start to wonder what a worker's life is worth. In some of the results we see, it's really troublesome.

We have seen that the loss of earnings has really been looked into and has been analyzed with the worst possible outcome for workers. When the law was put forward, when this assembly—other people than me—voted on those laws, they were clear that if there was to be a loss of income because somebody was injured, then the worker should be compensated. But then you start to look at if somebody is so sick because of what has happened to him or her at work, and decides to take their pension because they have a physically demanding job and just can't cope anymore, it won't be deemed a loss of income, because pensions are not income; they're earnings.

I know that lawyers love this stuff, and it allows them to take as much money away from the workers as possible, but at the end of the day it is wrong. If we don't craft our bills in a way that really thinks about all of the possibilities, then we end up with things like this: We end up with lawyers arguing about the meanings of words to make sure that at the end of the day the workers don't get their non-economic loss, they don't get their loss of earnings, and sometimes the widow or widower doesn't get their survivor's benefits either.

I would very much like us to work together on this and to really think it through—to think it through as to, if we all agree that accountability and transparency is one of the basics for good-quality outcomes of any bills, then this bill needs to change. This bill needs to take into account the fact that the reporting relationship we have set up right now is troublesome and could end up with working against the best outcomes.

Je voulais mentionner que, bien que je sois en faveur de la direction générale de ce projet de loi qui cherche à améliorer les conditions des travailleurs face à la santé et la sécurité au travail, j'ai également, vraiment, des réservations sérieuses.

La première, c'est que la nouvelle position d'officier de prévention est une position qui va se rapporter directement au ministre du Travail. Ça veut dire que, peu importe la qualité de son investigation, peu importe la

qualité du travail de cet officier et de son bureau, nous, à l'Assemblée, ne verrons jamais le résultat de son travail, à moins que la ou le ministre du Travail ne décide de le partager et de le rendre public.

Ça, c'est dangereux. Je ne peux pas m'empêcher de montrer le parallèle qui existe avec le commissaire aux services en français. On a un commissaire aux services en français en Ontario, M. François Boileau, et tout le monde est bien heureux de cette position-là. On est très satisfait de son travail et on est très satisfait également des rapports qu'il nous a fournis.

Le problème, c'est que M. Boileau, lorsqu'il fait ses rapports, les soumet à la ministre déléguée aux services en français, et c'est la ministre déléguée aux services en français qui décide s'il y aura un suivi, si on va respecter les recommandations ou si on va les envoyer aux oubliettes ou les mettre sur une tablette quelque part pour accumuler de la poussière.

Je raconte le parallèle parce que c'est ce qu'on est en train de mettre en place avec le nouveau projet de loi 160. Avec le nouveau projet de loi 160, on va créer une autre position équivalente à celle du commissaire, un officier qui va se rapporter directement au ministre du Travail.

Je peux donner l'exemple du commissaire aux services en français qui nous a soumis un rapport spécial par rapport à l'accès aux services de santé en français pour la population de Peel et Halton. Dans son rapport, il fait une très bonne analyse de la situation. C'est une population qui a travaillé pendant des années pour avoir un centre de santé communautaire francophone, qui a soumis, qui a resoumis, qui a changé sa proposition autant comme autant, et qui ne vient pas à bout d'être reconnue.

Ils ont soumis une plainte au commissaire. Le commissaire a accepté la plainte, il a fait son rapport, il a fait des recommandations concrètes, et dans ses recommandations, il a mis des dates butoirs—entre autres, une date butoir du 31 décembre 2010, qui vient de passer. Malheureusement, la date butoir est arrivée, le travail n'a pas été fait, les suivis n'ont pas été faits, et les francophones de Peel et Halton n'ont toujours pas les services en français que la Loi 8 leur garantit.

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Je donne cet exemple parce que le même processus est en train d'être établi avec le projet de loi 160, et c'est un processus, on le sait, qui peut bien fonctionner, mais il y en a de meilleurs. Pourquoi est-ce qu'on ne met pas tout de suite, en partant, un processus qui nous permet d'avoir la meilleure façon de procéder?

Ce qui se passe en ce moment pour les francophones de Peel et Halton, c'est une recommandation, vraiment, qui s'adresse à la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. La ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée, à la dernière minute, juste avant Noël, a dit qu'il se passerait quelque chose, mais à une date plus tard. Ça, c'est enlever beaucoup de pouvoir.

Il y a une pétition qui circule en ce moment qui demande à l'Assemblée législative de changer la façon dont le commissaire aux services en français fait ses rap-

ports; que les rapports ne devraient pas aller à une ministre en particulier—dans ce cas-ci, la ministre déléguée aux services en français—mais que le commissaire devrait faire son rapport à l'ensemble des députés pour s'assurer que l'ensemble des députés—qu'on sait les recommandations qu'il a faites, qu'on connaît les dates butoirs et qu'on s'assure que les suivis sont faits.

C'est quelque chose qu'on est en train de vivre en ce moment en Ontario. Pourquoi est-ce qu'on est en train de mettre en place un autre projet de loi qui nous remet un rapport de liaison comme ça qui n'est pas le meilleur? On sait déjà que ça cause des problèmes dans d'autres ministères. Pourquoi est-ce qu'on est en train de mettre en place une structure quand on sait qu'il y a de meilleures structures qui existent et qui donnent de meilleurs résultats?

Nobody would argue that we all want health and safety laws in Ontario to be the best that they can. This bill needs to be changed if we want the best for our workers.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I'm pleased to be able to comment for two minutes on the remarks that were made by the member from Nickel Belt.

I think she brought two excellent points, the first one being the reporting function. This bill is the result of a very detailed report called the Dean report, which was produced by an expert panel, nine people, and Mr. Tony Dean, who is a former Deputy Minister of Labour. They've recommended that the reporting function go to the Ministry of Labour. I think it's important that that function be that way, because that makes the minister directly responsible to this House. If someone from the opposition has an issue with what the chief prevention officer is doing or what the minister is doing or what the ministry is changing, that opportunity to keep them accountable is here in the House. Questions can be asked, and the opposition can question the Minister of Labour. So I think the reporting function is fine. It's also very transparent that way.

The other point that I wanted to respond to was the point brought up regarding transparency. It's quite clear in the Dean report that they wanted to achieve more transparency. The chief prevention officer has to get advice from his or her panel and then bring that to the minister. There's no hiding of anything here. I think it's very, very open.

The most important thing that this act and these changes achieve is system integration. The system will be more integrated this way, and the ministry will be able to function better. I think it's a good thing.

I think she made very good comments—

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

The member for Nickel Belt, you have two minutes to respond.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I listened attentively to the member from Scarborough Southwest. We are fully aware

of the Dean report, fully aware of who the membership was and the hard work that they put into this report and that the bill is based, in part, on a response to what was in the report.

I guess it's how you define accountability and the reporting function. The reporting function to the minister: Yes, we can hold the minister accountable for what the minister chooses to share with us. But what goes on between an employee of a minister and the minister himself? This is not information that will be available to me. Only what the ministers decide to share and make public will be accountable to me. What I want is that this position will help toward more system integration and will develop best practices. It's not the position itself that I question; it's how much of the work, the learning, the best practices that this new position and this office will provide. How much of this will be available to all of us? Remember I talked about the filter? This person will report back to his employer, which will be through the DM to the minister. The minister basically will either be transparent if he or she chooses to be, or may very well choose to not share anything with this House. It will be up to them. Only once information is shared can I then play my role, if I'm still here, of holding people accountable.

I think we both agree transparency is important. I think we could do better.

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

Mr. Rick Johnson: I'm very pleased to stand up and enter this debate on the Occupational Health and Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 160.

We're moving forward with changes to our health and safety system that make workplaces safer to help all Ontario workers come home safe at the end of the day. If these amendments are passed, they would benefit all Ontarians, employers and employees alike.

Employees would have enhanced safety training and a more effective reprisal complaint process. For example, when a worker is fired for reporting unsafe work conditions, there would be a venue for him or her to raise their issues.

The employers would benefit from a more efficient, streamlined prevention system and compliance assistance. The changes would help save lives and prevent injury among Ontarians, and they would help make workplaces safer and more productive. If passed, the amendments would:

- transfer prevention responsibilities from the WSIB to the Ministry of Labour;

- appoint a new chief prevention officer to better coordinate the prevention system;

- create a new prevention council with representatives from labour, employers and safety experts to advise the chief prevention officer and the minister;

- enable the Minister of Labour to set new training standards, revamp the reprisals process and develop codes of practice that help businesses with compliance.

Our approach would be fiscally neutral to the government and would not add employer WSIB premiums.

With the proposed amendments, our government is acting on its commitment to implement the recommendations of the expert panel on occupational health and safety chaired by Tony Dean and composed of representatives of labour, employers and academia. The expert panel consulted extensively across the province, received 400 responses from employer and worker groups, and held 50 meetings across the province. The panel's report was based on the consensus of all members.

Consultations will continue with our stakeholders to implement recommendations such as mandatory awareness training for workers and supervisors, entry-level training for construction workers and training for high-hazard activities. An interim prevention council has already been established to get started on implementation and advice on the recruitment of the CPO. The minister, WSIB and health and safety associations will work together to ensure a smooth transition to the new system.

I'd like to go into some of the details of the proposed legislation. Under the proposed legislation, structural changes would provide for a new prevention organization within the Ministry of Labour. The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's prevention mandate would be transferred to the Ministry of Labour. A new chief prevention officer, or CPO, reporting to the Minister of Labour on strategic priorities would provide leadership on the prevention of workplace injury and occupational diseases. The Ministry of Labour would expand its involvement in workplace health and safety.

Like in all fields, whether it's health, energy, being proactive in preventing accidents; things that you do to prevent things from happening in health care, for example, as well—these are all things that are proactive and ultimately designed to make people safe.

0930

The ministry will also have oversight of the province's health and safety associations, under the leadership of the chief prevention officer. This authority could be delegated only to the CPO.

A new prevention council with representatives from the worker and employer communities and health and safety experts would provide valuable input into the direction of the health and safety system with respect to preventing occupational injury and disease. The minister would have the authority to establish standards for health and safety training in order to enhance this training and ensure workers are properly trained. Workers, especially the most vulnerable workers, would have improved protections against reprisals for exercising their rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Now, this new prevention officer: This bill would provide that the Ministry of Labour have oversight of the province's health and safety associations. These powers could be delegated to the chief prevention officer. The chief prevention officer, the CPO, would be responsible for establishing a provincial health and safety strategy. The CPO's strategy would ensure that activities would be

aligned all across the system's partners. The CPO would directly report to and provide an annual report for the Minister of Labour on the statutory mandate and to the Deputy Minister of Labour on administrative public service matters.

A new prevention council, consisting of both employer and worker representatives, would be an important partner in setting the direction for the ministry's prevention activities, and will work closely with the chief prevention officer. The prevention council would also advise the minister on the appointment of the new prevention officer and advise the CPO on the occupational health and safety strategies. Where the CPO contemplates significant changes to the occupational health and safety system, the prevention council chair would be asked to state to the minister whether he or she endorses that direction of change.

Health and safety training in workplaces with six to 19 employees: This bill would provide that all health and safety representatives in workplaces with six to 19 employees would be trained to carry out their health and safety duties. This provision would come into force on a date yet to be determined, to allow for sufficient time to develop the training standards and consult with small businesses and labour on its cost-effective implementation.

My wife works for a company in Ajax, Ontario, and as soon as word of this bill was announced coming forward, she was saying that there was quite a bit of uptake within their company, where new training methods were being brought forward, and also being brought forward was awareness of the issues within her company. So, already on a personal level, I've seen the impact of this bill, and it hasn't even been passed yet.

There's anti-reprisal legislation as well. Proposed amendments would allow the Ontario Labour Relations Board, the OLRB, to deal with workplace safety reprisal claims in a more timely manner. In addition, inspectors would be given the power to refer matters of workplace reprisals to the OLRB in certain circumstances, if the worker agrees.

Regulation-making authority: The proposed amendments include a regulation-making authority to allow the offices of the worker and employer adviser to, in the future, provide support to both workers and employers in reprisal cases. To ensure sufficient implementation time, these provisions would come into effect on a date to be determined.

Either of the co-chairs of a joint health and safety committee would be able to provide a recommendation to the employer on health and safety concerns, as opposed to both employer and labour co-chair needing to agree, as is currently the case.

What is the cost of the changes to the system? The proposed changes would be cost-neutral. The ministry is working with the WSIB to provide a transition plan, including the transfer of funds for prevention services to the Ministry of Labour. Employer programs, which fund the whole occupational health and safety system, should

not go up as a result of the Ministry of Labour taking on the WSIB's current prevention functions.

Comments were raised earlier about transparency and accountability. Bill 160 proposes to transfer responsibility for prevention of work-related injuries and illnesses from the WSIB to the ministry. Under the proposed model, what mechanisms would ensure accountability and transparency with respect to Ministry of Labour funding of prevention-related issues and services? Under the proposed model, Ministry of Labour funding of prevention-related initiatives and services, including the funding of the HSAs, would be subject to the same review and approval process as all provincial government expenditures. First, the minister would have to seek approval from the treasury board and cabinet for prevention-related expenditures. Such spending would also be subject to scrutiny through the government's expenditure estimates, in which ministries set out their spending requirements as part of the government's annual formal request to the Legislature for approval of expenditures.

Estimates is an open, public and completely transparent government budgeting process, and the ultimate oversight of this process is through the provincial Legislature. Ministries can be asked to appear before the Standing Committee on Estimates to defend their proposed expenditures.

General accountability and transparency would also be assured through the public accounts of Ontario, which are documents, issued annually, setting out in detail all the ministry's expenditures for the previous year. In addition, proposed requirements in Bill 160 for the minister to publish the chief prevention officer's annual report would support accountability and transparency.

Consultation: Final recommendations were the result of deliberations and consensus among panel members, which was comprised of labour and employer representatives as well as academics. The legislative amendments being proposed as part of Bill 160 are the ministry's legislative response to the report's priority recommendations. The ministry will be working closely with stakeholders on the implementation of many of the recommendations.

For example, the new training requirement for health and safety, as proposed by Bill 160, such as requirements for health and safety representative training, extending regulations to the agricultural sector, mandatory entry-level training and training for high-hazard activities, will be developed in consultation with stakeholders.

Other recommendations, such as the development of more performance-based regulations and accompanying codes of practice, will also require extensive technical assessment and analysis, as well as industry input and consultation.

The testimony of inspectors in reprisal proceedings before the OLRB: This provision, if passed, would preserve the neutrality of Ministry of Labour inspectors by ensuring that they couldn't be called as witnesses by one of the parties to a reprisal proceeding. It would also ensure that the reprisal proceedings would not be delayed

unnecessarily by requests for inspectors to attend at hearings before the OLRB. Inspectors' notes and other documents that may be relevant to a reprisal proceeding could still be provided with the consent of a director.

The expert advisory panel that put this report together, that the legislation is based on, was headed by Tony Dean. The panel received more than 400 responses in over 50 meetings with stakeholders from across the province. The expert panel consisted of the chair and nine safety panel experts from labour groups, employers and academic institutions. The panel included representatives from labour, employers and academia with workplace health and safety experience.

The expert advisory panel looked at a range of issues, including:

- the need for enhanced training, including basic health and safety awareness training;
- the impact of the underground economy on health and safety practices; and
- how existing legislation serves worker safety.

There are a number of things that have come up. This bill has cited safety concerns of people in the prevention of accidents. My son had a job a couple of summers ago working for the city of Kawartha Lakes, and part of the job was patching roads and working with hot asphalt. Every day that he went to work, we would always say to him, "Be careful of what you're doing and don't do anything that you're not trained to do." So we are very aware of the impact of accidents that have happened around this province. I believe that many of the things in this legislation, as it comes forward, will really protect all the workers in this province, including our young people, who so often tragically end up being very severely injured or killed.

The key report recommendations—just to review this. Mandatory basic awareness training and education: requiring mandatory basic health and safety awareness training for all workers and supervisors, free of charge to employers, and improving integration of occupational health and safety training into school and educational programs.

Training for high-hazard work: identify and develop mandatory training requirements for high-hazard work, particularly construction work and work at heights.

Internal responsibility system: requiring mandatory training for workplace health and safety representatives.

Better protection for our vulnerable workers: to make sure that they're protected and to make sure that a lot of the information goes out to them and that they're better informed.

For the new chief prevention officer: We're going to appoint a new chief prevention officer, reporting to the Ministry of Labour, to coordinate and align occupational health and safety requirements—and the fact that he will be accountable in reporting to the Legislature and the minister. There are many different things that are—the ability to dig into it and find out for the accountability.

0940

I'm pleased that the stakeholders have been involved in this. Obviously, in any piece of legislation, it may not

be perfect, but it's a good step forward to ensure that our workers are carefully protected. Thanks, Speaker, for allowing me to take part in this debate.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to follow the previous speaker, my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. In speaking to Bill 160, I think there's a lot of goodwill being expressed by people around this House, on all sides, on this issue. I sense that in the province of Ontario, between employers and employees as well, on this issue: that there's very few people who are in favour of industrial accidents or are in favour of people being injured on the job. I think that goes without saying. Also, like anything else in our society, you've got some bad actors; you've got companies that abuse the system. From time to time, I'm sure you have persons who abuse the system, like any other system.

What we've done as a government, as a result of some tragedies that didn't need to happen, is we've taken a look at the current way of doing things around the province of Ontario. We're suggesting we move towards a system that is based more on prevention than it is a reactionary system where things kick into place after the injury has taken place. So the emphasis on prevention in this whole initiative is something that's of extreme interest to me and should be, I think, of extreme interest to those who are interested in this topic around the province of Ontario.

It's a well-researched document we have before us. It comes from a well-respected individual. I think that person is respected by all parties in this House for his previous work within these halls and buildings. They went out and did what I thought was a very consultative process. They had 50 meetings and spoke to over 400 people—individuals or delegations—from both sides of the issue, and have put this before us here today for our consideration.

Ontario has got a good system when compared to other jurisdictions. That doesn't mean that it can't get better, and that shouldn't mean that we don't all want it to get better. Certainly, I think the focus on prevention is something that we all should take some heart in, and this bill and the amendments therein are worthy of support.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'll have an opportunity to speak to this legislation at greater length after my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock finishes off his two minutes, but I did want to enter the debate today. This bill emanates from a tragedy that occurred in this province due to the black market and people trying to find a job—in this case, in construction. Ultimately, they paid the dearest and most powerful price any person could pay, which is losing their life.

We in the Ontario PC caucus, and our colleague Randy Hillier, from I think the longest-named riding here—let me see what his riding name is: Lanark–

Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. He's worked through our caucus, and we've had quite the debate. We support Tony Dean's panel. We believe that more needs to be done to encourage people to work in the legitimate market and not on the black market.

Having said that, in the Ontario PC caucus, we have grave concerns that this piece of legislation doesn't do what Tony Dean's panel had intended—or recommended, for that matter. That's why we have serious concerns today with Bill 160, and that's why we'll continue to speak for other opportunities to increase safety training in Ontario, but also to eliminate that black market and make it more attractive for employees to find work in legitimate opportunities.

So I'd like to thank you, and I look forward to entering the debate for a longer period of time in a few moments.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was interested in listening to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I can see that, like all of us in this House, he is interested in moving the laws in Ontario to where workers would have more protection. He spoke about his son, who had taken on a physical job for one summer that had some risk.

I come from a community where most of the jobs are heavy industrial, high-risk jobs. I mean, on April 28 we will be celebrating the Day of Mourning. When we celebrate the Day of Mourning, this is a day to recognize everybody who has died on the job. It was started in Sudbury, by the way, by USW 6500, and it is now something that is recognized worldwide. I bring this forward because not all jobs are created equal. There is lots that can be done to bring forward ways to make even the most dangerous job safer.

My husband is a firefighter. There is a lot of danger in the job that he does, but there are also a lot of best practices that allow him to do his job safely. I look at all of the people who work in mines, and the people I represent in my riding, where a huge percentage of them work in the mine—heavy, industrial, very dangerous jobs. Health and safety have made a lot of those jobs a whole lot safer.

We all want the same thing. To do this, you need transparency; you need accountability; you need a way to hold people accountable. I have spoken before, and although I agree with most of what he said, I disagree with the reporting relationship. The reporting relationship has to be more transparent. Everybody should be able to see the reports that will be done by this new officer, and should be able to learn from the best practices—

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: May I first of all compliment everyone in the House on the excellent tone that has been set in this House, where there's actually a good debate going on.

We've heard from the member from Nickel Belt, and now from the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and all of the other comments. They have

been very substantial and good comments. To my way of thinking, this is all about only one thing: greater transparency. It comes from a report that was put together by Tony Dean and his people. Tony Dean was not only an assistant Deputy Minister of Labour, but he was also the secretary of cabinet for four years, I think a man who is highly regarded on all sides of the House, an excellent public servant who served his province extremely well. He has put together a very thoughtful report in order to place a greater highlight, as it were, on the safety concerns that we should all be concerned about in the workplace.

I would strongly recommend to this body, to the Legislative Assembly and to members on all sides, that this is a good step forward: (1) to make sure that our employees, the people who work for us on a day-to-day basis, are better protected; and (2) there's much greater accountability by having this office located within the ministry, and the Minister of Labour being ultimately responsible in an accountable fashion and way to any questions that may arise in the House, here, rather than having it being done by an outside, independent agency.

This is a good step forward, and I truly believe that with the implementation of this we will create a safer workplace for all of the people of Ontario who work so hard to make this the great province that it is and will be in the future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, you have up to two minutes.

Mr. Rick Johnson: I really appreciate the comments made by the members from Kingston and the Islands, Oakville, Nepean–Carleton and Nickel Belt.

As I said when I was speaking earlier, this is about safety for our workers in this province. Ultimately, we all want our workers in this province to come home safe at the end of the day. If they don't come home safe at the end of the day, then it's incumbent upon us in this House and in this province to make sure that the processes are in place so those people do come home and those problems are fixed. This will benefit all of the residents of Ontario, all of the employees in Ontario—the employers or the employees alike.

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The fact that people will be able to come forward now and report on issues that they have when they have a concern and not have to fear reprisal of any sort will help save lives. The full prevention side of this is going to be so important, and the training that will go into our workers to make sure that they understand what they are dealing with when they go in to work at the end of the day.

The member from Nickel Belt spoke about her husband, a firefighter, and many of the people in her area are miners. My father was a firefighter, so I grew up in a house where we understood the risks that they had to go through every day. I have cousins and uncles who are miners in northern Manitoba—or were miners—and it was a constant discussion. They would come home with

some horror stories in the 1960s and 1970s about what they were dealing with and the efforts that they made to improve that.

On the transparency side, as part of the transparency process, I agree that we need to come forward and make sure that those stories are told and brought forward, both when things are good and when things are bad.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is my pleasure to address this legislation, Bill 160, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, and of course our critic, Randy Hillier. I think it's really important, as we continue on the debate, to put what has happened in context.

On Christmas Day 2009, many of us in Ontario greeted very sad news—along with a very happy day—when we learned that four workers were killed in the city of Toronto and another grievously injured when the scaffolding that was supporting them during their work on Christmas Day collapsed. The workers were illegal immigrants, and the scaffolding had been improperly maintained.

As a result, the government launched a panel on worker safety. That panel was chaired by Tony Dean, a former secretary of cabinet, and the blue-ribbon panel consisted of academics, labour representatives and members of the industry. Almost a year later—and it took almost a year to study this tragedy and others—the panel came back with a series of recommendations in December 2010, just a few short months ago, to mark the near anniversary of that tragedy.

There were obviously political circumstances around that as well. The then Minister of Labour announced that legislation would be forthcoming, effectively on the same day deciding he would become a federal Liberal candidate, and shamelessly, I believe, used this legislation to further a political cause. But I will give credit where it's due to Premier McGuinty for taking swift action on that matter.

Having said that, this bill falls far short of what we in the Ontario PC caucus believe needs to be done, namely to eradicate the black market and make it safer for illegal immigrants or anyone else who is working, to ensure that no one else has to die when they're working.

The report by Tony Dean's blue-ribbon panel focused on the black market in construction. The bill does nothing to prevent employers from entering the black market. Indeed, we have heard that through the HST more people are going underground, whether that is in the home renovation sector or in others across Ontario. This is a real challenge that we are facing in this province, particularly for people who have found themselves without a job, given the job losses we've seen in Ontario and other places across Canada.

The report offered significant steps to increase safety training in Ontario, and the bill does nothing to increase training.

In fact, we are actually concerned in this Legislature on the opposition side, given what we've seen in recent

weeks—the attacks on our leader, the leader of the official opposition, by the Working Families Coalition—that this bill is going to create yet another bureaucratic committee that Pat Dillon can sit on. Earlier this week, I asked a question in the Legislature—and Pat Dillon, as many know, sits on the WSIB. He also sits on the college of trades appointments council secretariat and gets handsome per diems. He works with Liberal insiders who have had an opportunity to pool their resources to skirt Ontario election laws to do one thing, and that's to defeat Ontario PC candidates and to attack our leader, Tim Hudak. We believe that this bill would create another bureaucratic entity on which he will be able to have a seat and use his influence and potentially abuse taxpayer dollars.

While the bill contains numerous new obligations and regulations for industry, it has no similar requirements for labour. That is concerning. As with other recent Liberal bills, many of the substantive portions of the legislation are left for the regulations, and in this chamber we have said on numerous occasions that that is a significant problem.

You will recall July 1 of last year when, by regulation, over 900,000 items in Ontario were hit with an eco tax. That fee, or tax, never hit the floor of this Legislature, because it came by way of regulation. The question the Ontario PC caucus then has is, are there going to be new taxes or fees levied as a result of this legislation, that we will find out by way of regulation? It's another question that we have, because this isn't a fulsome bill. In fact, it's another bill that puts forth a few ideas by the government, and that gives the Minister of Labour more oversight and ability to set standards but doesn't specifically prescribe what those are.

The challenge before us, of course, is to say, can we trust this government to do a number of things? One is to eliminate the black market, when we've seen that they've grown it, given the HST. The second is that it not create another bureaucratic institution that their friends can sit on, namely Patrick Dillon. We can't trust that that won't happen. And finally, again, when you see that most of the substantive portions of this legislation are left to regulation, we then have to ask, are we expecting to be hit with another tax, or are we expecting to see what happened with that secret G20 security law, which was done behind the public's back and outside of this Legislature?

With those three key variables, it's very difficult to support what the government is doing, and it's very difficult to applaud them for not going the full road of where Tony Dean's panel came in. Again, I just want to reiterate that the Ontario PC caucus does support the findings of Tony Dean at the time—and I know every member of this Legislature shares in the grief and the sympathies for the families who did lose loved ones. We must remember in this chamber that we are here to protect the people of Ontario, whether they are children, women, new Canadians or workers. That is our job, and that's why it's important to have this debate today.

Having said that, Bill 160, I can safely say, does not safely allay any of our concerns with this current government.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome comments from my colleagues. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill. I'd like to urge all my colleagues to remember that the purpose of the Dean panel was to eradicate the black market in construction. I think it is important for all of us to remember that, as we continue the debate on this legislation.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was interesting to listen to the take of the member regarding this bill. She certainly did a good historical overview as to how this came to be, following a tragedy, how the panel did its work and then how this legislation came to be.

I tend to agree with her that the problem of black market workers does exist in Ontario, and frankly, it seems to be thriving in every part of Ontario. This made me think a little bit about Monday night, when I had the pleasure to attend the J.S. Woodsworth Awards. The people who won the award were from Justicia for Migrant Workers. I would say it's very similar to the case of what's happening to workers on the black markets, who have very little, if any, health and safety protection. The people who won the J.S. Woodsworth Award spoke very eloquently about what happens to migrant workers, how, here again, as to their health and safety, they are really treated like second-class citizens, and how the health and safety laws of this province are circumvented so they are left with very little protection.

This bill is brought forward so that we improve the health and safety of people in Ontario and we improve the education that will empower workers to protect themselves and to basically be able to use those rights. But all is for nothing if you work on the black market or you're a migrant worker who is not respected.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I just wanted to briefly comment on some of the remarks made by the member from Nepean–Carleton. I think she brought up some really excellent points.

The problem with this bill—it is a challenge because it amends two acts that presently exist: the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. These are two key acts being amended by this bill. When you go through the amendments here, you can see that there are quite a few amendments in this bill, and if it becomes law, we're going to see major changes in the way the Ontario health and safety act works in regard to certain things.

There are amendments in here regarding training—they're on page 2 of the act. I won't go through all of them, but this provides for training for workers. It's clear in the act what those training systems are.

As far as the issue of whether it would be too bureaucratic or too heavy, a couple of remarks. First of all, this bill proposes a revenue-neutral system, so we're not going to be creating a whole bunch of new positions and

charging more money. It's revenue-neutral, and that's very important to know. The chief prevention officer is being created and the panel is being created, but it still remains revenue-neutral because there are changes to the other act, the WSIB act, that offset whatever expenses come on this side.

As far as the black market goes, again, the amendments in this bill to the Ontario health and safety act are quite substantial and there are sections in here that integrate the whole system. With the integration of this system, it will prevent the black market from increasing, because it simplifies the system. I think that's a good thing.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I want to commend the member from our caucus who has spoken and commend her remarks. The member from Nepean–Carleton raises a number of issues that our leader, Tim Hudak, has suggested we give consideration to, and also the idea that has been raised here before that some organization can somehow be added to the existing organizations to ensure safety.

I'm wondering if this new occupational person—there may even be chance that it might be Pat Dillon; he seems to be taking a very active role. As the chief prevention officer, I'm not sure if he wouldn't maybe have a bit of a conflict. I think we need someone that's more broadly skilled to recognize the importance of workplaces and the existing structures of safety committees and advisory committees and the function of unions within those organizations. I think that's very important. Some of them are non-union organizations; some of them are small business.

With all due respect to Tony Dean and the expert panel, I think there needs to be recognition of the good work that's going on today. There are violators now, and I think the accident that has been referred to with the scaffolding around Christmastime—that, I believe, should have been enforced. Where were the existing laws to mandate compliance and inspection of workplaces? There's a right to enter property and inspect and enforce compliance. I think it's a bit of an excuse, actually: By creating more bureaucracy, we're going to solve the problem.

I also respect that our leader, Mr. Hudak, said very clearly that he wants to work with small business to make our places safer and assure that the economy of Ontario and the families of Ontario are safe. Don't ever misunderstand that. We don't want to have more bureaucracy.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The member from Nepean does raise some good questions around the underground economy and the illegal use of workers, and the parliamentary assistant assures us that there are measures within the bill that deal with that. I'm not quite sure it does. I worry about that because the enforcement mech-

anisms, in my mind, are not sufficiently strong, and the reprisal provisions are not adequate and/or strong enough to be able to deal with the questions that the member from Nepean raises. But it will be interesting to see tomorrow whether the parliamentary assistant can help us with where exactly in the bill—he can show us—it deals with the issues of the illegal use of immigrants who are underground. I'm looking forward to that.

The other question I raise to the member from Nepean—because the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington raised it as well. I don't know why you guys hate Dillon so much. You shouldn't be showing these emotions so strongly for individuals. He probably thrives on your attention. I suggest that you just stop that, because I'm not sure what you gain from it.

You raise issues, as the member from Lanark, about how this government is going to put in Liberal people in the prevention council, but I worry about a hostile government putting in people who are hostile to workers. That's something that worries me as well. I wonder whether you have any comments about a hostile minister, or potentially a hostile government, that can then fill their own prevention council with members who may not be so good to workers. That's another worry of mine.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Nepean–Carleton, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I do hope I acknowledge all of my colleagues. By my estimation, my colleagues from Scarborough Southwest, Durham and Trinity–Spadina offered their opinions in this debate, and I appreciate that. I particularly appreciate the parliamentary assistant coming to discuss this.

Look, I'm going to be very clear: We do have concerns, in the Ontario PC caucus, with this piece of legislation. It was drafted in response to a crisis, a tragedy that occurred on Christmas Day with four illegal immigrants working in the black market. The blue-ribbon panel that was created, that Tony Dean chaired, focused the report on the black market. This legislation does not do that, with all due respect to the government.

We have valid concerns. We believe that this bill could be better to eradicate the black market. I will stand here and defend that line, because I wholly believe, as my colleagues do as well, that the best way to protect workers is to ensure that they're working in legitimate employment that does adhere to standards. It's one thing to put standards on legitimate employers, which is important; however, if you're not doing anything to eradicate how this occurred in the first place, which is the black market, we have a real challenge in Ontario.

Again, I'll go back to one of the key issues that has driven people into the underground economy in Ontario recently: It's the HST. We've heard that from the home renovation sector as well as others, and I would ask the government, in the coming days and weeks before we leave this place for an election, to address that challenge and to address the challenge that we all see as a result of this underground black market economy.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Rick Johnson: It's a pleasure to introduce, in the gallery, Gene Lewis, executive director of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a couple of things. First of all, in the public galleries, I'd like to welcome many representatives of the Ontario Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association and also reps of Camping in Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Also, I'd just like to acknowledge a member of the press gallery. Robert Benzie of the Toronto Star is 45 today.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I too want to join in wishing Rob Benzie a happy birthday—he's not here yet, but he will be—and Antonella Artuso from the Sun, whose birthday was on Sunday.

And I think of interest to all members of the House: he's not here yet, but my colleague and good friend Monte Kwinter turned 80 yesterday. Here he is.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to recognize Al Robinson, who's from the Ontario Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association. Welcome, Al, and keep up the good work.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'm delighted to introduce two great residents from the riding of Peterborough who are in the members' east gallery: Marie Calberry and Claire Cartman, who recently won a silent auction to have lunch with the MPP. I know they're looking forward to the proceedings of question period this morning and to a fine lunch a little later this morning.

Mr. Mike Colle: I have some distinguished guests from one of the most beautiful cities in the world, Perugia, Italy. I would like to welcome Giorgio Faraglia and Christina Vescovi, and their hosts John Orsini and Rosa Orsini. Benvenuti a Toronto, Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of page Rafeh Shahzad and the member from Brampton West to welcome Kausar Shahzad and Shahzad Hussain to the public gallery today. It's a pleasure to have you here.

Also today we'd like to welcome a group of broadcast journalism students from Sheridan College who are seated in the press gallery. Sheridan is located in Oakville. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, Ontario families are very concerned about the

bloat and waste that is growing under the McGuinty government; that families are paying more and getting less in return. One of the areas where you've seen extraordinary bloat and waste is the growth in the size and cost of agencies, boards and commissions under your leadership. We have given you several examples where we believe, for example, the LHINs and the Ontario Power Authority together have taken half a billion dollars in waste and administration.

Premier, if you're really committed to finding any kind of savings, will you follow the Ontario PC call to shut the doors on your wasteful bureaucracies like the LHINs and the OPA?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to, to a certain extent, welcome my honourable colleague to the party. Over a week ago, we announced that we were closing 14 Ontario agencies. Before that, we had announced we were going to merge Infrastructure Ontario and the Ontario Realty Corp., for an annual savings of \$5 million.

My concern any time a member of the party opposite stands up and says they're looking to cut things in order to save money is their record. In the past, when they looked to save money, they cut back on hospitals, they cut back on water inspectors, they cut back on meat inspectors and they cut back on nurses. Those are the kinds of concerns that we have and that we share with Ontarians when it comes to their language when it comes to cuts.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier claims that he has plans to close down 14 agencies. Premier, you added 14 regional health bureaucracies called the LHINs across this province, folks who don't spend a single minute with patients. They don't do any surgeries, they don't even plug in an MRI, and they've taken \$250 million out of front-line care. Our position is clear: We would shut the doors on the LHINs and put every penny into front-line health care for Ontario families instead.

Premier, you boast about a merger between the Ontario Realty Corp. and Infrastructure Ontario. Your so-called savings amount to 0.0002% of your record \$18.7-billion debt. Are you so out of touch that you think that's an achievement?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's hard to believe it, but my friend opposite is actually in favour of big government. He wants to take those decisions and the money that is now being distributed by LHINs throughout Ontario communities, and he wants to consolidate that in downtown Toronto. He wants to create big government.

I'm with Dr. Wilbert Keon—by the way, Senator Wilbert Keon—who said the following in response to this gentleman's proposal: "I have no idea what his plan is and a general statement like that doesn't make sense to me at all...."

"I'm a card-carrying Conservative, but my love for health care transcends my political persuasions."

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I think that shows how dramatically out of touch this Premier has become with the concerns

of average, hard-working families. At a time they're waiting far too long for emergency care, you embrace your wasteful bureaucracies, the LHINs, which should be closed down and the money put into front-line care.

Behind you, your Ontario energy minister has an unseemly love affair with the Ontario Power Authority, which stands as a tribute to McGuinty government waste, driving up the hydro bills. We would take a different course.

Premier, will you do the right thing? Will you listen to the PC Party recommendations, close the doors on the LHINs, shut down the OPA and pass on those savings to Ontario families instead?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I say I'm with Senator Keon when it comes to our position on LHINs.

I want to remind my honourable colleague that the LHINs are responsible for the distribution of some \$22 billion. They are funding our hospitals, our long-term-care institutions and community care.

Beyond that, I think one of the things that Ontarians remain very interested in is, why is it that my honourable colleague opposite is not championing his commitment—his firm, solemn and unwavering commitment—to take \$3 billion out of health care? That's going to result in a loss of nurses, in a loss of doctors, in an increase in wait times and in a shortage of long-term-care beds. I encourage my honourable colleague to stop talking about his cuts to LHINs and to start talking about his cuts in health care generally—we're talking to the tune of \$3 billion.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: Premier, you have an extraordinary record of waste and mismanagement under your leadership. You continue to embrace your wasteful LHINs. You have a bizarre attachment to the Ontario Power Authority, which is driving up hydro bills. You have an unseemly embrace of your eco-tax-collecting agencies, which are pulling more money out of the pockets of Ontario families and delivering less in return. We would take a different approach.

Today, Premier, I am tabling a private member's bill to review every agency, board and commission in this province, a sunset review to make them justify their existence. If they can't, they would be shut down and the savings invested in front-line services and balancing the books.

Premier, will you please support this comprehensive, thorough approach to rooting out this kind of waste in the McGuinty government?

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Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I say to my honourable colleague, "Welcome to the club." Over a week ago, we announced the closure of 14 separate agencies—not a review; a specific commitment to shut down 14 separate agencies. Some time before that, we announced the merger of a couple of agencies that will save us some \$5 million on an annual basis.

Again, my concern is what it is the honourable member is not talking about. Why won't he talk about his plan to take \$3 billion out of health care? Why does he not talk more and expand a bit more on his plan to shut down full-day kindergarten in the province of Ontario? That's something we are very much wed to, absolutely committed to. We will see this through. Why is it they're not talking about those kinds of cuts? Those are the kinds of things that Ontario families have a passionate concern about.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier just doesn't get it. He's patting himself on the back for what is equivalent to a 0.0002% in savings. He brags that he's closing down 14 agencies. Premier, you added 14 regional health bureaucracies in LHINs alone. Your Ontario Power Authority is driving up hydro bills with extraordinary waste and incompetence.

Here's what a PC government would do: put the onus on the agencies to prove their ongoing value to Ontario families who actually pay the bills. If it works, you keep it. If it's broken and needs to be fixed, you fix it. But if it can't justify its existence, it goes.

Premier, why won't you support this very reasonable measure to root out the waste under the McGuinty government?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Let's take the opportunity to continue to flesh out for Ontarians some of the Ontario Conservative Party plan at this point in time. They're going to take \$3 billion out of health care. We know that they're going to eliminate full-day kindergarten in Ontario. We know that they don't support clean energy, so they're going to rip up the contracts which have resulted in thousands of jobs in so many Ontario communities when it comes to building, erecting and maintaining solar panels, wind turbines and the like. We know that they intend to fire up our coal plants, which we made a commitment to eliminate here in the province of Ontario. We know that they are going to scrap the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

In ensuing questions, I'll take a bit more opportunity to flesh out their position since they're somewhat reluctant to talk about it.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, you just don't get what's happening in homes across this province, conversations in coffee shops and on street corners. Families are sick and tired of paying more and more to the McGuinty government and getting less in return. Look at the long list of McGuinty waste: a billion dollars down the drain in the eHealth boondoggle; scandal after scandal after scandal at the lottery and gaming corporation; and an MPAC bureaucracy that is giving away iPods to its employees and getting basic assessments wrong, driving up taxes across this province. Premier, are you that dramatically out of touch that you don't know what is going on under your nose each and every day in the Ontario government?

Will you do the right thing and adopt our bill for a sunset review for all agencies, boards and commissions and, if they don't justify their existence, close them down?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I've already welcomed my honourable colleague to the club when it comes to eliminating unnecessary agencies, boards and commissions. We're doing it in a thoughtful and responsible way.

My honourable colleague, for example, is proposing that we sunset Cancer Care Ontario. That is something that we, on this side of the House, cannot support.

Again, I think what Ontarians continue to wait for is, at some point in time, that my honourable colleague and his party are going to move beyond the comfort and the quiet preserve of criticism, and that they're actually going to put forward a substantive plan for Ontarians to consider. In the meantime, I'll help Ontarians understand what it is, in fact, they're proposing.

They want to take \$3 billion out of health care. They want to shut down full-day kindergarten in the province of Ontario. They want to rip up our contracts for clean energy which will result in thousands of jobs. That's just a glimmer, just a bit of a glimpse of what it is they in fact propose for Ontario families.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, Ontario's finance minister criticized the federal budget for not doing enough for jobs, but the Prime Minister's so-called jobs strategy of making life less affordable with an unfair HST while handing out billions of dollars in corporate tax giveaways that aren't creating any jobs seems a lot like the Premier's plan. Can the Premier explain the difference to us?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We will have the opportunity to table a budget next Tuesday which will address a range of opportunities for new jobs for Ontarians; which will build on our support of a strong public education system; which will provide training opportunities to more Ontarians and a brighter future for Ontarians. There's a proper way to get back to balance while you create jobs and protect the vital public services that are so important to all Ontario families. I look forward to the leader's support of those initiatives next week.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Jim Flaherty has praised Ontario for following his lead. One pundit noted that previous budgets from this government look like they were faxed from Ottawa. Now, the opposition in Ottawa has made it clear that it is not the time for another round of corporate tax giveaways. Does the Premier agree with the Prime Minister's decision to cut corporate taxes or the position of his own party?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I don't think the leader of the third party heard Mr. Flaherty's comments this morning on CBC.

I'll say this: According to Jack Mintz, our tax plan for jobs and growth will create 600,000 net new jobs in Ontario over the next 10 years.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: Hugh Mackenzie knows too.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: My colleague reminds me that Hugh Mackenzie and the Centre for Policy Alternatives have endorsed that tax plan as being the right plan for people of modest incomes because we're cutting taxes and making life more affordable for Ontario's most vulnerable citizens.

Finally, this government will protect the great strides we've made in public education and public health care. Those are the issues that families are concerned about. That's what our budget will address as it creates jobs and lowers the deficit more and more each year.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: One opposition MP says: "Now is not the time for a \$6-billion tax cut to our largest corporations that comes at the expense of families." That quote comes from the MP for Ottawa South, David McGuinty. Can the Premier tell us whether he agrees with Mr. McGuinty?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: You know, the leader of the New Democratic Party proposes a job creation plan for Alberta; she proposes a job creation plan for Saskatchewan and British Columbia; she proposes a job creation plan for Indiana and for Illinois and for Ohio and Michigan. All she cares about is pushing jobs, like steelworker jobs, out of Hamilton; like auto jobs, out of Windsor and St. Catharines.

I have the greatest respect for the member for Ottawa South. I look forward to campaigning for him and his colleagues should there be a federal election. But make no mistake: This government will protect the vital gains we've made in public health care and public education as we eliminate the deficit and create a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My second question is to the Premier as well. Families were looking for the Harper Conservatives to put their priorities first. Instead, they cut taxes for corporations that are shedding jobs. They didn't get it. Next week, families will be looking to the McGuinty Liberals. Will the McGuinty Liberals put family budgets first, or will they follow the Harper Conservatives' lead by putting corporate budgets first?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, I'm pleased to take the question from my honourable colleague, although I thought that reference to the MP for Ottawa South was a low blow. I was hoping that you were going to call her on that, Speaker.

I can say that our government has worked long and hard to ensure that we are sensitive to the issues that concern families right in their homes.

That's why we've worked so hard to enhance the quality of education we deliver to all our children. We've

got higher test scores, higher graduation rates and smaller classes. We've made spaces for 200,000 more young people in our post-secondary institutions.

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We've also invested heavily in health care. We've got our wait times down. There are thousands more nurses and doctors. We've got family health teams.

We have never lost sight of those fundamental concerns of families, especially when it comes to those public services they rely on: their schools and their health care.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The families that I've been meeting with across Ontario tell me that they're stretched to the limit. Many have been forced to take on new jobs that pay a lot less. Many haven't seen their wages go up in years. All have seen the cost of living skyrocketing. There's no wonder that people like Eve Corves say, "We just cannot seem to get a break."

Will the Premier give people like Ms. Corves a break in next week's budget?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'll remind my honourable colleague about some of the things that we've done, and I think she can draw some optimism from our record.

We've increased the minimum wage seven times; she may not recall, but it had been frozen for many, many years. We increased it seven times. We increased social assistance seven times. We created the Ontario child benefit. It started at \$600 per child. It's now up to \$1,100 per child. It's benefiting 1.3 million children who are growing up in struggling families—600,000 families, in fact.

The average Ontario family this year is receiving a \$355 income tax cut. They'll continue to get that every year going forward. The Minister of Finance, through our policy, has also taken thousands of our lowest-income earners off the tax rolls entirely.

Again, I would argue to my honourable colleague opposite that we are, in fact, keeping the needs of our families front and centre at all times.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm talking about the fact that families are feeling the financial squeeze these days. I'm talking about families like Dana Moore's. Dana writes, "My oil bill at this time last year was averaging around \$500 a month. I just received my monthly oil bill, and it was \$743."

This government has a choice. They can side with families like Dana's and put family budgets first, or they can side with Prime Minister Harper and offer billions of dollars in tax giveaways to banks and insurance companies that actually shed 25,000 jobs this past year.

Whose side is the Premier on? Who's he going to side with?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I wish the world were as simple as my honourable colleague describes it to be: "You've got to decide whether you're on the side of our businesses, which generate our jobs, or on the side of our

families and their public services.” The fact of the matter is, we think that we’ve got to be on both sides. We think we’ve got to bring a balanced approach. That’s why, at the same time as we are reducing the tax burden on our businesses, we’ve also reduced the tax burden on our families. At the same time, we continue to find ways to invest in those services that families have got to be able to count on, like their schools, like their health care, like their environmental protection. Those are the kinds of things that we have never once lost sight of as a government.

While we are, in fact, reducing—again, to repeat—the tax burden on our businesses in order to ensure that they can compete in a very competitive global economy, we are also finding ways to provide financial supports to those families and enhance the quality of their public services.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Minister, two weeks ago you announced that the agency review you began in December was complete, after 13 agencies were trimmed and a little over \$5 million was recovered. It was as if you unfurled a banner that read “Mission Accomplished,” when you said, “We’ve gone beyond the goal we set.”

How will you spend the \$5 million your review netted? Will you put all of it against the \$18.7-billion deficit, or will you pump it back into the agencies that survived your review, or return it all to the pockets of Ontario families who struggle to pay for agencies they no longer need?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: It’s interesting to learn today that the Conservatives are actually considering sunsetting Cancer Care Ontario.

What the member opposite and the leader of his party don’t recognize is that 15 of the largest agencies spend 90% of the money that’s spent by all agencies. So yes, indeed, we did take some initial steps, and I can assure you that, as we move forward, we will do more. We have a plan to balance the budget, a plan that’s clear and laid out. We have yet to see a plan from that party, and we know why: because they’re going to take \$3 billion out of health care. They are going to shut down full-day learning. They want to rip up every contract with farmers who are producing clean, renewable energy.

That’s their plan; our plan’s very different. We’re going to protect education and health care as we build a better future for our children.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Minister, your spending is what is putting education and health care at risk.

Premier McGuinty has a spending problem that won’t be solved by merging two bloated agencies like Infrastructure Ontario and the Ontario Realty Corp. into one mega-bloated agency. You haven’t taken effective action, so the Ontario PC leader is bringing forward sunset review legislation that looks seriously at agencies and what

they’re spending. If this legislation had been in place, scandals at eHealth and at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. could have been avoided or caught early.

Minister, why won’t you commit to adopting our measures that will root out waste in the McGuinty government?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Their idea of waste is hospital beds in emergency rooms. Their idea of waste is nurses. I’ll remind you that that government compared our nurses to hula-hoop workers. Their idea of waste is full-day learning. They are going to get rid of that.

They have no plan, no idea. We won’t support that bill. Why? Because what they did when they were in office was, they deliberately exempted Hydro One and OPG even from freedom of information—which we did, and what did we find when we opened the doors and we opened the window to accountability? We found a yacht owned by Hydro One; we found an Air Canada Centre box; we found 18 months of missing expense records for the chair of that; we found untendered contracts with senior Tories.

We changed that. We’re building better education and health care, protecting them from people like that—

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

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. As the minister knows, hearings are under way on a proposed new nuclear plant at Darlington. Presenters are supposed to answer questions from other interveners, but in January, Ministry of Energy ADM Rick Jennings negotiated a special agreement with the panel, allowing Ontario government presenters to refuse to answer questions.

Why is the government undermining the panel process on the proposed Darlington plant?

Hon. Brad Duguid: That question is absolutely ridiculous. I suggest that the member read that letter carefully, because the letter says no such thing.

Rick Jennings will be there as the assistant deputy minister of the Ministry of Energy. He’ll be there to respond to any questions that need to be responded to. This is an important issue, and it’s very important that he is there. He’ll be following the process that is put in place right now by the federal panel out in Courtice.

We look forward to following that process. It’s an important process. It’s important that Ontarians have their say. It’s important that we hear what Ontarians in other groups across the province, whether they agree with the project or not, have to say. We’re very confident that it will be a thorough process. My federal colleagues have assured me of that. They’ve responded positively to our request to ensure that it is indeed a very thorough process.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I know that you enforce the rules on unparliamentary language, so I will limit my comments in response to that non-answer.

Yesterday, that minister told the media, “We’re open to responding to any questions that may come up. It’s just a case of working with the process that they have in place.” But the truth is, the Ministry of Energy has sought to change the panel process and secure a special right to refuse to answer questions.

Why does the minister tell reporters that he will answer questions when he won’t?

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Hon. Brad Duguid: Once again, the member is simply wrong. It’s simply not the case. We’re pleased to answer whatever questions come up in the hearings. Indeed, Mr. Jennings will be there, and he’ll be there to respond to questions in keeping with the process that is in place under the federal environmental assessment process, the highest level of environmental process in the land. It’s very important that the ADM is there to respond to those questions. He’ll be there.

What the NDP should also take note of on this issue is their reference early last week. The media covered this very well when they suggested that your efforts to exploit what’s going on in Japan right now in terms of trying to further your own political interest is simply distasteful.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a second. I would just remind the members that question period is a very important time in the parliamentary system and in a parliamentary day, but when we start to bring it to a level of some personal attacks on one another—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That’s not helpful from somebody who’s not sitting in his seat, to the honourable member.

I’d just ask—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister, that’s not helpful either.

As I’m standing, I would like to deliver a message to all of you that I think is of importance to every member in this chamber, and that is, let’s be cognizant of some of the language that we use, and let’s not bring it down to a level, as an honourable member who’s not in his seat described it as being, in the “gutter.”

New question.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. There is a consensus that reducing red tape in Ontario is of key importance for businesses so that they can rightly focus their time and money on being competitive, creating jobs and contributing to our prosperity, something that I often hear from businesses in my riding of Ottawa Centre.

As all members are aware, the government introduced legislation to help Ontario businesses save time and money and, since then, I have been hearing positive feedback about the Open for Business initiative from our

business community. Yet, the opposition who continually rage against red tape failed to follow through on their own words. They voted against the very act created to save businesses’ time and money by cutting red tape.

Would the Minister of Economic Development and Trade update this House about our Open for Business initiative and provide some tangible evidence to all members on the progress we have been making in reducing the regulatory and administrative burden in our economy?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I’m delighted to give a report, and we’ve got so much more information that couldn’t possibly fit in the time frame.

But our Open for Business initiative has hit another major milestone. In fact, we’re launching, this Monday, yet another round table with another sector, this one the restaurant, hotelier and service sector, where we’ll be working with them directly to sort out their priorities in what they see as a regulatory burden. So far, we have moved across 500 different business services available across 17 different ministries. We have hit some 70,000 regulations that have since been eliminated across all our ministries.

We have more work to do. What business has told us is, it’s not just about the number of regulations, but it’s the type of regulation, that it’s working with businesses directly in how we actually work with them, and changing those processes means more to them than just—

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

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: With these types of results, I’m puzzled that the official opposition still voted against this bill.

As you know, Ottawa is a technology hub, and we are very proud of the innovative and important work the sector does and the immense contribution it makes to our regional economy. I understand that the medical technology sector, which forms a key part of the Ottawa technology cluster, is one of the industries that the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade has targeted as part of its business sector strategy under the Open for Business initiative.

Could the Minister of Economic Development and Trade provide more examples of how this government’s Open for Business initiative is enhancing the ability of key sectors like this one to grow and prosper, to the benefit of my community and communities across the province?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: We do have a number of examples. For example, we have one telephone number now for business, for municipal, provincial and federal services that are available to business—all through one line.

This particular member for Ottawa Centre, who follows the medical technology community specifically, knows that in this example this sector is thrilled with the work of Open for Business.

By way of example, Ontario is now the leading jurisdiction in establishing a method of assessing technologies that will shift the evaluation of medical devices upstream

so the results of the assessments are determined pre-market. This doesn't happen anywhere. Now these companies are saying, "We wish that every province would do what Ontario is doing," a direct result of the Open for Business initiative.

We're delighted that the member from Ottawa Centre is a huge proponent of this work, a huge proponent of the industry that makes up such a big part of the Ottawa business community.

COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Premier. The McGuinty government has asked the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for an opinion on how to give relief to parents who were denied support because they hadn't witnessed the murder of their child. In other words, you're asking the board to reconsider the opinions the Ombudsman gave you in 2006 and that the Honourable Roy McMurtry gave you in 2008.

Yesterday, the Acting Premier was asked for a timeline for action. Ignoring the question, he talked about increases to the victims' funds that parents of murdered children are not allowed to access.

I'll ask you, Premier: What is the timeline for when your broken victims-of-crime system will be fixed for parents of murdered children?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I was up in Timmins with NAN yesterday, so I could have probably better answered the question, and I will give the same answer that we've given, which is that we've said we're going to fix this. We've said we are going to fix it as quickly as possible. We've asked the CICB for some advice on different rules of procedure and possible legislative changes and we're taking a look at some other options as well to fix it as quickly as possible. I think the member, when he asked the question, forgot to mention that we are investing more than any previous government in history in victim services in the various forms—

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: That's the exact same answer that the Acting Premier gave yesterday. Your answer was no better than his and you didn't like his.

It's no mystery what's broken and how to fix the program. The Ontario PC leader has put forward a plan of action that will give parents relief. In contrast, Premier McGuinty dithers and puts forward more process and excuses, which we've just heard. You won't take action; the Ontario PC caucus has.

Tomorrow, the justice policy committee will debate an Ontario PC motion to investigate the \$31-million surplus in the victims' justice fund and why you're not adopting our three-point plan to release funds to victims.

Will the McGuinty government support our motion and expedite relief to the parents of murdered children? Will you do that tomorrow?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Both the Premier and I have said we are going to expedite the resolution to this.

I'm very pleased to hear that the committee is going to take a look at this because when the Tories left office they had a \$77-million surplus in the victims' justice fund. The amount that they referred to that we had was \$31 million. But of the \$31 million, there's a contingency, and \$3 million that's unallocated. All the rest is allocated to programs that are under way and it's already all committed for victims.

We're going to sort this out very quickly, within a matter of days or weeks. The member should know that. But I'm quite happy if we get into a comparison between their record and—

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

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. Newspapers are reporting that US Steel is ravaging the Hamilton economy yet again. It's planning to move millions of dollars worth of metallurgical coal from the former Stelco plant. This, at a time when their CEO John Surma's salary rose to \$8.3 million. Does the Premier really support this coal being processed outside of Hamilton?

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

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Hon. Sandra Pupatello: First of all, we want to say that we actively work with Hamilton on a regular basis. We recognize the challenge that Hamilton and region has been under because of the pressure of having so many US Steel workers who have not been working. It's been very detrimental to the community, and we do everything we can to be supportive. Let me say that first.

Second, there is a lot of information that we are not aware of, in terms of resources moving in and moving out, whether they're moving to the Nanticoke plant or from that site or across—we don't know. We don't want to respond to questions where we simply don't know what the facts are about what the company is doing on-site. What is important is that on the last visit that I made to Hamilton, I met with people. I met with people representing the steelworkers. I have historically met with people representing the company as well. We constantly stay in touch to see if there is any role that the provincial government can play in resolving a dispute—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Local 1005 agreed to the production of coke at the Hamilton plant to preserve the coke-making battery. If the ovens are turned off, it could be devastating to the whole operation. This coke is being produced by non-unionized salaried workers. The company's actions to move the coal out of Hamilton is another slap in the face of the co-operative union workers and those who've been locked out since November 7.

The federal government, together with the Ontario government, could pass legislation to restart Hamilton Works under a stand-pat collective agreement. Why won't this government get tough on job-destroying foreign companies like US Steel and force them to restart the Hamilton Works?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think the member opposite knows that there are a number of items under federal jurisdiction that the federal government—actually, to their credit—have made significant moves on, and US Steel is dealing with that in court. Let me say that just last week, the local members, the local MPPs, did meet—both the member from Hamilton Mountain and from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale—with the US Steel workers.

Again, we are in a position to do everything we can to see that those workers go back to work, and we are constantly offering that support to them, whether that's mediation—what other kind of intervention can we provide? What's important for Hamilton is that the balance of the work of this government is to put more investment in Hamilton—groups like Max Aicher, a new steel company, taking a US Steel mill and reopening it and hiring hundreds of steelworkers. That is the work that we're doing to support a great city like Hamilton, and we will continue to do more.

FOREIGN-TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question is for the Attorney General. As the world emerges from extremely challenging economic times, we must re-examine how we do things and explore new and innovative ideas to help us emerge stronger and more prosperous. My constituents are heartened to hear that the McGuinty government has a plan to not only weather these difficult times but to put Ontario on a stronger economic footing to benefit generations of Ontarians. Through the Open for Business plan, our government demonstrates its support for innovation and our commitment to deliver economic opportunities and growth to the people of the province.

As a professional engineer, I know that the Attorney General's office is responsible for the Professional Engineers Act. Can the Attorney General please tell me what the government has done to eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic barriers and barriers to practice that foreign-trained engineers face to help revitalize Ontario's economy?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member from Ottawa–Orléans, not only in his capacity as MPP but also with his background as a professional engineer, brings such good insight to this. We've worked very closely with my colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Trade through the Ontario Open for Business initiative to make for an open Ontario.

One of the things that was identified by my colleague is that foreign-trained engineers had to have either permanent residency or citizenship before they could start working here. This denied them the opportunity to work,

and businesses were denied the opportunity of their expertise. Working with Kim Allen, the registrar of the engineers society, we have eliminated that barrier, making for stronger businesses, better access to talent and better access for our newcomers who come with the training to work right here in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Phil McNeely: Each year Ontario opens its doors to thousands of newcomers. These newcomers choose Ontario as their new home to create a better life for themselves and their families. Newcomers bring with them their skills, talents and expertise, which they hope can help them find a good job, but while many newcomers possess the skills they need and the will and desire to succeed, many of them find it difficult to enter the workforce.

Newcomers in my riding of Ottawa–Orléans have told me that the lack of Canadian work experience is often a barrier to finding meaningful employment in their profession. Can the minister tell newcomers in my riding and throughout Ontario what the government is doing to help internationally trained engineers to find work in their profession?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: To the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm proud to say that the McGuinty government has invested in more than 200 bridge training programs to help our newcomers succeed. Bridge training, as we all know, creates a bridge to employment by helping our newcomers get training and also get Canadian workplace experience so that they can get licensed or certified in their profession or trade.

Our government, for example, has worked with the Professional Engineers of Ontario to develop bridge training programs specifically tailored for our internationally trained engineers. We currently have nine active programs that are helping to put the skills of our newcomer engineers to work. I'm pleased to tell the Legislature that approximately one third of Ontario's 73,000 licensed engineers were actually educated outside of Canada.

These programs work. They help our newcomers get good jobs to support themselves and their families. The McGuinty government will continue to invest in these bridge training programs.

SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Education: Trustees elected to the York Region District School Board have been told that it's inappropriate for them to meet in private with parents who want to discuss issues related to school board policy. Parents and trustees elected to represent them want to know whether this directive has come from the minister and, if so, how can the minister so blatantly undermine the role of an elected trustee?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Certainly, I very much appreciate the role of locally elected trustees, having been one myself. I am also aware that the Education Act

is very clear around those five conditions that enable boards to hold private sessions where the public is not able to participate. They are very specific. They are outlined in the Education Act. They were in the Education Act when you were in government. They remain there now.

We are absolutely committed as a government to ensure that school boards act within those legislated guidelines. If there are people in any community in Ontario who have a question about whether or not boards are conducting business appropriately in public, they should contact this office and we will definitely look into that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: These are parents from York region who simply want to meet with their trustee to talk about public school board issues. The director of education has in fact told trustees that they are not allowed to meet with parents in private to discuss these issues. They're being told that a staff member must attend every meeting that trustees have with parents.

I would like to know: Since when is it inappropriate for duly elected trustees not to be allowed by the director of education to meet with parents in private? Will the minister stand in her place and tell us whether she believes it is appropriate and, if so, will she send a directive to this director and every other director who would undermine the role of trustees in this province?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I very much appreciate the question. It is an important one. Certainly, trustees are accountable to the people who elected them. They are not accountable to the school board administration when it comes to dealing with the people who elected them.

I would say that trustees do have a responsibility to the people who elected them; that there is nothing in the Education Act that would say that a trustee should not meet with their constituents. That is very clear. Nothing has changed with this government. In fact, we believe that locally elected boards are accountable to their communities, and the best way to do that is to meet with the people who elected them.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Clayton Leveille was a healthy 21-year-old from St. Catharines on vacation with his girlfriend in Mexico last July. Like many Ontarians going on vacation, he had purchased health insurance in case something went wrong, but when it did and Clayton fell gravely ill, he was left stranded in Mexico because no hospital beds were available for him at home. It took seven weeks for a transfer back to Ontario. Sadly, after months of treatment, Clayton tragically passed away.

Now his family is left wondering whether a speedier transfer could in fact have helped him save his life. How could the Premier allow families to be left asking these kinds of questions?

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Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Obviously, first and foremost, I know that all members join me in expressing my sympathy to his family at this time of their personal loss.

The best that I can say is that we work as hard as we can, through all of our health care providers, to ensure that if there is someone who finds themselves in need outside the country, we move as quickly as we possibly can to have that person returned to an Ontario health setting like a hospital. I know that great efforts were made in this particular case.

I think I should also take the opportunity to remind Ontarians that when they're travelling out of the country, we encourage them to obtain private travel insurance. OHIP only covers a limited number of services while travelling outside of the country.

We also find that we've got to work with the insurance companies in these cases as well to ensure that the person is brought back.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Sadly, the Leveille family is not the only one that's having this kind of an experience. In February, the Toronto Star reported on a Woodbridge man stuck in St. Louis for 10 weeks, unable to secure a Toronto hospital bed. Our offices receive calls all too frequently from families facing this unacceptable situation. Ontarians want a reliable health care system that will take care of them if they fall sick, but today it seems that this government is abandoning those very patients.

What is the Premier going to do to assure families that they will never have to face this kind of heart-wrenching situation again?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that the minister is making sure that we can draw whatever lessons that we possibly can from these particular circumstances and move as quickly as we can to bring people back who are in need of health care here.

I can tell you, and I know my honourable colleague would want to agree with us in this regard, that while there is always more work to be done when it comes to health care, we have made real and measurable progress. We have thousands more nurses, we have thousands more doctors, we have the shortest wait times in the country now, and we have the first nurse-practitioner-led clinics in North America—as I say, real, measurable progress. And 94% of Ontarians now have their own family doctor. We've come a long way from where we were in years past, but again, as I say, we're always prepared to acknowledge that there is still more work to be done.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Mauro: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. In recent discussions on the legislation you have introduced for forest tenure modernization, the members opposite have made frequent mention of a flawed concern that increasing the role of markets to allocate and sell wood in Ontario is somehow a bad thing and that US companies will be taking profits away from Ontario. It's my understanding that this tenure modernization initiative, which was asked for across the north, I might add, will actually

help put Ontario's wood back to work and continue to build a new forest economy for all of Ontario.

Would the minister please tell this House how this initiative is going to improve the forestry sector in northern Ontario and improve Ontario's economy?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks to the member for the question. Certainly, at the core of our forest modernization legislation is a focus on bringing our forests and our people back to work. That's one of the main reasons why our legislation is retaining section 30 of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, an important section which makes it clear that companies need to process and use Ontario's wood within our jurisdictions, therefore protecting and stimulating the creation of more forestry jobs in Ontario.

May I say that this decision was certainly supported throughout our extensive consultations with Ontarians on the forestry sector priorities that are a very important part of this legislation? It was clear that people wanted change and improvements to the forestry sector, and to their credit, the people of Ontario also said they want change that is measured and cautious, while at the same time promoting job growth.

That's what this legislation does for the forestry sector: It moves forward on revitalizing the sector but holds onto those important parts of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that work and protect jobs in Ontario, such as section 30.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Mauro: I thank the minister for the answer, and it brings us, actually, to another important point. With almost no wood leaving Ontario, it seems clear that the members opposite may find it helpful to brush up on some of their facts, particularly when there are businesses in Ontario that also depend on wood that comes from out of the province. Would they change the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, which many of them voted for, so that wood neither enters nor leaves Ontario, and therefore deny regular supplies of wood from out of province to mills such as Abitibi in Fort Frances, Domtar in Dryden or St. Marys Paper in Sault Ste. Marie?

Could the minister please inform us how the government values and stimulates jobs in Ontario's forestry sector and how it protects forestry jobs from the ruin implicated by suggestions such as those by the members opposite?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It's a very good point. It was legislation brought forward by the New Democrats many years ago.

I think it's important to point out that our legislation calls for new local forest management corporation pilots that will test the principles of our proposed model and, perhaps most importantly, will be led by directors who have local, regional and aboriginal growth and prosperity as their top priorities. What we're really trying to do is to set up these LFMCS, as they're called, to be led by those who will promote regional wood harvesting and processing so that Ontario's wood can better benefit the families

and the workers of our Ontario-wide forestry-dependent communities.

Ontario's crown forests belong to the people of Ontario, and we want to make sure that Ontario receives the full benefit of this precious resource.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is for the Premier. Premier, the government of Alberta has recently changed its journeyman apprenticeship ratio of one journeyman to two apprentices in the electrical trade. But here in Ontario, the minister and his College of Trades insist on maintaining Ontario's antiquated and restrictive ratio of three journeymen to one apprentice for the electrical trade, in spite of their promise in 2008 to improve access to trades for Ontarians. As a result, many young Ontarians across this province are unable to pursue challenging, rewarding careers in the electrical trade.

Ontario's young skilled tradespeople are leaving our province to find training. Will the Premier immediately amend Ontario's electrical apprenticeship ratio to one to one?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I wish that there was as much enthusiasm over there for the presentation of a plan of any kind at some point in time.

Let me tell you a little bit about the plan that we've had in place for apprenticeships in Ontario for some time now. First of all, I'm very proud to report that there are 120,000 apprentices being trained. That's double what we had in 2003. We've also, for a number of good reasons, put in place our very first college for apprenticeships. Among other things, what we want to do is convey to our young people, particularly those moving towards the end of their high school careers, the real, viable and attractive options to be found in apprenticeships and in skilled trades in the province of Ontario.

We're moving ahead with our plan for apprenticeships in Ontario. We're making some progress, but there's always more to be done.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I thought that the Premier was looking over his shoulder. I didn't know if it was the minister or Pat Dillon he was looking for, but anyway.

Young Ontarians cannot wait for your minister to make the decision to allow apprentices to access qualified journeymen. There is no valid reason for these restrictive ratios. Again, Ontario is the only province in Canada with a three to one ratio. All other provinces have lower ratios.

I have received countless letters from students in the electrical trade who cannot find journeymen to train under due to the restrictive apprenticeship ratios. Why at this time are you blocking access to training for young people when they need it most? Premier, as we emerge from this economic recession, why is your government

forcing our young people to look for training and work in other provinces?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: A little bit of history always helps. Let's take a look at what my honourable colleagues did when they served in government. They cut funding to apprenticeship and training programs by 73%. They offered no support whatsoever to businesses to hire and train apprentices. We put all kinds of supports in place.

We're bringing a different approach. We're celebrating apprenticeships in Ontario. We have a new College of Trades. They have a specific responsibility when it comes to establishing these kinds of ratios. We have confidence in our tradespeople, we have confidence in our college, and we have confidence in the people who sit in that college. We look forward to finding ways to continue to work with our tradespeople and our apprentices.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question. The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. We have a rotation within question period. The rotation has now moved to the NDP, and I would just ask the honourable minister and the honourable members over here within the Conservative caucus to give that opportunity to the MPP of the rotation. If you don't like the answer, you know there are rules within the standing orders that you can call for a late show.

Let's give the NDP the opportunity—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, perhaps you want to ask the question because you could do a better job.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): As I was reminded this morning, there are eight and a half weeks left in this session.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I don't need help from the armchair Speaker from Renfrew.

New question.

DISCLOSURE OF TOXINS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, a while back you appointed Mr. Ritter as the person who's going to be in charge of the independent fact-finding panel set up by your ministry. It turns out that Mr. Ritter worked for the federal department that was responsible for the approval and the use of Agent Orange at the time he was working there. How independent can he be if he is in fact the very person who is responsible for the approval of Agent Orange in the first place?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'm really pleased to have an opportunity to talk about Dr. Ritter because I haven't been able to talk about his qualifications since March 11, when we first announced him leading the panel. This is

an extraordinarily important issue for the people of Ontario. I want people to know how well qualified he is to lead this panel and look into the application of 2,4,5-T by Ontario ministries and agencies back in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and possibly the 1980s.

He holds a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Queen's University, and he's been a tenured professor of toxicology at the school of environmental sciences at the University of Guelph. Prior to his appointment at the University of Guelph, Dr. Ritter held various positions at Health Canada, including the director of the bureau of veterinary drugs, the chief of product safety, and the chief of the pesticides division. Since joining the University of Guelph, he has led the Canadian Network of Toxicology Centres and coordinated a national metals research network. He's very well qualified for this position, and I look forward to his report.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, this guy was in charge of the environmental health directorship at the time that Agent Orange was being used. I asked you the question. I don't doubt that he's qualified, that he went to all these schools and got all those degrees. That's not the issue. The issue is, he was at the federal department that allowed the use of Agent Orange at the time, and my question to you is, why would you appoint somebody who clearly had a vested interest in the use of Agent Orange? Truly, this cannot be an independent individual who's going to do the review.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I think the member may be confused about the meaning of the word "independent," so I just want to read into the record the Oxford Dictionary meaning of the word "independent." It's "free from outside control; not subject to another's authority," "self-governing," "not belonging to or supported by a political party," "capable of thinking or acting for oneself," "not influenced by others." It means somebody who's "impartial."

If the honourable member is still confused, he can come and see me after question period.

At the end of the day, researchers and people who do the kind of work that Dr. Ritter does are peer-reviewed. They have a responsibility to make sure that the facts and the information they bring forward are scientifically rigorous, that they can provide that level of information.

I have confidence in Dr. Ritter. We think he's very well qualified. We're extraordinarily lucky to have somebody of his calibre working on this project. This is very important to the people of Ontario, and I expect that his report will provide some answers and more—

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

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, constituents in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham want to know that their children are being equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary

to compete in the workforce of tomorrow. Parents in my riding want to know that this government is taking steps to ensure that their children receive the best education and come out as well-rounded individuals.

Specifically, kids need to understand how to manage their finances in the future. Minister, can I tell parents in my riding about the measures that this government is taking to better educate students about financial literacy?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm very happy to have the opportunity to talk about the fact that our government is always reviewing our curriculum to ensure that it's providing students with the information they need. To that end, our government did establish a working group on financial literacy. It was co-chaired by Leeanna Pendergast and Tom Hamza, who is the president of the Investor Education Fund. They were asked to provide information and recommendations to the curriculum council about financial literacy in both the elementary and secondary panel.

The new financial literacy resources, tools and training are being developed as we speak, and almost \$2 million in funding has been obtained from the Ontario Securities Commission and support from the Investor Education Fund.

This is very clearly a partnership with the private sector working with educators to ensure that students will have the financial literacy that they need to enable them to be successful when they leave our school system.

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

A friendly reminder to members: Today, during routine proceedings, the House will pay tribute to the life and career of Eric Dowd, and I would encourage as many members as possible to be here in the chamber.

Following the tribute, starting at 4 p.m., there will be a meet-and-greet with the Dowd family in the Speaker's apartment, and an invitation to all members, staff and members of the press gallery to join us as we commemorate our good friend Eric Dowd.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1137 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: As I speak, we are being joined in the west members' gallery by some visitors from Community Living York South. They are: Doug Chafe, Michael Piechota, Debbie Sakaguchi, Andrea Maccarone, Gajen Paramalingham, Adriano Curatolo, Jackie Watts, Lloyd Chafe, Cathy Johnston and Carmen Kosem. Please help me in welcoming them.

Mr. David Zimmer: It's my pleasure to introduce some visitors from the United Nations Association in Canada here in the gallery: Larry Hebb, president of the United Nations Association in Canada; Janis Alton, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace; Dr. Douglas Alton, Physicians for Global Survival; Professor Helmut

Burkhardt, Council on Global Issues; Adele Buckley, Canadian Pugwash Group; and Dianne Leggatt, IHTEC.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to introduce another member of the recreational vehicle group that is here today. I'd encourage members to go to the reception this evening as well. I had time to meet today with Roland Goreski, who is well known in my area. I thank him for informing members of the two issues they're speaking to the House about today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CTV OTTAWA

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Peter Jennings, Rich Little, Sandra Oh and my favourite, Alanis Morissette—all recognized names by television audiences the world over. All these familiar names, I might add, got their start at CJOH in Ottawa, owned by the E.L. Bushnell Television Company. I am pleased to be joined today by my colleague from Ottawa Centre, Yasir Naqvi, to celebrate CJOH's—now CTV Ottawa's—50th anniversary in broadcasting.

I'd also like to thank the station for its numerous achievements and contributions to our community over the years, from one of my favourite childhood TV shows, *You Can't Do That on Television*, to the nightly news broadcast by big names like Max Keeping, Carol Anne Meehan and Graham Richardson.

CTV Ottawa has been a staple in eastern Ontario homes for the past 50 years. Ever the family-oriented station, it was Max Keeping who ensured that the nightly news was kid-friendly. I can tell you that, as a parent, we all welcomed that throughout our region. The CHEO telethon and fundraisers for the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, as well as for many Kiwanis Clubs throughout our community, have proved that CTV Ottawa is more than just a local broadcaster; they are the bedrock of our community because of the community work that they do through their local charity work.

Whether it is our on-air personalities like Kimothy Walker, Leigh Chapple or J.J. Clarke, or those who are behind the scenes, like John Crupi or John Ruttle, the good folks at CTV Ottawa prove every day why this station has been Ottawa's television station for 50 years strong.

To my friends at CTV, I want to say thank you for 50 years, and here's to another 50.

Ladies and gentlemen, up next: Yasir Naqvi.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): His correct title is the member from Ottawa Centre.

CTV OTTAWA

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you to the member from Nepean—Carleton, Lisa MacLeod, for giving a shout-out to CTV Ottawa on

their 50th anniversary. What an incredible organization in our community, which is not only playing a very important role in terms of giving us news, information and programming, but also doing incredible work in our community, building the community one by one.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the many people and faces that really make CTV Ottawa. We know the faces we see on TV: Max Keeping, who is now a community ambassador who continues to do more work in the community than he did when he was an anchor on the 6 o'clock news; Leanne Cusack; Michael O'Byrne; Graham Richardson; Carol Anne Meehan; Leigh Chapple; Kimothy Walker; and the list goes on and on—people like J.J. Clarke and Eric Longley.

But most importantly, the people we don't see are all the camera crew who come out to every single event. Rain or shine, here they are with their cameras covering those community events, making sure that members of our communities are getting the recognition they deserve—the support staff, the technicians who have worked very hard behind the scenes through good times and bad times over the last 50 years of CTV Ottawa.

Thank you very much for being such an important part of the community. Thank you very much for providing the support you have provided over all these years to make sure that people in Ottawa feel included and their stories are portrayed and represented through your television station. Congratulations, CTV Ottawa.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Randy Hillier: I've lost count of the number of phone calls, emails and faxes I receive every week from constituents outraged with the cost of their hydro bills.

Thanks to Premier McGuinty's costly green energy experiments, my constituents Anne and John Ridley's hydro bill has skyrocketed from roughly \$200 a month in January last year to over \$600 a month in the same billing period. Since the government seems to have trouble with math, I'll do it for them: That's a 200% increase in hydro costs for a family trying to heat a two-bedroom home, a family that also uses propane for heating to keep their costs down.

My constituents are tired of the McGuinty Liberals' smart meters, which are nothing more than tax machines. The McGuinty government is simply out of touch with the people of this province.

Hydro One has made it clear to me that they only investigate cases when bills go up by 300% or more. They won't be investigating the bill of Anne and John Ridley.

Last year, Hydro One investigated over 8,000 cases where prices had gone up over 300%. But how many more thousands have increases almost as large?

While the Premier continues to boast how he is saving my constituents 10% on their monthly bills, they are left with a bill that has skyrocketed 200% in the last year. This government needs to stop coming up with ploys to get Liberals re-elected and start dealing with the mess

that they have created with their expensive energy experiments.

ONTARIO EARLY YEARS CENTRES

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to talk about the Ontario early years centres and the vital role they play in York South–Weston.

Ontario early years centres are supportive, welcoming and accessible places where parents or caregivers and children can play and learn together.

Recently, I had the opportunity to join parents and families at the York South–Weston Early Years Centre, followed by a visit to the Falstaff site, one of six satellite locations in the riding, as part of a city-wide initiative to highlight and celebrate the important role these centres play. Both events were very well-attended—parents, children and families excited to participate and show their appreciation for these valuable centres.

Targeted towards children from infancy up to six years of age, the early years centres offer a wide range of interactive and engaging programs that help develop social, communication and early literacy skills that are associated with success in school and in life. Parents and caregivers can learn about child growth and development, meet other parents and caregivers, share parenting experiences with professional staff and find out about other community services. The staff also provides culturally appropriate services, many of which are available in several languages, a tremendously vital component in York South–Weston and around our diverse province.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. John O'Toole: This week, public hearings began in Courtine in my riding of Durham on the proposed Darlington new-build nuclear project.

I'm proud to say that Durham is home to over 30% of Ontario's power supply generated by nuclear energy at the Darlington and Pickering plants.

This new project is an important piece of Ontario's long-term power supply needs. Durham supports, has been and will continue to be a willing host community. Nuclear power is carbon-free, safe and reliable power. We do appreciate and listen to the issues unfolding in Japan.

1510

According to the Clarington Board of Trade, the construction of the station would mean 3,500 construction jobs, 1,500 permanent jobs and \$600 million in GDP growth in our economy in Ontario.

This project needs to be a team approach. Premier McGuinty has used the old blame game of the federal government for delay. Instead of foot-dragging, we need collaboration with the ACL. In fact, there are three natural partners. They would be the federal government, which I agree is important as a regulator, and the Candu industry itself, as well as the province of Ontario, whose

baseload is nuclear. Let's quit stalling on this important issue to Ontario's economy.

It's important also that nuclear power, from commission to decommissioning, be priced openly and transparently. I call on you—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The member from Toronto–Danforth.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: There's a severe problem in this province with wait times for neurological diagnosis and treatment. A constituent of mine, Thane Mitchell, came to see me a few weeks ago. He was in pain. He couldn't get an appointment here to have an MRI of his spinal problems; he had to go to the United States. It was determined that there was severe compression of the nerve root at L5. He was told he would have to wait six months before he could see anybody here in Ontario. He's in a lot of pain. He can't work. He has to stay on his back most of the day. He can't bring in employment and he can't get an analysis or a recommendation for treatment.

The Minister of Health has to recognize that telling people they have to wait half a year or longer before they even get an appointment for a diagnosis is completely unacceptable. Once he has that appointment, once the diagnosis is made, then many months will have to be waited before he actually has an opportunity to be treated.

People need to be able to work; they need to be able to be free of pain. Clearly, this Minister of Health is not attending to wait times and is leaving people in impossible situations.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Pat Hoy: Many families in Chatham–Kent–Essex are benefiting from full-day kindergarten this year. It is undeniable that strong reading and writing skills are essential for success. The earlier children learn those skills, the better prepared they are for future learning. Every year, even more children and their families are going to have access to this innovative new program. By fall of 2012, even more schools in my riding will be offering the program: Tecumseh Public School, Queen Elizabeth Public School, Merlin Area Public School, St. Michael Catholic School, St. Ursula Catholic School, East Mersea Public School, St. Joseph Catholic School, Ridgeview Moravian Elementary and Saint-Michel Catholic Elementary School.

To ensure these schools are ready to welcome students, school boards will receive funding to build and renovate classrooms. Full-day kindergarten also helps our busy working families. Parents will have peace of mind knowing their children are in a safe and engaging learning environment all day long.

Our government believes that early learning is one of the most important investments we can make and will

lead to Ontario's long-term competitive advantage. Working together, we can give our children the best possible start in school and in life.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

Mr. David Zimmer: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to a matter which is very important to me and to my constituents. On March 9, I tabled a resolution in this House that, if passed, would proclaim and recognize September 21 of each year as International Day of Peace in Ontario. September 21 of each year is recognized worldwide as the International Day of Peace.

Established by a United Nations resolution in 1981, the day affirms peace as a key international goal and provides an opportunity for individuals, organizations and nations around the globe to perform practical acts of peace on a common day. The International Day of Peace is also a day of global ceasefire and non-violence during which individuals and nations alike are invited to cease all hostility and armed conflict for a period of 24 hours.

An international day of peace in Ontario would demonstrate support for a day of peace worldwide and encourage citizens to become engaged in the promotion of peace, justice, education and sustainability. Again, I congratulate the individuals in the House today, whom I introduced earlier, who have championed this cause. I look forward to working with them to bring International Day of Peace to Ontario.

COMMUNITY LIVING YORK SOUTH

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Today, Community Living York South volunteers, participants and employees are present in the gallery. They have come to tour the Legislature and learn about the legislative process.

Since 1954, Community Living York South has worked tirelessly to help people with special needs from all backgrounds lead more fulfilling lives. Community Living York South supports both people with special needs and their families by providing support and community services, as well as educational workshops, spring and summer programs, and community outreach.

Every Thursday, three to four Community Living York South members come to my constituency office to gain valuable working skills through volunteering. Many of these volunteers came to join me in this year's Markham Santa Claus parade.

Recently, I had the opportunity to announce that Community Living York South was the recipient of a \$219,000 Trillium grant from the province of Ontario, to be disbursed over the next three years. This grant is to be used toward increasing the capacity of persons living with disabilities to learn and work within the York region community.

I would like to personally thank and congratulate the chair of the board, Claudio Battaglin, and the executive director, Don Wilkinson, as well as the rest of this incredible organization, for the great success it has had in

providing valuable services to people with special needs to live, learn, grow and succeed in our community.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

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 Pr42, An Act to revive Bahram & Hamid Inc.

Your committee recommends that Bill Pr44, An Act respecting The Ontario Barber Association, be not reported.

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

Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

AGENCIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS SUNSET REVIEW ACT, 2011 LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÉEXAMEN DE L'UTILITÉ DES ORGANISMES, CONSEILS ET COMMISSIONS

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 168, An Act to provide for performance reviews of agencies, boards and commissions by the Assembly / Projet de loi 168, Loi prévoyant l'examen par l'Assemblée du rendement des organismes, conseils et commissions.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: The bill enacts the Agencies, Boards and Commissions Sunset Review Act, 2011. The act provides for the performance review of agencies, boards and commissions by a select or standing committee of the Assembly. The committee would cease to exist five years after the provincial election of 2011.

The committee is authorized to conduct performance reviews of any agency, board or commission, or other type of entity that is a public body under the Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006, or designated by regulation. The agency, board or commission must also make a business case establishing how it provides value for

Ontario families. Provision is made for public participation in the review process as well.

After a performance review, the committee may recommend that an agency, board or commission continue to exist, with or without changes to its mandate, and the committee may recommend changes to improve the way the agency, board or commission fulfills its mandate and changes to improve its efficiency.

1520

The agency, board or commission must report its progress in making these changes, and this report must be made within the time specified by the committee. However, the committee may instead recommend that an agency, board or commission be dissolved. Before the committee can make such a recommendation, the responsible minister must be given an opportunity to make submissions about the proposed dissolution. If the assembly adopts the committee's recommendation that one or more agencies, boards or commissions be dissolved, they are dissolved on the date specified in the committee's recommendation.

The powers and duties of the committee do not affect the powers and duties of any other committee of the assembly, and the powers and duties of the minister responsible for an agency, board or commission are also not affected, except with respect to the dissolution under subsection 6(3) of the act.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT ACT (STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS), 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE (COMITÉ PERMANENT DES RÈGLEMENTS ET DES PROJETS DE LOI D'INTÉRÊT PRIVÉ)

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 169, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act with respect to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Projet de loi 169, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative en ce qui concerne le Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: This bill amends the Legislative Assembly Act with respect to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills that the standing orders of the assembly require be established.

At present, all regulations stand permanently referred to the committee, but the committee is prevented from examining the merits of the policy or objectives to be effected by the regulations. This bill allows for the

examination and allows for any member of the assembly to make submissions to the committee for the purpose of that examination.

My bill would bring power back to the Legislature by allowing all members, even—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I trust that the member has read the explanatory note. Thank you.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 75 from the order of precedence for private members' public business dated March 4, 2010, be waived.

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

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following changes be made to the ballot list dated March 9, 2011, for private members' public business: Mr. Crozier, Mr. Flynn and Mr. Oraziotti exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Crozier assumes ballot item number 64, Mr. Flynn assumes ballot item number 8 and Mr. Oraziotti assumes ballot item number 1; and Mr. Delaney and Mr. Caplan exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Delaney assumes ballot item number 53 and Mr. Caplan assumes ballot item number 2; and Mr. Arthurs and Mr. Zimmer exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Arthurs assumes ballot item number 49 and Mr. Zimmer assumes ballot item number 6; and Mr. Hoy and Mr. Craitor exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Hoy assumes ballot item number 33 and Mr. Craitor assumes ballot item number 7.

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding committee membership.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the following amendment be made to the membership of certain committees: The member from Leeds–Grenville replaces the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka on the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr. John Yakabuski: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm not sure this is a point of order, but you will let me know.

It is interesting, in the motion just before the one you read, where there are these ballot item changes—I found it just quite prophetic that Mr. Arthurs, beginning with “A,” was switching places with Mr. Zimmer, beginning with the letter “Z.” It takes me to the biblical reference to, “The first shall be last and the last shall be first.” It would behoove each and every one of us to think about that more often as we carry out our daily business in this House, referencing to how, even in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Mr. Arthurs, “A,” is quite willing to switch places with Mr. Zimmer, “Z.”

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for his point of order. It's not a point of order, but the unfortunate thing is that the way the standing orders have been changed in this place, we no longer have the opportunity to have spontaneous speeches like that and good filibusters like we used to enjoy in the past.

As the members know, this afternoon we're going to be presenting a tribute to the family of Eric Dowd. They are just on their way to the chamber right now. I would ask for the co-operation of the members, if we could take a brief adjournment. They are on their way to the Speaker's gallery.

Is there consent amongst the members to proceed with petitions? Agreed? Agreed.

PETITIONS

RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Jim Wilson: “Petition to Save Duntroon Central Public School and All Other Rural Schools in Clearview Township:

“Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

“Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

“Whereas the frameworks of rural schools are different from urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, ‘Rural schools help keep communities

strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them"; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep rural schools open in Simcoe–Grey;

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

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario."

I agree with the petition, and I will sign it.

1530

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Jake Lombardo from USW Local 1005, and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 agree with this petition and send it to the table via page Riley.

ERIC DOWD

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm going to presume leave of the House, and I'm going to revert to motions.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Eric Dowd.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to welcome the Dowd family here in the assembly today for this tribute from all parties to the legendary Eric Dowd.

Former Queen's Park reporter Jim Coyle tells a story about how, in the 1960s, the boys used to go down to the Royal York at night for drinks, and Eric Dowd used to call the Royal York every once in a while, when the boys were down there having a good time, to get a good quote for one of his stories.

On one particular evening, then-Premier John Robarts, for whatever reason at the time, was having some difficulty coming up with something good to say for his story; it may have been rather late in the evening. So Premier Robarts decided to defer to Eric. In fact, Premier Robarts told him to come up with a quote on his own—something that sounded a lot like Robarts. I'm sure that Eric did him proud. I'm not sure if I would do the same.

Those were different times.

Eric Dowd was a true newspaper man, a nighthawk who at times, I'm told, could be a bit on the cantankerous side, although I didn't know him that way. Whenever I saw Eric in the hallway he was extraordinarily pleasant, always asking about Debbie and my daughter, Miller. He had a fantastic memory, as well, for folks who had served as part of my staff over the years, asking about them and about their kids. That's the Eric Dowd I always knew in my time here at Queen's Park.

But he never lost that ability to cut with a rapier-sharp wit. He cut into politicians with a surgical procedure, but he always had a smile for the cleaning staff, the cafeteria workers, the security guards, the staff here at Queen's Park, not only because he respected how hard they worked and what they did; Eric also knew they had the juiciest behind-the-scenes stories.

Eric was our connection to a bygone era of typewriters, typesetting and teletype, before recorders replaced shorthand and search engines replaced clipping books and paper files.

I am told that Eric had a very elaborate filing system of his own consisting of every clipping and Hansard copy going back likely to 1963, when he first started writing here at Queen's Park. He used to come by our office pretty much every night at 5 p.m. to chat about the day's events, ask my staff how they were doing, how they were enjoying their work, and then collect his newspapers for his own personal archives. There are various ways the gallery describes Eric's old office—I guess now Robert Benzie has moved in and calls it home—but perhaps my favourite is that Eric's office would have made the fire marshal need the defibrillator.

Just like the search engines today and probably almost as quickly, Eric knew where every piece of paper was, and he could produce any needed Hansard from 2011 to 1963—bill, column or quote practically on demand. Having that kind of information, that library, that recollection immediately on hand, were key to Eric's writing. That uncanny ability to see patterns and to give us lessons about the past and insight into the future—that's what a lot of his columns were all about.

In his last column published two days before he passed, Eric wrote how Winston Churchill once used the phrase "terminological inexactitude" to question—how would I say it in the rules of Parliament?—the veracity of one of his opponent's statements. The headline for that column was "Humorous Rhetoric Is Gone from Queen's Park." It was a very fitting farewell from Eric, someone who could always make us laugh and, most importantly, make us laugh at ourselves—a brilliant column. An absolutely touching description by one of his daughters—was it Charlotte?—at the funeral service talked about Eric even in his last days, body weakening, mind still sharp as a tack. Every word in the right order, grammatically correct, no spelling errors—that's the story of his last column, a brilliant column and a legendary column.

Another funny story was about how Eric used to sideline in his spare time filing stories back into the UK. In 1984, then-Transportation Minister Jim Snow was lambasted in the British press for allegedly touching the Queen when he helped her down from the podium while visiting, which, of course, is a royal faux pas back home. The news of the world trumpeted the headline "Hands Off Our Queen" and accused Snow of accosting Her Royal Highness. What wasn't known was that, all the while, Eric was feverishly filing stories back to the UK papers about the incident. When a few folks noticed a few extra bucks in his pocket, he later confided to his Queen's Park brethren that not only was he filing under his name but several other names as well.

In a tribute piece following his death, Christina Blizzard wrote in the Toronto Sun that John Robarts once asked Eric about his family. He told the reporter that he saw them at Union Station and how lovely they looked. Eric later said he was so flattered by the comment, considering in reality what was happening in the difficult personal life of Premier Robarts. Here was the second most powerful man in Canada envying what Eric had, a lovely family.

So many of them are joining us here today, the envy of the Premier of the province and something Eric was so justifiably proud of. For 42 years, you shared Eric with us here at Queen's Park. We thank all of you.

They say that the fourth estate is a check on government, to hold elected officials' feet to the fire and make sure that we do what we say. In Eric Dowd's case, he was true to that mantra right to his last days. Even on his deathbed, writing his last column, he reminded all of us of who we are, where we've come from and, with good work and Eric's advice, what we can all be. Thank you very much for sharing Eric Dowd with us for 42 years.

1540

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I wish to preface my remarks by thanking those who have come here today—I hope I have them all: Georgina Dowd, Eric's wife; Dominic Dowd, Megan Davies, Madeline Dowd, James Dowd, Sophie Dowd, Katherine Dowd, Charlotte Eidt, Elizabeth Dowd, Charlotte Dowd, Thomas Dowd, Corrine Maloney and Jude Dowd. I think that says a great deal about the love of this family for Eric Dowd.

By the time I arrived here in this Legislature, Eric Dowd was already known as the dean of Queen's Park. I've been here for 10 years, and he was already the dean. People who knew him knew him well. He had been writing stories about this place and in this place for a long time, mostly—almost exclusively—since he came to this country from England.

Those who followed his career knew him as a tough, disciplined, honest, forthright and very, very intelligent man who knew how to write, who knew how to put words together that would excite the public to want to read more about what happens at Queen's Park.

When he died, two columns were written about him that were particularly striking to me. One was by John Downing, who had spent considerable time around here himself. In half a sentence he said pretty much everything that needs to be told, and I quote him: "No one who ever spent time with Eric will forget him." And Christina Blizzard wrote: "Eric Dowd was every bit an old-time journalist with a nose for news and an unrelenting passion for reporting it."

The stories around this place—you've heard some of them from the Leader of the Opposition, but Eric liked to tell some too, and other people have told me stories about things he did. Probably the most famous one of all did not involve this House. That's when he got a phone call to come down and meet four boys from Liverpool on their first tour through Toronto. Of all the journalists who were invited, he just happened to know some of the people from his former homeland and his former city, and they invited him down to cover that. I think if you ask people around Canada today, that might be the story they remember best.

He also wrote good stories about Premier Robarts, one of which has been recounted. John Downing wrote a very good one about Eric's holding off an Italian carabinieri

in Rome to protect Premier Davis after he made some kind of faux pas by throwing coins into the Trevi Fountain. In any event, that's the kind of man he was, and that's what we remember him for.

But those of us who came a little later to Queen's Park knew him as a quiet gentleman, a man who would come by your office from time to time to talk about his family and your family and about the 65 years he had spent doing his journalistic career. He would often drop by my office for chats. Particularly, he found a way to come on Mondays. I don't know whether that's because he found out that that was the day I brought in baking, or because that was just the day he was most free, but he would drop by for a little snack in the afternoon. He would talk about events, he would give scholarly and fatherly advice, and he would take a few chocolates on the way out and go off to whatever he was doing.

But sometimes he would drop by not on Monday afternoons; he would drop by, literally, almost in the dead of night. My light would be on in the office—I was trying to get caught up on some work—there would be a gentle knock on the door, it would open up and there, at 10 or 11 o'clock at night, would be Eric saying, "I saw your light on. I just wanted to drop by and make sure you were all right. And by the way, can I sit down and have a chat?" We had many of those.

He talked about Canada. He talked about provincial politics. He talked about his family but rarely about himself. In that, I guess he was a quintessential Canadian.

Until the last few months, when he became much, much slower, he confided in a great many people. I know he confided in me about the cancer, about the chemotherapy, about the things that were happening to him. But every single day that I can remember, he was still here at work, every single day right up until the end. I saw him in that week before Christmas, still hard at work, still doing what he loved.

At the funeral, which many of us had the privilege of attending, there were family and friends, politicians, journalists and staff from Queen's Park, all of whom spoke brilliantly and lovingly of the man. All were better for having known him—those whom he mentored as new writers, his encyclopedic knowledge of this place, his sage advice and his encouragement for all. He truly loved this building and he truly loved the people who work in it. What a remarkable way for him to have made his living.

To his wife Georgina, to his five children—Katherine, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Tom and Dominic—we send our condolences, and we thank you for a lifetime of sharing.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm pleased to rise with my colleagues who have already risen in the House and those who are able to be with us today and those who are watching to pay tribute to Eric Dowd, who was a very close, personal friend of mine for the 34 years that I've been in the Ontario Legislature.

In fact, Eric was one of the first people to greet me when I was newly elected. I was very green at the time, very lacking in the knowledge of the intricacies of prov-

incial politics as it relates to this House. Eric provided, as he did to so many of us who were new—whether in our capacity as MPPs or in our capacity as, perhaps, journalists, and others in the building—sage advice for us.

This time is usually reserved for tributes to members of the Legislature who are deceased, and we recall and remember them. It's a tribute to Eric Dowd and to members of his family that this time has been reserved for a person who was one of the journalists here.

But we recognize that Eric wasn't just one of the journalists; he was one for whom we have all, regardless of our political affiliation, our ridings or our backgrounds, had a personal liking for and an affection that is probably unequalled. So it is appropriate that we have taken the time in this Legislature to pay tribute to an individual who was here for so many years, starting with Premier Robarts and right up to Premier McGuinty, one who has seen many come and go in this House while he sat in the seat that today has a floral tribute to him.

Most of us would walk into the House and look up at the gallery, where the floral tribute is today, and give a smile or a wave to Eric. We also knew that we were going to get notes of some kind. My friend Monique Smith, the member from Nipissing, showed me a note that she received from Eric in December. Of course, his health was failing but his affection for us and concern for others was not failing in any way. He mentions in the note knowing Monique's father, Dick Smith, who was a member of this Legislature, and saying that Dick Smith would be very proud of his daughter being a member of the Legislature.

That was Eric. He knew everybody. He knew everybody's families; he knew our friends; he knew staff, as our colleagues have said. There was nobody too unimportant in this place for Eric to talk to. He spoke to virtually everybody. He was, as Rudyard Kipling once said of people, someone who could walk with kings and keep the common touch. He, indeed, walked with royalty, in a literal sense, and kept the common touch for all of us. I know that each one of us, today, has a feeling for him that we would express to our colleagues and to our friends.

When I went looking for material—because sometimes, remember, when there were tributes to people who had died or at least served some years ago and were members of the House, if you couldn't find as much material as you would like to pay tribute to that person, you went to Eric's office.

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Now, I have to confess that Eric's filing system looks like my filing system. There is a program on television called Hoarders now that would describe Eric's office. I've tried to emulate it, but nobody could emulate Eric's office and his system. But he provided the material. If you needed some material of an historical nature, Eric had, as has been mentioned, either the Hansard or the clipping itself.

We all recognize as well—and this was said at the funeral—that there was no such thing as a short con-

versation with Eric Dowd. Once he had you in a headlock in the hallway, you knew that the conversation was going to be lengthy. But it was always, invariably, interesting. It took into account Eric's views on things, because he was happy to share them with you, but also inquiries about some background information that perhaps others in today's day of journalism would not be so concerned about. We appreciated that very much.

We knew about the family. All of us could name the members of the family because Eric told us about the family. He was extremely proud of them when he was here in the House and was prepared to share that.

He had an institutional memory that is necessary. It's good to have a variety of people, just as in the House, where we have new members and those who have been here a few extra years. Eric was the person who was the institutional memory for everyone. People went to Eric because he knew where the bodies were buried, he knew where the scandals were in years gone by, and he knew the issues and how they bubbled up around the province. I often thought that when we went to chains purchasing all of the newspapers in the province, and the independent papers were gone, many of the chains missed the kind of perspective Eric would have that would have added to the others who are part of the reporting and journalistic part of this Legislature, because Eric did have a perspective that was different.

He was a defender of the underdog, without a doubt. He despised those who used their position of privilege in an inappropriate fashion. He was a crusader against corruption. He was a person who knew that there were many people in this world who came from very modest roots, and that those of us who are elected and those who are journalists should never forget that those people count as well. In fact, with Eric, they counted very much.

He would play a game, at least with me, and perhaps with others. I would ask him how things were. He at one time lived in Rosedale. We would make fun of him for living in Rosedale because it's reputed to be a place where people of some distinction and money happen to reside. I don't know if that's true or not, but Eric would talk about his neighbours who were very prominent, and we would kid about that. He would talk about the servants and so on in a very jocular fashion. But that was Eric. He had just a marvellous, marvellous sense of humour that I think all of us appreciated very much.

As I mentioned, he was not occupied with the horse race; Eric was occupied with other kinds of issues. He was occupied with people. He had a good read on people, he was a good judge of people, but he was not judgmental. He could certainly perceive the attributes of people and always brought out the positive attributes in them. He knew our failings as well, and from time to time was prepared to share those with the readers, as he actually should.

Now, I don't want to get myself in trouble with members of the press gallery today, but they all have television sets that they can watch question period from now. We have monitors in our place as well. But Eric,

every day, showed up at question period, and he could see the look of angst on a minister's face—probably mine when I was getting a good question from someone in the opposition—or that smile of satisfaction if someone had made a good point in the Legislature. Being in that position as he was, and some of us went up to see him from time to time, he was able to make, I think, some astute judgments.

You should know, as I think many of you did, that he had a bicycle. Another thing Eric and I have in common is both being terrible nighthawks. I would be walking back to my apartment and Eric would have his bicycle. Instead of riding it, he would be walking his bicycle along and sharing with me some of his philosophy of the day. But no matter what the weather out there, you could see Eric putting the helmet on in recent years and riding that bicycle.

He loved royalty. He loved talking about royalty, at least, and wrote some good columns about royalty, which I think were important to people here who are royalists or monarchists.

Premier McGuinty was quoted as saying something about Eric I think all of us would agree with: "Eric has been a fixture at Queen's Park for decades, and every single day he showed an incredible dedication to his craft and a genuine passion for journalism.

"I was sad to learn of Eric's passing. He will be missed by his readers and by all of us who had the pleasure of knowing him."

It is a difficult day for all of us as we pay tribute to Eric. I know that his friends in the press gallery and those who were in the press gallery in years gone by will all have stories of Eric—his walking down the hallway late at night, his dropping in for a snack or two with any one of us in any of the political parties, and his sharing of stories that were endless, stories that we enjoyed.

I thought that an appropriate ending for a tribute of this kind was one I read that Chris Blizzard had in the Toronto Sun. She ended her eulogy, if you want to call it that way in a newspaper—an obituary, if you will—for Eric, saying the following, and I think it's something we can all relate to: "After 65 years in journalism, the light has gone out in Dowd's office. The old Underwood is silent. And somehow Queen's Park will never be the same." Indeed, it will not.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to thank all the honourable members for their wonderful comments today. Again, a big thank you to the Dowd family who are here, seated in the Speaker's gallery today. It is such an honour to have you here.

I think you've heard today how much collectively on both sides of this House everyone misses Eric, as do I, because I have had the pleasure, having lived in this building for the past three and a half years, of having experienced those late-night visits with Eric. Whether it was a little note slipped under my door—I've learned more about a septic system at a cottage than I ever thought I would learn. I can assure you he did eat very well at Queen's Park. He never went without. The doors were open in every office for him.

I want to thank the Minister of Community Safety, because he made reference to it. Jim Bradley is a true disciple of your father. We needed something for today that you will see will be presented to you, and we couldn't find a copy of it. So my staff contacted Minister Bradley's office and, lo and behold, in one of those infamous boxes of Jim Bradley, we found exactly what we needed, and he got that from your father.

So on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the Clerk and all the staff—and I mean every staff member here at the Legislature—our deepest condolences, but rest assured that that memory of Eric is going to live on for a long time within this building. I will ensure that copies of today's Hansard and a DVD of today's proceedings are left with you, Georgina, and copies for all of your family.

I'd like to take this opportunity to extend an invitation to all members, any guests who are here, staff who are watching in their offices, members of the press gallery, to join us for a reception in the Speaker's apartment that will be taking place just following the conclusion of this. Thank you.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

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

"Whereas the hallmark of a free society is the right of the individual to the use and enjoyment of property; and

"Whereas the property rights include the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly pass the property rights motion tabled by the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and take the necessary steps to enshrine property rights in the constitution of Ontario."

I agree with this petition and will affix my name to it.

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REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was gathered by Shawn Haggerty, who is the president of UFCW Local 175, and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric

of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;"

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

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

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to read a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"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 the Oak Ridges moraine," especially at Lakeridge Road.

I'm pleased to present this to Grace, one of the pages here at Queen's Park.

DOG OWNERSHIP

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

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

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

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and to implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

As I am in agreement, I've affixed my signature and give it to page Travis.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Phil McNeely: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario will be the first government to close its coal-fired electricity generation; and

“Whereas many countries continue to build coal-fired electricity generation, including Canada; and

“Whereas the CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere was historically around 286 parts per million; and

“Whereas the present concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere is 390 parts per million; and

“Whereas in 2014, when our last coal-fired plants will be closed, the CO₂ will be 400 parts per million, and by the year 2030, the CO₂ will exceed 450 parts per million; and

“Whereas many scientists believe that a level of 450 parts per million of CO₂ in our atmosphere will be catastrophic for the environment as we know it;

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

“To request the government of Canada to change their pro-CO₂ policies and provide leadership on mitigation of climate change.”

I will put my name on that petition and send it up with Travis.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Collingwood Street bridge, built in 1913, located in the township of Clearview, in the county of Simcoe, is scheduled for destruction and replacement;

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

“To have the bridge declared to have significant historical value under the Heritage Act, protecting it from destruction; and

“To have the bridge restored while maintaining the existing structure.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Phil McNeely: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Orleans urgent care centre provides emergency care for the residents of Orleans, utilizing many of the same capabilities along with the medical facilities and the equipment available at a hospital emergency department. The OUCC is equipped to administer treatment for serious, acute medical conditions, including heart attack, asthma, fractures and dislocations, lacerations and allergic reactions;

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

“As the funding is up for renewal, to continue to provide funding to the Orleans urgent care centre to allow

this clinic to stay open evenings and weekends to support the health needs of the community of Orleans and surrounding areas.”

I am very pleased to support this petition. I give it to Riley to take to the desk.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Robert Bailey: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government have continued to ignore farmers and have slashed support to farmers by over \$145 million in 2010 alone; and

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

“Whereas PC MPP Bob Bailey has introduced a significant tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural goods to food banks, to help provide tax relief to farmers and assist local food banks; and

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

“Whereas if the McGuinty Liberals truly support farm families and wish to fight poverty, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should immediately pass MPP Bob Bailey’s bill;

“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 this petition, affix my signature and send it down with Grace.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Phil McNeely: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas this government supports full-day kindergarten in all schools; and

“Whereas full-day kindergarten was introduced in Our Lady of Wisdom Catholic School, Convent Glen public school, École élémentaire catholique Sainte-Marie, Brother André Catholic School, École élémentaire publique Des Sentiers and École élémentaire catholique Alain-Fortin in Ottawa-Orléans in September 2010; and

“Whereas it is the government’s intention to introduce full-day kindergarten in Fallingbrook Community Elementary School and Blessed Kateri Catholic school in Ottawa-Orléans schools in September 2011; and

“Whereas the government intends to fully implement full-day kindergarten in all schools by 2015; and

“Whereas parents of four- and five-year-olds have supported this program; and

“Whereas the Conservative Party of Ontario has said that they would freeze this program;

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

“To support full-day kindergarten and to follow the implementation schedule which will complete the program by 2015.”

I proudly include my signature on that petition and send it up with Devon.

DOG OWNERSHIP

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

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

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

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act (2005) and to implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

As I am in agreement, I will affix my signature to give it to page Logan.

PARKINSON’S DISEASE

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present another petition from my riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier” McGuinty’s govern-

ment “and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to intervene immediately to ensure that CCACs”—community care access centres—“across Ontario develop a plan to ensure that all Ontarians living with Parkinson’s who need speech-language therapy and swallowing therapy receive the necessary treatment” where and when they need it, immediately.

I’m pleased to sign in support and endorse this and present it to Travis, one of the pages.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: A petition to restore medical laboratory services in Elmvale:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the consolidation of medical laboratories in rural areas is causing people to travel further and wait longer for services; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have equal access to all health care services; and

“Whereas rural Ontario continues to get shortchanged when it comes to health care: doctor shortages, smaller hospitals, less pharmaceutical services, lack of transportation and now medical laboratory services; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government continues to increase taxes to make up for misspent tax dollars, collecting \$15 billion over the last six years from the Liberal health tax, ultimately forcing Ontarians to pay more while receiving less;

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

“That the McGuinty government stop the erosion of public health care services and ensure equal access to medical laboratories for all Ontarians, including the people of Elmvale.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CHRISTOPHER’S LAW (SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY) AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT

LA LOI CHRISTOPHER

SUR LE REGISTRE

DES DÉLINQUANTS SEXUELS

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 22, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 163, An Act to amend Christopher’s Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000 / Projet de loi 163, Loi modifiant la Loi Christopher de 2000 sur le registre des délinquants sexuels.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I’m pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 163, An Act to amend Christopher’s Law

(Sex Offender Registry), 2000; that's also the short title of the bill. I'd like to mention, first of all, the explanatory note inside the bill. I'd like to put that on the record because it is a bill that basically aligns itself with recent changes made to the national sex offender registry via Bill S-2 from the federal Parliament. The changes are amending the requirement of offenders "to report within 15 days after or before various events so that the number of days will in the future be specified by regulation rather than in the act."

It's requiring offenders who have been convicted of a sex offence outside of Canada and have been ordered to report to the national registry to also report to the Ontario registry, and it's allowing the Ontario registry to maintain the records of registered offenders who receive a pardon under the Criminal Records Act.

"Clauses 3(1)(a) to (e) and 7(2)(a) and (b) of Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000, which require offenders to report within 15 days after or before various events, are amended so that the numbers of days will in the future be specified by regulation rather than in the act.

"The act is also amended to provide that if an offender who was convicted, or found not criminally responsible on account of a mental disorder, outside Canada becomes subject to an obligation to report under the Sex Offender Information Registration Act (Canada) after he or she arrives in Canada—by virtue of section 490.02901 of the Criminal Code (Canada) or section 36.1 of the International Transfer of Offenders Act (Canada)—the offender will be obliged to report under Christopher's Law, too. These new reporting obligations are reflected in the new clauses 3 (1)(e.1) and (e.2), the new clauses (b.2) and (b.3) of the definition of 'sex offence' in subsection 1(1), and the new subsections 8(1.5) and (1.6) respecting reporting periods.

"Subsection 1(1) of the act is amended to define 'pardon' as a free pardon granted under Her Majesty's royal prerogative of mercy or under section 748 of the Criminal Code (Canada) or a pardon or record suspension under the Criminal Records Act (Canada). The new section 9.1, which replaces the former subsection 9(3), requires the ministry to delete references to an offender from the sex offender registry if the offender receives a free pardon for every sex offence in respect of which the act applies to him or her, but not if the offender receives only a pardon or record suspension under the Criminal Records Act (Canada). However, an offender's reporting requirement ceases under subsection 7(4) of the act if the offender receives either a free pardon or a pardon or record suspension under the Criminal Records Act (Canada)."

I always like to include the explanatory note in my debate. In the end, as we go through this bill, I have to say right up front that we're very, very supportive of this legislation and supportive of the record of the federal government with respect to law and order, and believe we have to keep the Ontario sex offender registry in tip-top condition and right up to date with the latest legislation.

This is not the first time the bill has been amended. It was amended in 2007, and I have some comments on that as well before I comment on the bill and put some things on the record with respect to the Ontario Provincial Police and the OPP general headquarters up in Orillia.

Some background: Following a 1992 inquest into the brutal murder of 11-year-old Christopher Stephenson by a convicted pedophile, a coroner's jury recommended the creation of a mechanism to register convicted and dangerous sex offenders with the local police. I should point out that Christopher's father, Jim Stephenson, was here the day the bill had first reading and has been a strong advocate for the Ontario sex offender registry to this day. I had a chance to chat with him on the day of introduction of the bill with Minister Bradley, wanting to thank him for his support and for what he's done as a result of pushing forward and convincing legislators to move forward with this kind of legislation.

Christopher's Law, the Ontario sex offender registry, was introduced by David Tsubouchi in December 1999, received royal assent on April 12, 2000, and came into force in April 2001, which means that next month will be the 10th anniversary of the Ontario sex offender registry. I know that some of the folks up at OPP general headquarters, where the registry is located, are very pleased with the progress of the registry over the years and are looking forward to some kind of celebration of the 10th anniversary.

Ontario was the first Canadian jurisdiction to create a sex offender registry, although they have existed in the United States since the 1940s. Ontario's registry is managed and maintained by the ministry's sex offender registry—SOR—unit within the Ontario Provincial Police. As I said a few minutes ago, it is located at the OPP general headquarters, which I am proud to say is located in my riding.

Before we get to the act that I read the explanatory note on, we did pass legislation in 2007, Bill 16, Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry) Amendment Act. It made amendments to the act, including imposing an obligation to report on persons who are convicted of certain designated offences, extending the situations that would trigger a reporting obligation, enhancing the information to be added to the sex offender registry and requiring police forces to attempt to verify an offender's address at least once every year.

In April 2008, the Ontario Court of Appeal dismissed the challenge by Abram Dyck of Kitchener, who argued that the registry deprived him of the right to liberty because the law required everyone convicted of a sex offence, even a minor offence, to register along with those who are at risk to reoffend, such as pedophiles or serial rapists.

As of 2007, according to the auditor's report, the sex offender registry unit continues to rely on the offender tracking information system as a prime source of information for daily updates of registry data, including any revisions to existing offender records such as sentence or release date adjustments, I'll get into that a little bit more later as I talk about touring the facility myself.

1620

The auditor's 2007 report also notes that the registry has been developed at moderate cost up until 2007: a budget of approximately \$4 million, of which \$1 million is dedicated to system development and maintenance. Now, that has gone up somewhat in the last couple of years, but again, we can move forward with that as well as I make a few other comments, when we talk directly about Bill 163 and the registry.

We had a strong auditor's report in 2007 on the registry. The act does not refer to the many offenders living in the community, such as those on day parole or in intermittent sentence programs, those awaiting appeal decisions, and in some cases those found not criminally responsible because of mental illness. The ministry has little assurance that all offenders in the federal system who live in Ontario are being systematically included in the registry. That's some of the things we found out. That's why, as we moved forward to create Bill 163, the federal government had to make adjustments to its Bill S-2.

Federal offenders temporarily detained in provincial institutions before being transferred to a federal facility are recorded in the registry with what is known as a footprint record. However, the review identified some 360 offenders—this is in the 2007 report—who appear to have been subsequently released into Ontario communities from federal custody but were not registered in the Ontario registry.

The process for deleting offender records from the registry needs improvement. In addition, the ministry had no procedures for ensuring that it was notified if a pardon was revoked so that the offender could be reregistered.

Despite basically a 95% to 97% compliance rate, local police follow-up procedures on the 384 non-compliant offenders—those who did not register or did not re-register annually—varied widely and there was no ministry guidance on what those procedures should be.

The ministry's public safety division inspections of local police services did not include activities relating to the registry at the time of the audit.

There are a number of limitations in the registry tools available to investigators that inhibit efficient searches through the list of registered offenders in the database. Registry records do not always capture all offender information required under the act that would be useful to investigators. There's little evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of registries in reducing sexual crimes or helping investigators solve them. The ministry has yet to establish performance measures for its registry. Since its inception, nearly \$9 million in federal funding for registry operation was spent instead on other OPP operational areas.

So those are the problems that we actually can say we have found with the registry through the auditor's report. But keep in mind that it's a fairly new organization, only set up in 2001. As we move forward with building this registry, we need to note that we've tried to follow up with both the federal legislation and provincial improve-

ments to make sure we improve upon and clear up any kind of problems that there can be with the registry itself.

I'm really proud of this bill, and I told that to the minister when he introduced the bill.

I did want to thank him for a couple of things: first of all, the remarkable job that both he and Mr. Hudak and Mr. Prue did this afternoon in honouring Eric Dowd. I thought this was certainly one of the nicest tributes I've seen paid in this Legislature. But I wanted to thank the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for allowing our office to have a briefing on this bill. The staff did an excellent job and we had a good chat about a number of things in the ministry. However, we made it clear that we were supporting the legislation. We did want to move forward with improving it, with the recommendations that would align it with the new federal legislation. I believe it still has yet to be proclaimed.

Now, when I mentioned how proud we are, the minister at the time who brought in Christopher's Law was David Tsubouchi, who is a good friend of mine and someone that I really admired in this Legislature. Certainly, I know he was one of the most popular ministers, Solicitor Generals or Ministers of Community Safety—whatever title the minister has at the time—that we've had in the province. Certainly the police community thought a lot of Minister Tsubouchi.

He brought in this bill, did substantial consultation with a number of families and identified a strong, strong need for this kind of legislation in the province of Ontario. With the support of Jim Stephenson and his family, based on the sad death of his son Christopher, this legislation was brought into force in Ontario and has since been what I would consider a real leader in registries in our country, even more so than the national sex offender registry. Keep in mind that none of the other provinces have a sex offender registry. Ontario did take the leadership role on that, and I compliment the current government for following up on Bill 16 and then, again, today on Bill 163, on amendments to this legislation.

I've talked a number of times about the few tours that I've done. Having the general headquarters in my riding, I drive by it two or three times a week, and I've got a lot of friends at the OPP general headquarters. I've actually had the opportunity do fairly substantial tours of the sex offender registry twice, and to be told by the staff and the people administering the programs what they had there.

One of the things that has really developed out of the Ontario sex offender registry is that it has become a wonderful investigative tool for the Ontario Provincial Police, other police services in province, and even, in fact, the RCMP, who look after the national sex offender registry in the rest of Canada. I don't think that when they started out it was meant to be quite as handy for police services as it has become.

Leading up the Ontario sex offender registry are a couple of folks that I know very well, and they help me when I call and ask them for comments and information on what's actually happening. They are Adam Alderson and Jim Mascola from the Ontario sex offender registry. I

want to thank them for any information I've received from them and for the times we've had the opportunity to tour the facility.

But something that is really important to me is that I was told the number of offenders that we have in the province and how they're identified when a problem arises, if they've registered. We know that the people who are on the registry are supposed to register, and the compliance rate now is usually between 95% and 97.5%. Overall, most people who have been identified as sexual offenders do register on a regular basis, and it's only the odd one we hear about in the media who hasn't registered, and we wonder where they actually are.

One of the things that's really interesting is, when a crime is reported to a police service in Ontario, whether it be the OPP or one of the police services, they can immediately go to the Ontario sex offender registry and find out who it may be. There are thousands of names on these files, but they have a way, with their database and the technology they use, to actually zoom in on, first of all, the size of the person, the age of the person, what his preference is—for example, if he likes little boys or little girls or women or whatever it may be, all these sorts of things—and in no time they can take that example of who it may be and identify, from the particular area where the offence took place—they can pick people out of their database and immediately begin to circle in on who it possibly could be that committed the crime.

That's what I found amazing when they showed me on the computer system they have, the database, how quickly they can do that, and how they can get that information back.

What it tells me is, having that information and the fact that the offenders know that information is available about them since Christopher's Law was introduced in 2001, I can't imagine how many crimes have probably been saved—have not gone ahead, haven't taken place—because the criminals know they can be caught like that. You can imagine, if we never had the registry, what could happen—with the technology we've got today, with child pornography and with the Internet etc., how many people would have taken advantage of people if that registry didn't take place. So kudos to the staff there and to the administration of the OPP for a job really, really well done as they build this registry.

1630

I'm talking to people about the Ontario sex offender registry, and I understand that, as we build these improvements with added legislation, there's really an opportunity here. This may, in fact, be the top sex offender registry, certainly in North America and maybe even worldwide. That much data has been captured and that much information is available to the public.

Now, everything is not perfect, and I've asked a number of police officers, people whom I know and people whom I've chatted with, about how they felt about certain parts of it. Certainly, the fact that there's a privacy issue around it is a problem for some. Some police officers feel that somehow should be changed, so

that if you're convicted, if your name is on the registry, that should be information that's available to the public. I've had police officers tell me that. I'm not going to mention their names here in the House today, but they do think that's an area of concern. And when someone who's on the sex offender registry moves into the community, the police certainly know, but the community doesn't know. Some police officers feel that their names should be posted so that the general community knows, because although they may be a convicted sex offender and they may be on the registry, that does not mean they won't reoffend. The problem we have with that, of course, is that families worry when a convicted sex offender is in the community. So that would be the downside of it.

However, I did want to point out that in the end, this registry over the years has been something that I think has saved many, many cases from actually occurring in the country, because if they were convicted in the past, the criminals know that they'll be caught again easily. It has probably prevented a lot of sexual offences from occurring in our province.

I wanted to talk also about policing in general. When you have a one-hour leadoff, Mr. Speaker, and there are only three amendments to the bill, it takes a long time to use a whole hour up. You've probably done that a number of times yourself. I can tell you, I do want to put a number of things about the OPP on the record today because I think it's a good opportunity. Again, it's in my riding, and I wanted to openly put some of these things on the record.

Since I was elected in 1999, I've had the opportunity as both an MPP in the government for four years and now in my eighth year as critic for community safety and correctional services to work under three OPP commissioners: a few years with Commissioner Gwen Boniface; the whole career of Chief Fantino as commissioner of the OPP, including the 100th anniversary of the OPP; and, of course, now with our new commissioner, Chris Lewis. He's a great guy, a person who so deserves that program because he has worked so hard throughout, starting at the very basic constable position in policing and working his way through all the different programs and divisions of the OPP until today, he is the commissioner. I think he'll be an outstanding commissioner in the years ahead.

I've had the opportunity in that time to work with things like Christopher's Law. I also had the opportunity, as I mentioned earlier, to work with David Tsubouchi. Another thing I was really proud to work with Mr. Tsubouchi on was Bill 25. Before Bill 25, OPP civilian employees belonged to OPSEU, and the Ontario Provincial Police Association felt that their civilian employees should be part of the OPP Association as well. Bill 25 allowed them to have that vote. I can remember the major story up in my riding, because both the association of the OPP and OPSEU were fighting to have the membership as part of their organizations. I can tell you that, in the end, Brian Adkin, who was president of the OPP Associ-

ation at the time, convinced his civilian employees to go to the OPPA, and they left OPSEU and joined. And I think they've had a fairly good relationship, not only at the OPP general headquarters but in all of their detachments and divisions—districts—across the province.

OPP general headquarters has some amazing programs they operate out of there. Recently, the Ontario Provincial Police moved Project P, the child pornography unit, from Downsview up to the general headquarters. I had an opportunity to actually tour one time, with the superintendent of Project P, to see what actually happens in the child pornography unit and the challenges that people face in there, and that's with all the computer systems today and the technology and the Internet going around the world. What occurs in there was just incredible, and it's actually very, very wearing on anyone who's trying to do their job effectively.

When we do a tour of an organization like Project P, there's so much information—there's privacy around all that information. But I was allowed to see quick snaps of some of the photos of some of the things that had taken place with children and babies, and I found out what a difficult job it has to be working in that unit. I know that a number of the people who work in Project P can't work there too many years. They have to move on to other parts of their career because it's very frustrating, and if you have children of your own or nephews or nieces, this is an area that you have a lot of concern with.

Also operating out of the OPP general headquarters are organizations that purchase all the equipment, that purchase the marine unit equipment. I can tell you that the OPP marine unit—and I know that anybody who's near water will have an OPP boat of some kind near them. Many of the larger boats are named after former commissioners: the Thomas O'Grady boat. More recently, one boat was named—the boat that works out of the—

Interjection.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Pardon me?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I was there.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay, yeah. A boat that was launched a year or two ago was named after Constable Tom Coffin, who was shot in a bar in Penetanguishene by a person that just went wild and brought a gun in and killed him right in the bar as he was having a cold beer after work. The OPP employees and members of the association got behind—I think at that time it was Chief Fantino—and asked if they could name that boat after him, and it was done, because it was working out of the Georgian Bay area at the time.

I had a chance to go out on Georgian Bay one day with the OPP marine unit and witnessed what they do. It was absolutely unbelievable to see the respect the OPP marine unit has in cottage country. First of all, they pull people over if they've got the wrong kind of licence for—the Minister of Natural Resources is here today. If they have the wrong fishing licence, for example, they'll check that out when they're out with the OPP and make

sure that they've got the proper gear in their boat, that they've got the proper licensing for the boat.

Interjection.

1640

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Pardon me? Yeah, it was OPP officers. You should go out and ride on it sometime. You know what? Really, in my opinion, they're just doing sort of a backup job for the conservation officers.

As well, they would stop people with boat problems. In a body of water the size of Georgian Bay, if they see a boat stopped somewhere, they stop and check it. Whether it's a broken engine or somebody just wanting to stop and have a swim or something like that, they keep an eye on it.

But where I really noticed the respect was when we toured through the islands—because we did it right in the middle of the summer—with the number of people who came down to their docks or would stand on their decks and wave at the OPP boat. In a lot of cases, when you're up in that part of the Muskoka or Parry Sound area, they don't get a lot of services from their municipality because there's no water or sewer or transportation. They leave their boat at a marina and they go on up the shoreline and, really, what they get is law and order. They get the security of having their cottage in safekeeping because the OPP boats are going through and watching for people that would have stolen goods or something like that. I really noticed that. That was one thing that I thought was really positive.

In the future, I think, there are some opportunities for the marine division of the OPP, and I'm hoping that some of that can actually take place in Orillia on Lake Couchiching on some land that's currently owned by the government under the Ontario Realty Corp. I know they're also negotiating with the city of Orillia etc. So we'll see what happens on that.

We have some great people in the Ontario Provincial Police as well, people that you wonder where their career takes them. A gentleman who was just recently named as director of corporate communication and executive services in the office of the commissioner is a friend of mine, a person I've known the last seven or eight years, a guy by the name of Rick Philbin. He used to be the detachment commander of the OPP out of south Georgian Bay and spent some time as a police chief working for a year in the Sudan actually teaching police chiefs in the Sudan about good policing. We all know the kind of lifestyle and problems they've had in a country like that, so it's really amazing when we can send our officers over to a foreign country and the OPP can help in that way.

I don't think a lot of people understand that in policing—people in Ontario just see the black-and-whites on the road and don't realize that we help other countries as well with some of the backup and some of the education programs. People have gone over to Ireland for training and have trained people in different parts of the world. We're quick to criticize policing forces and that sort of thing many times, but often we're not able to compliment them on some of the great programs they work on as well.

The Crime Stoppers unit is another program. It's not just the OPP; it takes in a number of police forces. But we have had a very strong OPP presence, and basically all of our community presence in the Crime Stoppers of Dufferin, Muskoka and Simcoe. I know a friend of mine, Dawn Martin, headed it up as an OPP appointee on that for the last year or so—couple of years, I should say—and has done a remarkable job recruiting volunteers. They go in and they set up these meet-and-greets and opportunities to sign up people that might possibly want to be on a Crime Stoppers committee.

I don't think everybody is aware of what exactly happens with Crime Stoppers, but it's meant for people who can report crime and not have to give their name. That gives the police a lead, and in the end it saves, in the province of Ontario alone, I believe—in fact, around the world I believe it's been billions of dollars in crime they've prevented by being able to have this program work. So we're trying very strongly—it was one strong area, and then it kind of weakened off, and now we're trying again to strongly move the Crime Stoppers forward, because anything that can help the police, anything that can be a tip for the police, is also going to save the taxpayers money. So I tip my hat to Dawn Martin, who has done great work building the Crime Stoppers team in Simcoe county.

I also wanted to talk about a friend of mine. Some of the dedication that you see in these police officers is absolutely incredible. A friend of mine whom I've known for a number of years now is a fellow by the name of David Hobson. David Hobson is a provincial constable. He's a community services officer out of the southern Georgian Bay detachment as well.

I don't know if this guy ever sleeps, because he sends out press releases all the time. That's his job: He's supposed to inform the public of what's actually happening in policing in south Georgian Bay. Whether it's weather conditions or the traffic—we've got some blowouts or snowstorms at Wasaga Beach or on Highway 92—he's on to that; he's telling the public. It comes across our BlackBerry's. Whether it's the icebreaker going into Midland harbour to allow a ship in to get rid of a load of grain at one of the mills, he puts all these things on the record and puts out releases constantly—not just to the politicians, but to all the community leaders in the media, community leaders in church organizations, in hospital organizations and to just about everyone you can imagine Dave sends these releases out, sometimes every day, sometimes two or three times a day. But the reality is, it's really good for communications and the police service that we have people like that.

He reports to Peter Leon at general headquarters. You can recall that that's how some of the people like Cam Woolley—and I often tease Dave that he's getting far more publicity up in our area than Cam Woolley, and Dave says, “Well, no; I'm getting a lot more publicity than you as the MPP, because you're always on page 2 and I'm on page 1 with the media reports.” I'm seriously saying this, eh? Because he is a great guy and he just

knows everybody. I'll tell you, there can't be anything happening in crime that he doesn't report on and let the media and community know, and that means all of us. I don't know how many people are on his database, but literally hundreds of people find out when something goes wrong. He does all kinds of school programs. He works with the boards of education, works with the hospitals. I just wanted to say that because he's a friend of mine and has done a great job as a community service officer. I wanted to say a few words about him today in the House.

Do you know what? I can't use up the whole hour, Mr. Speaker. I'm not really talking about Bill 163. It's just that, as I said earlier, we in this caucus support this bill. It's funny how some of these things come about. The temperature is kind of rising as you get closer to an election, even in the House here. But it's funny that you can actually have a bill, where it comes forward like this amendment bill, where you all agree to the bill. There are all kinds of issues around the federal election and Liberals and Conservatives and the provincial election coming up in the fall, so that, you know what? Things are heating up around here. However, this bill is something that I'm hoping every member of this House would support.

On top of that, my colleague from Welland will likely be debating this, and he'll definitely have some wonderful thoughts on it. It's one of the nice things about working with the member from Welland: He knows the legislation inside out and knows a lot of the past legislation. He's able to offer so much constructive criticism to legislation and, in a lot of cases, really positive amendments to the bill as well. I'll look forward to what he has to say and what kinds of amendments we might make to the bill in committee.

Overall, the PC caucus was very proud of Christopher's Law in the beginning, the lives it's helped and the lives it's probably saved. I think that the government's doing a reasonably good job by trying to immediately tie this bill into the national sex offender registry, so that we can align these bills so we don't have any problems coming up in that direction. It's only good government to do that, and we're happy to support it.

I look forward to the committee hearings. I appreciate the opportunity to speak for almost 40 minutes. I look forward to the passing of this bill, hoping that in the end, this bill will save more lives and will keep sex offenders away from people whom they could be offending.

1650

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to rise and make some comments on the Christopher's Law Amendment Act, 2011, following the speaker who just finished.

We're changing this act to bring it up to date and to make changes that are technical in nature to the sex offender registry that would—if passed, of course—align the provincial registry with recent changes made to the federal government's national sex offender registry. So

we'll have a harmonized situation in that regard, if we were to align these two pieces of legislation.

The proposed amendments address the following three areas: reporting obligations which would enable the province to require sex offenders to report within seven days instead of the current demand that it be 15 days, so it will be less than half the time; second, the addition of offenders convicted from outside of Canada as well; and thirdly, the addition of sex offenders pardoned under the Criminal Records Act prior to the proposed amendments, registered sex offenders who provide proof that they had received a pardon or were removed from the Ontario registry.

In essence, what we're doing is making technical changes that would align our existing law with that of the national government.

The proposed amendments to Christopher's Law are a continuation of our commitment to stronger and safer communities, which everyone wants to see occur wherever they may live in Ontario, and I look forward to the debate. I suspect that, like most of our bills here at Queen's Park, this bill will also go to committee, and there will be further conversation about this act at that time.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I would only say that I returned promptly to respond to the member from Simcoe North, who takes the issue very seriously.

As he said, he works with the OPP and the police services very responsibly and respectfully. It's a very sensitive issue. He has briefed caucus on it and on Bill 163. I am anxious in seeing the general consensus develop in compliance with the federal record on the sex offender registry.

I think everyone here generally agrees with the objective. I have my own personal views on some sections, if I get a chance. I'm not sure that the pardon language, which is more federal, is appropriate. I have written to the federal minister on it. The evidence is very clear on the aspect of pardoning, which comes up in section 9.1 of the Criminal Code. It's scientifically proven, the recidivism and risk to the public. The fact that the people can get a pardon and then go about changing their name to avoid detection, whether here or—as we've seen in Canada—other countries, that remains a concern that I have.

But, generally, I think it's important to make sure the public is safe, and I think the government is doing the right thing in that respect. There are some other concerns, not directly on this bill, that I would raise to be constructive. There are those who would think that any suggestions or amendments would be not helpful, but I think there are reasons to raise those concerns, even if the government chooses to ignore them.

With that, I think the member from Simcoe North represents our views pretty strongly.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: This comes very close to home for me, and I want to thank the member for Simcoe North for his thoughtful intervention.

I worked with street kids. They were sexually and physically abused 80% of the time in their home. They would run to the streets, where I worked as an outreach worker. They were sexually exploited by adults, kids as young as 11 or 12 years old. I remember working on the streets and phoning into the police with their licence plate numbers.

I famously used the word "homophobe" the other day, and I said that what I was referring to was situations that I was seeing. I was referring to these people who came down with baseball bats and beat these children senseless, and police would not respond. And what's interesting is that these children, once they've been sexually abused and they're adults, often get placed by child and family services on offender registries. So the whole totality of this tragedy is that children who are sexually and physically abused at home run to the streets, are subject to all kinds of violence, often become chemically dependent to deal with their pain, they get involved with drugs, self-inflicted crimes, and end up getting involved in robbery and incarceration. And these children's lives are destroyed—I've foster-parented and raised a number of these children; I've seen them—by sexual exploiters.

I want to just agree with my friend from Simcoe North. I think he put this forward in a very passionate way. I think this is a very good law. I think it was one of the good things from the previous government.

But these are often motivated—and the horror, what was so shocking to me, is that more often than not, these were the parents. I raised children who had their legs broken when they were two years old, who went through 28 child and family placements. Some of these kids were gay and got the crap beaten out of them. Some of them were straight and—

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

The member for Simcoe North, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to thank the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex, the member from Durham and the member from Toronto Centre for all of their comments on my leadoff a few minutes ago.

I think it's nice that we get a variety of comments coming from our different members as we debate this legislation, and that's why it's always great to go to committee too, because we get the comments like those of the member from Toronto Centre, which I hadn't heard before or I wasn't familiar with. We have those kinds of comments that we can hear at the committee table, and we can ask people who are there to make presentations.

On this bill, though, I'll be amazed if we have any more than a day of hearings, and it's not that I'm going to say the government is going to push it through or anything like that. I just think that most of the police industry would be supportive of this. I know that the Ontario sex offender registry helped the government with

the legislation. It aligns itself with the national registry, and we may have some people come in and add comments. I'm looking forward to the member from Welland, who always has good suggestions and sometimes puts forward amendments to the legislation. We'll see what they have to say as well.

I think with that—I just said it—it's a bill we're proud of on this side of House. We think that it's the right thing to do by moving it in line with the national sex offender registry, and as I'm told, and I'm telling people—people in the OPP have told me this and some of the other major police services—our registry in Ontario is as good as any in the world, and it can be a model for other jurisdictions in the world as well. So the better we make it, the better it is for other jurisdictions, and of course, the better it is for the safety of our citizens and our young people as well.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: On behalf of New Democrats, I do want to make a few comments on this bill and some of the history which—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I want to give the member the opportunity. Are you doing the leadoff? Are you doing the NDP leadoff?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'll stand down the leadoff.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): That you'd like to stand down the leadoff is what I'm getting at.

The third party would like to stand down their leadoff. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I would also like to outline some of the things which historically got us to where we are now and the introduction of this bill.

I think we know that there is federal legislation in this area and there is provincial legislation in this area. In fact, the federal legislation has recently been amended, in 2010. The federal legislation was amended by Bill S-2, which received royal assent on December 9, 2010, and when Bill S-2 is proclaimed at the federal level, there will be several differences between the federal registry and the Ontario registry. This is the reason why this bill is here today: because legislation needs to be put in place to, in effect, bring the two registries together. The changes being made are administrative in nature and will ensure that the federal and provincial sex offender registries are in sync with each other. I think we all know the changes that are being made as a result of Bill 163. It removes existing legislative offender reporting timelines of 15 days. It adds a new regulation-making authority to prescribe the timelines for reporting in section 3 and section 7 of the act. It requires offenders who have been convicted of a sex offence outside of Canada and who have been ordered to report to the national registry to also report to the Ontario registry. It allows the Ontario registry to maintain the records of registered offenders who receive a pardon under the Criminal Records Act.

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I think all of us would support these changes. They are, in essence, housekeeping changes that need to be

made to ensure that the Ontario registry and the federal registry work in sync. But there continue to be two serious problems with the Ontario registry. One is the omission of convicted persons who were young offenders at the time of their conviction. What that means is that a person who was 17 and 11 months old and who was convicted of even a serious sex offence is immunized from being listed on the sex offender registry. I think most of us, if we were to think about that, contemplate it for a minute, would say there is a problem here.

The other element that remains of concern is the absence of retroactivity. We welcome the inclusion of persons convicted outside of the country, but the absence of retroactivity—and we all appreciate that over time retroactivity will become less of an issue, but it is certainly an issue now. This legislation is only 10 years old, and we have a chance to amend it here, but we are not dealing with the issue of retroactivity. What it means, then, is that there's a very large number of sex offenders in the community, in the country, in the province, who are not registered because their convictions occurred before the creation of the original sex offender registry. I think most Ontarians, if they knew this, would be shocked and would be concerned. We ought to be concerned. I'm hopeful that when this legislation goes before committee we'll have a chance to deal with those two particular issues.

Now, there are some other things that need to be addressed as well. The importance of discovering an offence and the importance of punishing an offence I think some of us all accept with respect to the criminal law. But I think we would all acknowledge that the prevention of the offence—in particular, the prevention of sexual assault—is really where we ought to put our greatest emphasis. The reality today, both in Ontario and in Canada, is that there is a crisis in overburdened prisons and that crisis is going to get worse. And there is a crisis when it comes to people receiving mental health services; I think we all acknowledge that that is getting worse. We know that there is a high percentage of sex offenders who have been abused themselves and we know that there is an absence of resources for people who unfortunately find themselves in this situation. So the question is, besides these essentially administrative amendments to the sex offender registry, what is being done to address the issue of prevention and what is being done to address the issue of those who have been the victims of sex offenders? What is being done to address those issues? What about the resources for young people who exhibit the early signs of a disorder or dangerous behaviour? What are we doing there? Are we doing anything?

In 2007, the Auditor General looked at Ontario's sex offender registry program. On page 272 of his report, this is what he said:

“Even though sex offender registries have existed for many years and can consume significant public resources, we found surprisingly little evidence that demonstrates their effectiveness in actually reducing sexual crimes or helping investigators solve them, and few

attempts to demonstrate such effectiveness. This has not gone unnoticed by critics of sex offender registries, some of whom argue that public funds would be better spent on offender treatment and support programs where there has been some documented proof of effectiveness in reducing recidivism—"recidivism" meaning, of course, the committing of another crime by an offender after being released.

New Democrats fully support the sex offender registry. We understand why it exists; we understand the importance of having one. But we need to recognize that this is simply one tool in attempting to protect Ontarians, especially vulnerable Ontarians.

We need to do more. We need to focus resources on prevention. We need to focus resources on offenders and ensuring that they receive the counselling and the attention that will minimize the probability of them reoffending. We believe that by simply putting all of our resources into the sex offender registry and not putting resources into these other very important areas, we're letting people down.

New Democrats will be supporting the bill, but we want to see it go to committee, we want to see some stakeholder comment and we would like to see some resources put into prevention, on the one hand, and helping the victims of sex offenders, on the other hand.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Kenora-Rainy River speaking on Bill 163 did make some very valid observations. I think that's what this second reading debate is all about.

The bill was just introduced on March 10, and we have briefly caucused it. Our critic, the member from Simcoe North, has just responded, and we're waiting. In fact, we all agreed to stand down. In the third party, the member from Welland, is the actual critic on this.

When we're discussing this bill, I think it's generally agreed in our caucus—Tim Hudak and Mr. Dunlop have told us that we should agree, but as you go through—I'm hoping to get a few moments; not too many, but a few on this issue.

The sex offender registry is well intended to make sure that people are aware that there could be a predator. It's that type of abuse that I'm talking about, where the person may be a risk to society, where we need to have some strengthening of the bill.

It differentiates between the person who may have been accused of inappropriately touching or those kinds of things that aren't acceptable, either—and they may even be convicted. Where there is violence or predatory kinds of activities, I don't think those persons should be eligible for a pardon.

It's a very subtle distinction. It is in the bill, which I will get to if I'm given a chance this afternoon. Perhaps the Liberal members will stand down their time so I will be given a chance to speak. But in the event they don't, I'm on the record.

It's a bit technical, because when there's a risk to society, we have a duty to protect the most vulnerable,

and that's what this is about. I think we're all aiming in the right direction, and I look forward to further debate.

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to be able to respond to the comments of the member from Kenora-Rainy River and to speak in support of Bill 163.

It's interesting: I've been known to be very critical of things the former Conservative government did, but I will admit that this is something they did right. They did a very good job when they set up the Ontario sex offender registry.

Interjection.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Enjoy it while I'm saying it. This doesn't happen often.

To be serious, the Auditor General looked at the Ontario sex offender registry and we did hearings at public accounts. The then OPP Commissioner, Fantino, came to talk to us. He talked about the fact that the Ontario sex offender registry is far superior to the national sex offender registry for a number of reasons.

Mr. David Zimmer: He's going to change that now.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I don't know what his position is now, but when he was commissioner of the OPP, that was certainly his position.

While there are some things we would like to see the national offender registry fix, they have fixed some things. Because they fixed those things, it's important that we align the Ontario sex offender registry to jibe with that registry.

Personally, one of the things I am very pleased to see is that we're adding sex offenders who have been pardoned. I was absolutely appalled, as were lots of Ontarians, when we realized earlier this year the frequency with which the federal government was pardoning people with sex offender histories. Now they're going to be captured both nationally and provincially on our sex offender registries.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I just want, in the time available, to add a couple of comments to the discussion today. Listening to the member from Kenora-Rainy River's comments reminded me of the important role so many organizations play in our communities.

I was particularly reminded of the work done by the York Region Abuse Program, which of course has been around for many years; I dare not mention a number, because I'm not sure I would be correct. It has provided opportunities for counselling and therapy for people—both children and adults—who have experienced the grimness of this whole issue of sex offenders.

I think that what we are debating here today, as recognized by members on all sides, is the fact that we have a good piece of legislation, and it has proven to be effective. What we need to do is refine it in such a way that it meets the standards nationally.

But it is an opportunity to recognize, first of all, the victims of sexual abuse and the work that is done by community organizations such as YRAP in trying to heal and being prepared to try to heal, whether it's very young children or adults who have struggled for many, many years and then realized that there is an opportunity, through organizations like YRAP and also Family Service Ontario, to find the kind of expertise that will, in some way, provide them with the methods and strength to go on and live as normal lives as they can. I think it's really important to keep them in mind as well.

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

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I just want to take the opportunity, for a couple of minutes, to add a couple of comments on the proposed amendments to Christopher's Law in Bill 163. I think this is one of those pieces of legislation that, frankly, we agree in general is a good thing that we need to bring up to date because it is providing some results.

Just to touch on the proposed amendments, there are three areas. There's a reporting obligation, which enables the province to require sex offenders to report within seven days instead of the current 15. That's shortening that time gap. Once again, I think we all agree that it's a good amendment.

Addition of offenders convicted outside of Canada: I cannot name names or communities, but I know during my municipal days—

Mr. Jeff Leal: One of the greatest mayors Brighton ever had.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Close. Close.

But let me tell you, I had some calls from some of the ratepayers of the municipality of Brighton—as a matter of fact, it was in the Brighton township days, before the amalgamation, when I was reeve. People weren't quite sure, but they thought that there was a sex offender who moved into their community. There was no way they could verify it. I, as the mayor, called the police. They couldn't really share a lot of information, but it created an awful lot of anxiety, and this was in rural Ontario, where kids would have to walk to the school bus. So I think anything that we can do to improve the safety of those folks from—I'm going to use the word “predators” in some cases, although some of these folks might be somewhat reformed. I think we all need to—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. The member for Kenora–Rainy River, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I want to thank my colleagues, both from the Conservative caucus and the Liberal caucus, for their comments. I just want to return, in the few brief moments that I have, to what I think is the most important part of this discussion that is not included in the amendment.

First, I think we all have to focus more attention on prevention, and insofar as this legislation can be amended to do something effective in terms of prevention, I would hope that that will happen at the committee level, and

that whoever sits on committee will in fact spend some time looking at what can be done in terms of prevention.

The other issue is, again, treatment, and as the Auditor General remarks in his review, there have been treatment programs which have been shown to be effective, and effective in terms of reducing or eliminating the possibility of re-offending. I think in terms of protecting people from pain and suffering, in terms of offering better and greater security to the most vulnerable people in Ontario, we need to spend some time to reflect on this.

It is one thing to record the name, the identity, of a sex offender. It is quite another thing to ensure that people are not at risk of re-offending. It is quite another thing to be sure to ensure that vulnerable people are better protected.

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

Mr. David Zimmer: The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services spoke the other day. He laid out the broader policy reasons for moving ahead with the legislation, and it falls to me now to get into some of the nuts and bolts and technical details of it.

The amendments that we're proposing to Christopher's Law are going to align the legislation with the national sex offender registry. That was amended by Bill S-2. Members of the House are aware that on April 4, 2000, the Ontario government passed Christopher's Law to establish and maintain a registry of sex offenders that the police can use proactively for investigative purposes and crime prevention.

The federal government established a national sex offender registry in 2004. The national registry was similar to Ontario's, though less comprehensive. On December 9, 2010, the federal government passed legislation, their Bill S-2, that brings the national registry more in line with Ontario's registry. However, a difficulty: The legislation will create some differences between the national and the provincial registries, and it's important that we resolve those differences.

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What are the differences? The sex offender registry is based on a very simple proposition, that is, if police know the whereabouts of all convicted sex offenders in the community, they are better able to identify potential threats and can better focus their investigation into actual crimes. That is why Christopher's Law requires offenders convicted of a criteria offence and residing in Ontario to register with their local police service within 15 days after a triggering event. A triggering event is typically the release from custody or if they've gone through a name change or an address change. It's important that that information be forthwith conveyed and put into the registry. Where there is no custodial sentence, they must register within 15 days after being convicted of a sex offence, or within 15 days of receiving an absolute or conditional discharge for a sex offence when found not criminally responsible on account of a mental disorder.

Currently in Ontario, police services are responsible for the Ontario and the national sex offender registra-

tions. But police services in Ontario only have direct access to the Ontario registry to input and search offender information. Because the information captured by the Ontario and the national registries is similar, police services in Ontario are only required to submit offender information into the Ontario registry. Information required by the national registry is automatically transmitted from the Ontario registry. However, the national registry will now require Ontario police services to collect additional information that cannot be entered into the Ontario registry because there is no legislative authority to do so. As a result, information that is automatically submitted to the national registry could be incomplete.

When S-2 is proclaimed—it has received proclamation but it hasn't been proclaimed yet—there will be some differences between the Ontario and the national registry in the following areas. Here are the differences:

Reporting obligations: Bill S-2 requires offender to register within seven days, while the Ontario legislation requires registration within 15 days.

A difference regarding offenders convicted outside of Canada: The federal registry will require registration of offenders convicted outside of Canada, while the Ontario legislation does not.

Pardon provisions: The national registry will maintain the records of registered offenders who receive a pardon under the Criminal Records Act. Information pertaining to all pardoned offenders must be removed from the Ontario registry—so you see the substantial difference there.

The federal legislation will also require the reporting of certain volunteer and employment information, while Christopher's Law does not now require this. The legislative amendments we are proposing would ensure consistency between the national and the provincial registry. Consistency is critical to the effectiveness of the registries, both the national registry and the provincial registry. It will help ensure that more offenders of interest are identified by an Ontario registry search during the time of these very sensitive investigations.

Having different Ontario and national registry reporting periods could increase the workload of Ontario police services. They would have to manually register offenders in Ontario for the national registry and then confirm that the offenders are fulfilling their national and their Ontario reporting obligations, if the registries were inconsistent.

The process of manual uploading of information from local police to the OPP, which in Ontario is the only police service with direct access to the national registry, and from the OPP then—the second step—to the national registry, could take up to four weeks. That's much too long for these time-sensitive investigations because when there's an investigation involving a sex offender, it makes common sense that the police want to move quickly. They want to move quickly; that's key to preventing further sex offences and to rescuing someone who is in danger. So this bill will ensure that Ontario

continues to provide offender information to the national registry electronically and in real time.

Furthermore, where there are differences in the time allowed for offenders to report to the Ontario registry and the national registry, offenders may fail to differentiate the Ontario and the national reporting requirements, resulting in potential criminal charges for offenders who mistakenly believe they have 15 days to report to the national registry. We want to be fair and objective in describing and making known the requirements to people who have to and should register.

Including sex offenders in the Ontario registry who have been convicted of a sex offence outside of Canada will help ensure more offenders of interest are identified by the Ontario registry.

The bill proposes to address these issues that I've just touched on in the following way. I'm going to talk about some of the provisions of the bill now, and some of this gets pretty technical, but it's important, dealing with this matter of sex offender legislation, that we all know exactly what is contemplated in the bill.

Section 1 of the bill would add two new clauses to the definition "sex offence" in section 1 of the act. New clauses (b.2) and (b.3) would result in offences which were committed outside of Canada now being included in the definition if the person who committed the offence is required to report to the federal sex offender registry pursuant to an obligation under either section 490 of the Criminal Code or section 36 of the International Transfer of Offenders Act.

Section 2 of the bill would amend section 3 of the act to remove the 15-day reporting timelines and would provide for the timelines to be prescribed by regulation. The section would be further amended by adding two new clauses, (e.1) and (e.2), which would require offenders who are subject to a federal sex offender registry reporting obligation pursuant to the Criminal Code or pursuant to the International Transfer of Offenders Act to report to the Ontario registry within the time prescribed in the regulation.

Section 3 of the bill would amend section 7 of the act to remove the 15-day reporting timelines and to have the timelines prescribed by regulation. Section 3 of the bill also contains some transition provisions which would stipulate that if the events that trigger a reporting obligation in subsection 7(2) of the act occur before the bill comes into force, the old reporting obligation provisions would apply, and if such events occur on or after the bill comes into force, the new reporting obligations would apply.

Section 4 of the bill would amend section 8 of the act to state that it applies to persons who become subject to an obligation to report to the national sex offender registry pursuant to section 490 of the Criminal Code on or after the day this bill comes into force. It goes on to state that the duration of the reporting obligation under the act is for the duration of that federal reporting obligation.

Section 4 of the bill would further amend section 8 of the act to state that it applies to persons who become

subject to an obligation to report to the national sex offender registry pursuant to section 36 of the International Transfer of Offenders Act. They would have to do that on or before the bill comes into force. The section goes on to state that the duration of their reporting obligation under the act is for the duration of the federal reporting obligation.

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Section 5 of the bill would repeal subsection 9(3) of the act. Under that subsection, the ministry is required to remove all of an offender's information from the registry if the offender receives a pardon for all of the sex offences that triggered a reporting obligation. This is a very sensitive piece of the legislation. Section 6 of the bill would add a new section to the act, section 9.1, which would require the ministry to remove all of an offender's information from the registry if the offender receives a free pardon for all of the sex offences that triggered the original reporting obligation.

Section 7 of the bill would add a new regulation-making power to section 14 of the act, allowing for regulations to be made in relation to the various timelines for reporting set out in subsections (3) and (7) of the act.

I realize that that's a very technical speech with references to sections and subsections and a lot of technical language in my remarks, but in dealing with sex offender legislation, the sensitivity and the consequences for potential victims—because the whole idea is that you can keep an eye on sex offenders who might have a proclivity to repeat their conduct, to assist the police in investigating a sexual offence that has happened, and, of course, one of their tools is the registry where they can check on people who might be possible suspects.

The business of some people having had pardons in the past and that the information prior to those pardons should be included in the registry: That's all addressed in this bill. At the same time, we have to be cognizant and fair in dealing with the rights of a sex offender. They have rights too, and it's important that this legislation strike the right balance between their rights and protection of the public and assisting police officers in their investigation. It's my submission that this bill strikes the right balance. But I do want to leave you with these final points about the legislation, because it's very, very important.

Even with the proclamation of Bill S-2, Ontario's registry will still maintain the following advantages over the national registry.

—First, it is accessible by every police service in Ontario, where the national registry is only accessible by the OPP at their general headquarters in Orillia. As a result, what happens is that local police services in Ontario have got to contact the OPP to conduct a national registry search on their behalf.

—It allows the police to perform searches that display offender residences within a specific proximity of a given location, such as a school or a daycare centre. The national registry doesn't have that capability, and that's a real plus for the Ontario model.

—The Ontario registry maintains the historic and most recent photographs of the offender. The national registry only maintains the most recent photograph.

—Ontario's registry is routinely checked by police services in the course of their investigations. Ontario's sex offender registry has a compliance rate of more than 97%, one of the highest compliance rates for all sex offender registries in operation, including all of the registries in the United States.

Christopher's Law is an important piece of the legislation. It is based on a very simple proposition: If police know the whereabouts of all convicted sex offenders in the community, they are better able to identify potential threats and better able to focus their investigation on current offences.

The amendments proposed in the bill would, if adopted, maintain a smooth and efficient sharing of information between local police forces of both registries, the national and the Ontario, and more closely align the Ontario sex offender registry with the national registry.

It is for these reasons that I urge all members to study the legislation carefully, compare it to the national registry and reflect on the enhancements that the Ontario registry provides. This legislation ensures that Ontario continues to be one of the leaders in Canada, in North America and, indeed, in the world in the drafting of sexual offender registry legislation.

It's so important that we have the national registry and the provincial registry work in tandem, that they be in sync. It would be a terrible, terrible thing if, because of legislative differences, different reporting requirements and other technical differences regarding the obligations of a sex offender to register—if they're slightly different or even quite a bit different between the national and the provincial registry, we don't want anybody to fall between the cracks and not be registered, if they should be registered. They can fall between the cracks, from the offender's point of view, perhaps quite innocently, just because he or she didn't understand the reporting requirements or confused the provincial and the federal requirements. Or it may be that an offender deliberately takes advantage of the conflicting reporting requirements and deliberately navigates away through the cracks because of the differences in the legislation.

We owe it to all of the potential victims who are out there to provide the police with all the tools that we can possibly provide them. We owe it to our community, to our children, to our men and women who might, at some point in the future, fall victim to a sexual offence to set things up in such a way that we can do whatever we can to reduce the risk of a sexual offender repeating his or her conduct.

That's what this registry is all about. It's to provide protection of the public, it's to provide the tools to investigate offences that have already occurred and it's to eliminate the conflicts and the inconsistencies between the two registries so that the two registries act in tandem and the police have fast, quick and immediate access to the information in the registry.

Just this business of the legislation eliminating the requirement that the local municipal police forces in Ontario, under the current regime, have to go through the OPP and Ottawa, who then have to go through another process, call Ottawa and get the information back to the OPP office, and then send it out to the local municipal police, is a delay that often, we're told, can be a matter of days.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I listened very carefully to the member from Willowdale, and I think, to paraphrase, he explained that they have found the right balance. I would tend to agree with almost everything he says. I think we're all aiming at the same objective of having safe communities in the case of the sex offender registry.

When you look back at the history—and he was right to reflect on that, the compliance rate of 97%. This bill was introduced, I believe, by David Tsubouchi, who was then the Solicitor General, I gather; that was in 2000. This is an improvement to deliver compliance with the federal legislation under Bill S-2.

It's quite an innocuous little bill, actually. It's about a page-and-a-half long, and there's only one section. I think he spotted it. It's the new section, 9.1, which needs to have—and I've gathered there's going to be public hearings on this.

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It's more or less in the interest of our police services to sort out the accessibility issue. If you want to get to the national registry, you have to go through the OPP, which is kind of a red-tape bottleneck in this wired, flat world that we live in. In our local police station, you should be able to get access to these records. I say that with all the best of intentions to improve the bill, because it isn't as if we need to rely on paper records. These are all secured sites that should be available at the local police station.

I'll tell you why this is so important. When it comes to volunteers today or persons working with vulnerable people, they have to have background checks. This is becoming a serious, serious issue, while the intention is laudable.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member for Willowdale for his thoughtful and accurate description.

One of the things that's particularly difficult—and I'd just like to take a moment to look ahead. For about 15 years, I worked with sexually abused kids on the street. As I said earlier, 80% of those children were sexually abused at home by a family member, often a parent. We often have this CSI or Law and Order view that there is some terrible person in a trench coat in a local park, hunting down children. The sad story is that most of these children are abused by someone who loves them and protects them.

I also talked a little bit about the homophobia involved in that and how dangerous that is. I remember when I

applied to be a foster parent, I had to fill out a 17-page questionnaire on homosexuality and child abuse, sexual abuse. I didn't mind that. I found out that I was the only person—because I was the first gay person in Canada to become a parent—no other parent or caregiver applying had to get that kind of review. I found that with all the children whom I was fostering and working with, the majority of them were sexually abused while in child care. I'm going to say that again: The majority of children whom I worked with on the street were not only abused at home, but abused by a caregiver and a guardian.

I got the questionnaire because I was gay, and I was the only one. Why don't we do it with straight people? Because the kids would tell me that if it was a nice, middle-class family in the suburbs, no one checked their record. No one found out if it was that hockey coach who had abused seven kids. The problem we have is that, in spite of this law, we never find out. They never appear on the registry.

Children don't report their parents. I had a grandmother come into my constituency office to tell me she thought her son was abusing her grandchild. I had to work with her for three weeks to help her get the courage to report it to the police. I've heard a lot of talk—

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: It's so encouraging that some issues do come forward that allow this House to set all the politics aside, park them at the door and work together to strengthen some of the rules that our society lives by. This is, of course, one of the most important, and that is to protect one of the most vulnerable parts of our society: our children. So I am happy to support this bill.

I am also very encouraged that the original Christopher's Law was introduced by a PC former member, David Tsubouchi, and created the Ontario sex offender registry, which still remains the only provincial sex offender registry in Canada. It's so appropriate that we now align it with the federal registry to try to create more security and less risk for our children.

I agree that we can go much further, but I think that in cases like this, unfortunately, it's sometimes one baby step at a time. I think that we can do much better. I know that my colleague from Oshawa has presented a private member's bill trying to create more awareness and necessity for people to be checked for minor sports teams. Unfortunately, that was voted down a couple of times in my time here. I think that we need to move forward more on issues like that. So I am pleased to be supporting this bill and hope that we can create even stronger laws.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm glad to hear both sides of the House supporting this bill, because it's very important to all of us to create some kind of protection mechanism for the kids and for our communities across the province of Ontario.

Of course, this bill is very technical. I listened to the member from Willowdale. He outlined exactly what this bill is all about. It is about creating protection, aligning our bill in the province of Ontario with the federal bill, to have some kind of coordination between the convicted in the province of Ontario with the rest of the nation, and also to have shared information to allow the policing system, with the RCMP or OPP or the police services, to work together to get the information they need in order to protect our communities.

I know that we in Ontario have had a strong bill for many, many years. It was the first one in the whole nation, maybe one of the most unique bills in North America and the strongest bill in North America. Now we are going to work with the federal government to have shared information, to align ourselves with the federal laws, because it's important for us, even though our bill in the province of Ontario is stronger than the federal laws.

I want to congratulate my colleague the PA for the Attorney General for bringing up to the House a lot of explanations and detailing in order to convince us and tell us what this bill entails, what the bill is all about. I'm glad. Hopefully I'll get a chance to speak more about this bill in the future, because I think it's very important to all of us. It's important to our constituents, important for the safety of the province of Ontario, to keep our province safe. As we know, the compliance on this bill, as a number of colleagues mentioned, is almost 97%—the highest in North America. So I'm going to support it. I want to congratulate my colleague who spoke on this bill.

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

Mr. David Zimmer: I thank the members of the chamber for their remarks and for their careful attention to the debate. You know, at the end of the day what this bill is all about is bringing the Ontario registry into sync with the national registry, and as I've said before, the reasons for doing that are several.

First, we want to make sure that nobody, either intentionally or unintentionally, slips between the cracks and is not registered when they should be registered. Second, we want to provide the investigating police forces throughout Ontario—whether it's the OPP, whether it's the large police forces in Ottawa, Toronto, London, Windsor, Hamilton, or whether it's the smaller municipal, town and village police forces, because the citizens in big-city Ontario and the citizens in rural Ontario and the citizens in small-town Ontario should all have the benefit of a coordinated national and provincial registry.

We hear from time to time of horrific offences that occur in big-city Ontario; just as equally, we hear of horrific offences that occur in rural Ontario or small-town Ontario. The Ontario public is entitled to the best protection that that we can give them. Coordinating our two registries, eliminating the inconsistencies, making sure that there are no cracks that people—as I've said earlier, intentionally or unintentionally—can fall through is one of the best ways to protect against sexual offences.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I wouldn't want to have to interrupt my honourable colleague from Durham if he were in full flight, and when it gets near 6 of the clock, my trusty watch starts to vibrate, so I think it's time that we adjourn until 9 of the clock, Thursday, March 24.

The House adjourned at 1750.

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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)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	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)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	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)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	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)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	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)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	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	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Kim Craitor, Bob Delaney
Garfield Dunlop, Peter Fonseca
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Helena Jaczek
Norm Miller, Leeanna Pendergast
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell
Jim Brownell, Steve Clark
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, Aileen Carroll, P.C.
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Steve Clark
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
Wayne Arthurs, Aileen Carroll, P.C.
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**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craitor
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
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
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