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Tuesday 5 April 2011

Mardi 5 avril 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 5 April 2011

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 5 avril 2011

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HEALTH PROTECTION
AND PROMOTION
AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION
ET LA PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Ms. Matthews, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 141, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act / Projet de loi 141, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I will be sharing my time this morning with the member from Guelph, but before I hand over to the member from Guelph, I want to send a shout-out to my North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit: Dr. Jim Chirico, who is our medical officer of health, and Monique Lugli, a good friend of mine, who's the executive director. I just commend our medical officer of health and our health unit for all the great work that they do in our community. I know that they support us in a lot of the programming that we've developed over the years. Certainly, they are doing a great job in our community.

Now I hand it over to the member from Guelph.

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to be able to begin the third reading debate on Bill 141, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

As you will all recall, this legislation was introduced last November with one principal goal in mind: to better protect the health of our people and our communities. It will, if passed, strengthen Ontario's response to serious public health events, such as a pandemic.

The province's experience with pH1N1—which stands for pandemic H1N1, if you wonder what my mysterious little short form is—provided us with opportunities to review what worked well and where we could

improve. That was the impetus behind this particular bill, this legislation.

Local medical officers of health and the province's health providers have been heralded for their responsiveness, collaboration and professionalism during H1N1. I'm pleased with Ontario's response to the H1N1 pandemic, but we need to think about the future because it's not a question of whether we'll face another pandemic; experts tell us it's a question of when. And when there is another pandemic, or another public health emergency, will our province be ready for it? That's what this proposed legislation is all about. It's about making sure Ontario is better coordinated and better prepared for the next major health-related emergency.

There were many challenges and lessons learned during the 2009 pandemic. We believe Dr. Arlene King, Ontario's chief medical officer of health, has identified the best way to move forward in her report on the H1N1 response, which was released last June. Dr. King recommended a strong, centralized approach to public health emergencies, and she suggested that the chief medical officer of health have the authority to direct public health units in real time. We have responded with proposed legislation that would create these new powers for the chief medical officer of health, or CMOH.

The proposed legislation would give the chief medical officer of health enhanced oversight authority and give the CMOH the authority to direct boards of health and local medical officers of health to adopt policies and measures during a future public health emergency to support a coordinated response. The CMOH would only issue directives to boards of health if there is an immediate public health-related risk and a coordinated response is necessary to protect the health of Ontarians. Such directives would initially be enforced for six months, or less if the CMOH so decided.

The proposed amendments would also expand the minister's power to use a public space, on the advice of the CMOH, for public health purposes, such as holding an immunization clinic. It's perhaps important to note here that the existing act already provides the authority to use spaces for isolation units. That came out of SARS. But what we realized with the H1N1 pandemic is that you can need public spaces for purposes other than simply setting up isolation units. For example, what we discovered during the pandemic was that it was necessary to be able to quickly get space set up to hold mass immunization clinics. You can imagine another sort of chemical spill where perhaps the need would be to set up

a public space for some sort of decontamination. So what this bill proposes is that we expand that power to take over public spaces for those sorts of emergency public health needs.

The amendments would also ensure that the appointments of acting medical officers of health are approved by the CMOH and the minister. This would ensure consistency in the process by which permanent MOHs and acting MOHs are appointed and would strengthen the qualifications of our leadership in the province's public health system.

Following second reading of the bill, Bill 141 was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. The committee received input both orally and in writing from key stakeholder groups and organizations. These included the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and the city of Toronto.

I'm pleased to say that stakeholders who made submissions provided a number of constructive comments on the bill, and we were able to incorporate some of their suggested changes during clause-by-clause consideration of the bill at the standing committee. So the version we have here before us today, at third reading, is slightly different than the one that left here after second reading.

0910

For example, one of the things that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and ALPHA, the public health association, proposed was that when we talk about the criteria of risk to public health, or some sort of risk, we clarify that we mean "immediate risk" to meet the threshold to issue orders. So, in fact, we have taken that advice and, with the agreement of all three parties, we have clarified that the threshold is immediate risk. That's consistent with other clauses in the act.

We also had some questions by both the Association of Local Public Health Agencies and the city of Toronto around the use of the term "environmental health" in the act. When you're talking about circumstances where there would be cause to issue an order, "environmental health" was one of the things that the original version, as tabled, talked about as a criterion. The stakeholders quite rightly pointed out that in other parts of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the requirement is "health hazard" and that that's the language which is used elsewhere in the bill and which is already clearly defined, already clearly understood by the public health community. Again, on consent of all three parties, we changed that wording to talk about "health hazards" rather than environmental issues.

At the clause-by-clause examination we also, in response to the submission made by the City of Toronto, made an amendment to the bill around personal liability protection for certain public health workers. This is quite a technical amendment. Currently, section 95 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, or HPPA, provides protection from personal liability to designated positions and employees of boards of health who are working

under the direction of a medical officer of health and act in good faith—so protection from personal liability when you're working for a board of health. The only problem is that in some cases—the city of Toronto being the one that raised the issue, but we understand that there are some other jurisdictions where the same problem applies—the board of health employees are actually legally employees of the municipality.

We've sorted that out so that the amendment would add the phrase "or of a municipality." So when we're talking about protection for liability, we're talking now about both the direct employees of the boards of health and the people who happen to be formally designated as employees of the municipality. That will assure those people who work on our behalf during a public health emergency, who are following the directives of the local medical officer of health, or indeed the chief medical officer of health, that they are protected from any liability.

There were some suggestions made and some amendments that we did not accept. The one that I particularly wanted to mention that we did not accept and explain why was an amendment that was proposed by the NDP. Again, when we're talking about the criteria, the existing language proposes that if we have a health emergency, either national, international or locally in Ontario, this would apply. There was a proposal to remove "national" and "international," and we said, "No, we don't want to do that." Because you can imagine a situation where, across the border in Buffalo, Niagara Falls, New York or something, there would be some sort of a chemical explosion and the toxic cloud is headed this way. Clearly, the chief medical officer of health would want to have that coordinated response for all the health units, all the areas of the province, where that might end up. That would be an international incident. We think that's appropriate.

You can also imagine an outbreak in Florida during March break, and people returning all over our province from Florida carrying some highly infectious communicable disease. Again, we would want the chief medical officer of health to have a coordinated response all over the province. So we do want the chief medical officer of health to have that authority to deal with international and national incidents, not just provincial incidents. That was a proposed amendment that we rejected. We are keeping the power to deal with international and national health issues.

Ontario currently has one of the most decentralized public health systems in Canada. While this decentralization does give local health units the flexibility to look after local needs, we need to balance that with the need for provincial consistency and standardization, especially in times of public health emergencies. The proposed legislation is part of this government's larger plan to enhance the way we respond to future public health emergencies.

Our plan also includes the renewal of the Ontario health plan for an influenza pandemic. The lessons we

learned from the 2009 pandemic will be incorporated into the provincial pandemic plan, which is an ever-evolving document that aims to ensure our health system adjusts and operates well during the next pandemic. That, however, does not require legislation.

In addition, Ontario will continue to take steps forward to implement Panorama, a pan-Canadian initiative that will improve public health surveillance and enhance the province's capacity to deliver immunization programs. Again, however, that does not require legislation.

I'm proud of the way this government has demonstrated its commitment to public health in Ontario. The steps we are taking will help us continue to strengthen our pandemic planning and our preparedness for future public health emergencies. The H1N1 pandemic was not as severe as it could have been. The next one could be much worse. This proposed legislation would add to the many important tools already in place and enhance our responses to public health threats. Our proposed amendments and other coordinated steps are critical to ensuring that Ontario's highly regarded public health system continues to promote and protect the health of Ontarians. I urge all the members in this Legislature to support Bill 141.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Guelph on this important legislation. It's my thought that in the past, as she said, there certainly have been challenges to public health with respect to—I remember the incident of SARS, and how ill-planned and ill-conceived—and out of it, I think a lot of reaction caused the government to come up with this response.

I believe being prepared is a laudable goal. But when I look at the handing out of certain medications to Ontarians in the last couple of episodes with the flu vaccinations, that was anything but successful.

I look forward to our member from Whitby–Oshawa, in her remarks, that we're able to come up with a plan that actually works. I'm sort of disappointed in the history, but I look forward with anticipation to solutions in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Jeff Leal: As we've moved through, we're now into third reading of Bill 141, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act in the province of Ontario. I think the member from Guelph did a particularly good job this morning giving a comprehensive summation of where this bill has been through over the last little while, and certainly providing a bit of a history in the province of Ontario.

0920

We do know, from reading our history books, that the famous Spanish flu of 1919 started in Europe and then of course spread throughout the world, leaving millions dead in its path and a significant number of others who were ill for long periods of time. That historic event is the background for a lot of planning that has been done in

public health over a long period of time, and successive governments of all political stripes have been very involved in the advancing of public health in the province of Ontario—immunization programs in our schools and other health promotion programs.

Our recent experience in Ontario over the last decade in how we coordinate the various entities throughout the province of Ontario to respond to this type of situation—I think Bill 141 goes a very long way to improve that coordination capacity throughout the province, and I think that, as we move forward, all parties seem to be in agreement here that these amendments and this bill are the right thing to do. We look forward to having it ultimately passed in the province of Ontario, which will lead to improved public health.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I do commend the member from Guelph for what I feel is a very good summation of what Bill 141 is all about, as well as the amendments that came to committee. We didn't have very many groups presenting; we had two presentations in person and two written submissions that were made.

The bill, of course, was brought forward as a response to a report by Dr. Arlene King, our chief medical officer of health, on the H1N1 pandemic and how Ontario fared. While there was a lot of good in what was brought forward, there was still some room to improve, so the amendments that we discussed were largely in that vein. As PCs, we certainly supported this bill on second reading, and we will be supporting the bill on third reading, as amended.

I will have an opportunity in a very short time to discuss our view of the amendments and the importance of the amendments, but suffice it to say that they essentially strengthened the bill and, I think, clarify in several areas where there was perhaps a little bit of ambiguity about what the bill was intended to say. The language is clarified to make it more consistent with some of the other language within the Health Protection and Promotion Act. We are, as I said, very supportive and look forward to further discussion on this issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would agree that the member has done a summary of what's in the bill. Where I disagree is, the pieces that were not in her summary are the pieces that the NDP find most problematic. You have to realize that this bill was tabled before a full assessment of the province's handling of H1N1 was complete, and this rush to get there before the full assessment was done means that some important pieces got—they're kind of there, but they're not there in a clear fashion.

One of the most eloquent examples I can bring forward is that they talk about a "public health event," as this will be the trigger for the power of the local medical officer of health to be taken away and a coordination power to be given to the chief medical officer of health. Well, a "public health event" could be anything. If public

health is having a public consultation, that's a public health event. If they're holding a training seminar, that's a public health event.

I would like it to be very, very narrowly focused. I come from northern Ontario, and there is no appetite to have central power in Toronto when a serious public health emergency is happening in the north. We have not been well served in northern Ontario by made-in-Toronto, directed-from-Toronto anything. So you'll have to excuse me for being a little bit sheepish with the direction that this bill has taken. The need for coordination needs to be balanced.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Guelph has two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the members from Durham, Peterborough, Whitby–Oshawa and Nickel Belt for their comments.

Just before I respond, I would like to introduce Dr. Arlene King, the chief medical officer of health, who is in the gallery this morning.

Thank you to the members who reminded us that, even if you think back to the Spanish flu at the beginning of the last century, and look through SARS and H1N1, as progressive public health pandemics and epidemics have challenged us, each time we are able to fine-tune the legislation and the authority to deal with those and respond to those. I actually look at that as a strength—the fact that we learn from our experience each time to inform and make the next response even better. I think that's a great strength we have in Ontario.

I would, however, question the member from Nickel Belt, who asserted that the legislation was tabled before we had the report and evaluation from Dr. King on H1N1. I'm sitting here with Dr. King's report, *The H1N1 Pandemic—How Ontario Fared: A Report by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health*, and it is dated June 2010. I will remind you that this bill was tabled in November 2010. So it was tabled five months after we got Dr. King's response. I would submit to everyone that, in fact, we did have the opportunity to very carefully consider what Dr. King said, and that the threshold in the bill for when the chief medical officer of health can give a directive is much higher than somebody having a conference. That's nuts.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very pleased to speak this morning, on behalf of our Ontario PC leader, Tim Hudak, and the PC caucus, to third reading of Bill 141, the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act, 2010.

The clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 141 was completed on March 28, following one day of hearings on March 22. There were not many submissions made with respect to this bill, and certainly far fewer than what one would normally see in social policy committee. There were, in fact, a total of four presentations. Two were made in person: one by the Association of Local Public Health Agencies and one by the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. Written submissions

were received from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and from the city of Toronto.

I would like to spend some time discussing the amendments to the bill which were passed in committee and which, in my view, make the bill stronger, but I think it would be helpful, for the benefit of those people who may be following this debate, to set up a little bit of context.

Bill 141, as has been mentioned, came about in response to, and largely echoes, the recommendations made by Ontario's chief medical officer of health, Dr. Arlene King, who I'm also pleased to see here this morning to listen to this debate. This was done with respect to Ontario's response to the H1N1 pandemic of 2009.

Dr. King's thoughtful report, entitled *The H1N1 Pandemic—How Ontario Fared*, noted that Ontario fared well compared to most other countries, but also noted that measures needed to be taken in order to ensure that our public health system would be fully prepared for the next pandemic. Unfortunately, given the nature of the world today, we know that it's not a question of if we will be facing another pandemic; it's when.

Dr. King spoke to this issue in her report when she noted that, "We live in a truly interconnected world, and with that interconnectedness comes vulnerability to literally any disease that emerges anywhere in the world. Because of air travel, a disease can take less than a day to travel around the globe under the right, or wrong, circumstances. A recent study, for example, found Toronto to be one of the most vulnerable cities in the world in that regard because of our high volume of air travel to and from a great number of different locations.

"Simply put, we know beyond a shadow of doubt that at some point, there will either be another pandemic, or another emerging infectious disease event like SARS, that will require a provincial response. We intend that response to be as robust and effective as it can be."

0930

We certainly owe it to the memory of the people who died and their families to ensure that everything possible is done to protect the health and welfare of everyone in Ontario.

It's important to note that a lot was good in Ontario's response to H1N1. Dr. King, all of the medical officers of health and thousands of health care professionals across the province did an incredible job under very difficult circumstances to inoculate as many people as possible within a very, very short time frame. Similarly, the state of emergency preparedness overall in Ontario was very good. The province's Critical Care Secretariat worked with 124 hospitals to implement a coordinated surge capacity management plan, which helped to manage increased demand in critical care units.

As was noted during second reading, most of the problems encountered in Ontario related to the delivery and dissemination of the H1N1 vaccine. That is primarily what Dr. King's report addresses and what Bill 141 is intended to resolve.

During the H1N1 outbreak, there was significant confusion in a number of areas: (1) with respect to the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine and the order in which they were to be given. (2) There was confusion about who was in the high-risk groups. In some regions of Ontario, pregnant women were told that they were considered to be in a high-risk group and were eligible for early vaccination, and others were told that they were not a priority. (3) For pregnant women, there was some confusion about whether they should have received the adjuvanted version of the vaccine or the unadjuvanted version, although this was later clarified. (4) The vaccination clinics themselves: There were a lot of problems with these, in that there were significant variations in the times of operation of the clinics, which led to people shopping around the GTA in order to receive the vaccination faster. Initially, the H1N1 vaccine, unlike the seasonal flu vaccine, was distributed through flu clinics. This caused a lot of confusion with the general public, particularly with a lot of seniors, who were normally used to receiving flu vaccines through their family doctor's office.

It's clear that the overall problem with the rollout of the H1N1 vaccination program was the lack of a clearly defined chain of command to eliminate confusion and to ensure a consistent response to medical emergencies across the province. That is what Bill 141 proposes to deliver. The PC caucus, as I mentioned earlier, supported it in second reading, and we will support it again on third reading, as amended.

I'd like to take a moment to review the most substantive amendments to the bill that were passed in committee. Subsection 77.4(3) of the Health Protection and Promotion Act originally allowed the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to make an order to allow the chief medical officer of health to take control of premises for public health purposes in situations where there was "the risk of an outbreak of a communicable disease." The amendment inserted changes to the clause to state that this action could only be taken where there was an "immediate risk of an outbreak of a communicable disease." A similar amendment was made to this clause with respect to action being taken in case of an "immediate risk to the health of persons." The issue of immediacy was also addressed in an amendment to subsection 77.4(6) of the act. All members of the committee voted in favour of these amendments on the basis that any interference in local decision-making and actions by public health authorities should be such that there is no time for normal procedures to be followed and no time for the chief medical officer of health to embark upon normal consultation and communication practices.

Another amendment was made to section 77.9 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act. This section originally allowed the chief medical officer of health to issue a directive to local medical officers of health requiring the adoption of certain policies or procedures in connection with "environmental health." This was changed by amendment to "health hazards" to ensure

consistency with other sections of the act and to more accurately cover situations where these procedures might be employed.

The amendments which were passed in committee were very positive, in my view, and clearly state the circumstances under which the extraordinary powers allowed to the chief medical officer of health may be exercised in times of public health emergencies.

One quite interesting amendment which was not passed, which I would like to discuss for a moment, was recommended by the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. I think it's rather unfortunate that we didn't pass this one because it would have required the establishment of the position of chief nursing officers in every public health unit. Their position would be "to inform community and region-based planning, strengthen emergency response, increase buy-in and facilitate evaluation."

This made good sense to me because many public health responses are handled by nurses in our communities, in co-operation with physicians and other professional health care providers, so it would be helpful to have a chief nursing officer to assist in planning and coordinating their response. I should add, however, that even though this amendment did not pass, all of the committee members were favourably disposed to the idea. So I certainly hope that we will be able to revisit the concept in the future.

There is one other point that I would like to make before I conclude my remarks. We noted this in second reading debate, but I believe it's sufficiently important that it needs to be repeated. It is the fact that Ontario does not yet have a properly functioning system of electronic health records, despite the passage of almost eight years of Liberal McGuinty government and the expenditure of billions of dollars.

Why is the concept of electronic health records important in the context of the debate on Bill 141? The answer lies in the words of Dr. King herself, our chief medical officer of health, who said—and I quote from her report: "This was the largest and most rapidly executed immunization program in Ontario's history. We underestimated the logistics of organizing and delivering a mass campaign in extraordinarily tight time frames, across a vast province, in the glare of intense media coverage and in the face of rising demand. We underestimated lineups and demand surges. We had different plans unfolding in different communities, with the result being a different level of service depending on where you were in the province. We didn't fully leverage the primary care physicians who traditionally deliver the seasonal shot. And in too many critical ways, we didn't have the details we needed about how the immunization program was unfolding."

That last point is critical. In an era where there is much talk about electronic health systems and patient records, we do not have the capacity in this province to electronically manage and track our immunization programs. This is a serious problem. We need to move to a

21st-century system if we are to effectively deal with the pandemics of the 21st century.

As much as we regard Bill 141 as an important first step, much remains to be done. That being said, we need to start somewhere, so, as I indicated earlier, we in the PC caucus will be supporting Bill 141.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was interesting to hear what the member had to say about Bill 141, certainly pointing to some of the shortfalls that are still plaguing our health care system. The last one, having to do with electronic health records: From the 60-page report that was done doing the post-analysis of H1N1, we certainly realized that in the clinics—I'll take the Group Health Centre in Sault Ste. Marie—which did have a functional electronic health record, the response on the ground was vastly improved. I would certainly support what my colleague had to say regarding the urgency to bring that kind of tool to our health care system, including our public health system.

0940

Although we are making strides in rolling out electronic health records, we still have a lot of communication issues, and very few—none that I know of, anyway—that exist right now are able to communicate with our public health units. Our public health units are responsible for doing some of the testing for some of the diseases, and believe it or not, although they're able to do most of this electronically—and the people at the other end, the primary care centres that are sending those referrals, have also started an electronic health record of their own—they are not able to communicate between one another—not great.

When you still get your results from a fax from the health units, you know that there is room for improvement. And the same thing for this bill: There is room for improvement.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'd like to thank the member for Whitby–Oshawa for her party's support on this, and thank her for her very constructive comments.

Just picking up on the member's comments around the confusion that did happen around some of the immunization protocols and who was next up in line and what the hours were, I often give my riding of Guelph as an example. We have no TV station in my riding or in Wellington county, which means that people who watch TV get their news from Kitchener or maybe London, but most likely Toronto. When they get news about what's going on, it's by definition going to be for the wrong public health unit that the reporter is reporting on. So for something like this, where we all need to be on the same page, it's very important that we have a consistent approach so that wherever the public turns for information they're going to get the right information.

With respect to the concept of the chief nursing officer, we did not put it in this bill because that is not the

subject of the bill. Just to assure members, the government is very supportive of the concept of a chief nursing officer, and in fact, we are establishing a working group in collaboration with the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and the Association of Nursing Directors and Supervisors in Ontario Official Health Agencies. They will be at the working group fleshing out what the role of the chief nursing officer should be so that when we get to firming that up, we can do it properly.

Briefly, with respect to Panorama, which is the public health system, it's not part of the eHealth project; it's a pan-Canadian project trying to get all the provinces to work together. Believe me, we share everybody's frustration on trying to get 10 people to go in the same direction.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I'd like to follow up on the comments of our health critic, the member from Whitby–Oshawa. Much of the initiative, as I understand, for this legislation is to strengthen our health promotion, our public health system, with respect to anticipation of the next pandemic. We know there will be more. We've had the emergence of something like 30 various viruses and bacteria in the last 30 years: Ebola; legionnaires' disease; hepatitis C; people who spent time in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s are not allowed to give blood right now because of BSE-contaminated meat that was shipped there from Britain; H5N1, the avian flu; and of course H1N1, which, as I understand, triggered much of the need for this legislation.

Internationally there was coordination; the World Health Organization and the federal government seemed to do a pretty good job. The problem was a very logistical error and fault in distributing vaccines in the province of Ontario.

My concern with the legislation—and I don't know to what extent the committee was able to spend time on this. We can't fight the Second World War based on World War I, and by the same token, we can't fight future battles based on past battles.

Anybody who's on Twitter, for example, if you hit hashtag Fukushima—now there's a public health issue. I don't know whether this committee has been monitoring and studying the public health response in Japan—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments?

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: First of all, as a physician legislator, I'm particularly pleased to be able to speak to this very important bill in which we empower our chief medical officer of health, who joins us today, to better synchronize our messaging across the province of Ontario.

Some of my honourable colleagues mentioned Fukushima, and I think those of us in the medical and biological communities can perhaps, as the member suggests, use that as an example of where we very much need to have coordinated messaging.

Just as a quick case in point, the Japanese government has just announced, I think as of yesterday, that something on the order of about three million gallons of low-radioactive water has been released directly into the Pacific, and likely more pending. There's likely going to be a slow but steady burn on the ecological front. In some of the spent fuel rods, atomic fission continues. These are very important issues. Something on the order of about 50,000 to 100,000 people have been displaced, and many more are homeless and unable to actually return to areas. That is very much, as you've said, sir, a public health emergency that needs a coordinated response.

Now, we certainly hope and pray that no such calamity befalls the province of Ontario. But should something on that order ever happen, whether it's infectious or nuclear or a chemical spill or all the various things that we treat our environment to, that is precisely the point where we need to have effective, coordinated, synchronized best practices diffused on an instantaneous basis.

Of course, in the age of Twitter and Facebook and electronic communication, I think we really need to make use of all our emergency management services.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Whitby–Oshawa has two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I would like to thank my colleagues the members from Nickel Belt, Guelph, Haldimand–Norfolk and Etobicoke North for their comments.

The member from Nickel Belt is quite right in her concern with the issue of electronic health records. We hear a lot about the digitizing of records in physicians' offices. Of course, that's only half of the work that needs to be done, because physicians and other health care professionals need to be able to communicate with each other. That's the big piece of work that has yet to be done so that they can communicate with each other and with public health units and be able to respond to these kinds of emergencies.

The member from Guelph mentioned the position of the chief nursing officer. I am really pleased to hear that there is that working group working with the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, because I think that is a really important position. We look forward to this position once it has been fleshed out by the working group.

Thirdly, the members from Haldimand–Norfolk and Etobicoke North both mentioned the types of issues that we might face—medical emergencies or public health emergencies—and queried whether we had considered the Fukushima situation in our deliberations. I can certainly report that, yes, we did.

In our discussions around the amendments to this bill, we deliberately tried to keep the language as open-ended as possible to contemplate all of those sorts of situations that we know about now. But then, of course, there are many other situations that we can't even contemplate yet. We want to make sure that this piece of legislation can pass the test of time. Though we certainly hope that we don't encounter any of these situations in the future, such as what happened in Japan most recently, we need to be

prepared for that, so the language of the act, as we tried to develop it in committee, hopefully will reflect that and will allow for us to deal effectively with any of those situations that might arise.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate.

0950

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to start by thanking our chief medical officer of health, Dr. King, for having taken the time out of what I know is a very busy schedule to take part in the proceedings and listen in this morning. I think it shows her dedication to the field of public health, and I certainly thank you for it. I would be tempted to add that I wish our Minister of Health was as dedicated to public health as our chief medical officer of health, but I digress so I will stick to my notes.

The NDP voted against this bill in second reading, the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act, basically because we had serious and significant concerns at two levels. The first one was the process that was used to bring this bill and the second is some of the content of the bill.

During the committee hearings we were presented with quite disturbing pictures as to how poor the process and the consultations leading to that bill were. We heard it in many different ways from the different stakeholders who came. I would say that this is part of what makes me so worried about this bill. It is also at the core of the worry as to the hesitance I have to fully support this bill. To me, it's another example of legislation that was rushed and kind of incomplete and a bit sloppy. I don't understand why the government keeps doing this. The amendments that were proposed, both by our caucus, by the PC caucus as well as by the government themselves, have cleaned things up a bit and have brought together some loose ends and some inconsistency, but in our view, in the NDP, we still see that there are some loose ends that have not been tied and some inconsistencies that still exist in a piece of legislation.

To me it is a serious problem when a bill is incomplete, when a bill has loose ends, because in many years from now, this piece of legislation will still be there. It will be read by people who were not part of those debates. A bill should stand by itself and be clear to whoever reads it. Right now, I don't think we have achieved this.

This bill, first of all, was introduced before a full assessment of Ontario's performance during the H1N1 was complete. Actually, the bill passed first reading a full 10 days before the Minister of Health released the findings on Ontario's response to H1N1. We all knew that this report was coming. We all knew that we need to learn from what happened during H1N1. What did we do well? What could we have done better? What are some of the best practices that we can learn out of this? We were all looking forward to reading the minister's response—the Ontario response to the H1N1 report—but this bill was tabled before we even had a chance to read it or see it. When we did have a chance to read the report, we saw

that nowhere in the report does it point to a widespread problem with coordination, or nowhere in the report do we point toward a lack of control by the Ontario chief medical officer of health. So why is it that we are bringing this bill forward when the report clearly states that we have done some good things and we could have done things better? Why don't we focus on the things that we could have done better so that we prepare ourselves for the next time rather than bring forward a bill that was not really pointed to in the report? The report does not say that we had a lack of control by the Ontario chief medical officer of health or a lack of coordination. It does talk about a need for communication, but to me, communication and coordination are two completely different functions. This bill talks about coordination; it does not talk about communication. I suppose that in the coordination, communication could be included, but coordination goes way further than just central communication. This is worrisome to the NDP.

In fact, the ministry report makes multiple mentions of the value of local control. There are 60 pages in this report; you will find reference to the value of local control every second page or so. This points to the value of having our 36 health units, health units that know the population they serve. They know how to communicate with them, they know how they react, and they know the people who are hard to serve, hard to reach. This is what they're there to do, and they do a great job at it. Our health units are very good. Do they have their challenges? Absolutely, but they are champions in public health for their own communities, and they do this by bringing forward public health policy, but they also do this by making sure that they connect and they stay connected. They have the pulse of the community in the geographic area that they serve.

The report on Ontario's response to H1N1 raised numerous issues, but none of them is addressed in Bill 141. So here we have a government that rushed the process behind Bill 141, and we still have in front of us, in third reading, a bill that is flawed, despite some amendments. I think the member from Whitby-Oshawa was certainly very good in explaining the changes that had taken place in committee and the amendments that were brought forward to make the bill stronger, but there are still some that were turned down, that were not acted upon and, to me, need to be acted upon.

Bill 141 focuses on one kind of initiative, the central control of public health units, and really, think of it as central coordination. What does that mean? Bill 141 expands the circumstances in which the chief medical officer of health would take control of what a public health unit is doing in its geographical area, either a single unit, a number of them or all 36 of them, depending on the circumstances. This is what Bill 141 is all about.

I think we all agree that, during a pandemic or another public health emergency, there is a need for central communication, and I think the report talks to that. But that's not what Bill 141 does. Bill 141 focuses on the central control of the public health units: the chief

medical officer of health taking control of a health unit. To me, this is counter to the design of our entire public health system. What makes the strength of our public health system is that local control, the fact that they are the champion of public health for their geographical area, and every area has its own set of different circumstances that will mean that its response will have to be adapted so that the end goal of what we're trying to do is achieved for everyone in Ontario.

But in order to get to the end goal, the steps to get there will be targeted. They will be different in the First Nations that are served by the Porcupine Health Unit than by the London Health Unit. They are all different because, although we are all Ontarians, we come with our own sets of diversities, and our health units have learned to identify and respect those diversities. This is why they are so good at what they are doing, and this is why I support the system that we have in place.

Here we have the chief medical officer of health, under circumstances that I would have liked to have very narrowly defined but we didn't get there, who is very capable, very well-intentioned and comes to us with lots of experience in public health, who will come and will be able to coordinate from Toronto the next pandemic or the next public health emergency that comes.

1000

What we had before was a system where all 36 medical officers of health had an opportunity to have their voice heard. The chief medical officer of health absolutely had her voice heard; I mean, she is our chief medical officer of health. We created this position because we believed we needed it, and I still believe we need it. But then the particularity, the knowledge, the skills, the experience and the diversity of all 36 medical officers of health made that response even stronger, because you had 36—37 with our chief medical officer of health—dedicated public health professionals looking at an issue together and bringing forward all of their best will, best experience and best knowledge to attain the best of outcomes during a time of public health emergency. This is a system that I believe in, a system where everybody has a voice and the diversity of Ontario has an opportunity to be heard.

I must say that I come with my sets of biases. I come from northeastern Ontario. I have been a health care provider in northeastern Ontario for 25 years of my life. I have seen first-hand decisions made in Toronto that have not served the people of northeastern Ontario in the best of ways, decisions that were made that were so Toronto-centric that once they came out to the field we would laugh and say, "What are those people talking about? Have they ever set foot in Mattagami? How do you roll this out in Gogama? That makes no sense. This is made for Toronto. This is made for a big urban centre."

Nickel Belt has no big urban centre. Nickel Belt is 36 beautiful little communities that have very little in common with a big urban centre, but there are still people who deserve protection in the case of a public health emergency, so I support this system.

At the core of what worries the NDP is that this valuable system that we have had in place in Ontario for all those years, where public health is locally grounded, knows their population, knows their community—all of this, under sets of circumstances that, to me, are way too broad, could be thrown out for the need for central coordination.

We already have central communication tools if we choose to use them, so if you want to improve communication so everybody knows how the H1N1 vaccine will be rolled out, etc., we already have this. We are now adding centralization power. This comes at a cost. It will always come at a cost. The need to act quickly to coordinate a response will come with a cost. The cost will be a centralized response that is not conducive to the best quality of public health care for pieces of Ontario.

Coming from where I come from, chances are that my communities are going to be the ones at the losing end. In order to improve coordination and in order to improve what we do during a public health emergency, we will have this power to have a coordinated response.

When I hear “coordinated response,” I hear “one size fits all.” This is it. We have one person, our chief medical officer of health. She is calling the shots. She is telling every single one of the 36 health units, “This is how you shall do things and this is how you will do things.” I agree that there could be some very narrow circumstances where this need for central coordination trumps everything else, but those are very narrow. What we have here is a bill that doesn’t look at those circumstances as being very narrow. We have left them wide, so that means that when a local response by the Sudbury and District Health Unit would have looked very different to achieve quality public health outcomes, it will be trumped by a central coordinated response that won’t be in the best interest of quality public health outcomes for this particular geographical area. So, for the good of the masses, we will sacrifice the quality in some of the health units.

I would have liked the system that we’ve had in Ontario to be protected. I would have liked the circumstances under which those central coordination orders could come to be defined more narrowly. But this has not happened.

I will go into some of the quotes that we’ve had, and I will start with a quote from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies. As you all know, after second reading we had the opportunity for people to come and present. Here’s what the Association of Local Public Health Agencies had to say:

“However, I wish to clarify that public health units were not consulted about the need for an amendment to the HPPA. The need appeared to be a foregone conclusion, and we were asked to comment only on the wording of an amendment that would permit the CMOH to issue directives to medical officers of health and boards of health during an emergency situation, a power that some argue already exists within the current HPPA.

“Further, we would like to note that, historically, changes that have been made to the HPPA have occurred only after careful consideration and thorough review of multiple reports and consultations, like SARS. In contrast, Bill 141 was tabled following the recommendations of a single report that has been described by its author as ‘informal and initial.’ Despite our requests for a delay of legislative changes until the Ontario H1N1 report was released and to allow medical officers of health, boards of health and other stakeholders time to enter into a robust dialogue, the legislation was tabled.

“Basically, we feel that a more comprehensive review of the issues following H1N1 and a meaningful consultation with the field would have led to a clearer understanding of the potential areas for improvement within our public health system. Such a process may indeed have indicated a need for additional CMOH powers, but it may also have indicated alternative approaches and identified additional required modifications that would collectively further enhance and strengthen our public health system’s ability to protect the health of all Ontarians, especially during an emergency.”

To me, there are some parallels to be drawn here. You see how this piece of legislation was brought forward without consulting with the field, without consulting with the people who are our experts in public health. They themselves say that they don’t know if the legislation that will give additional powers to our chief medical officer of health is needed. They don’t know if it’s the right way to go, because there hasn’t been an opportunity for everybody in the field—not only our medical officer of health but also our board of health—to have a say in this.

Why are we taking away an opportunity to do things better, to engage people who are the leaders in the field so that they can guide us and tell us, “Here’s how you make pandemic response stronger, better, with better-quality outcomes for the people in Ontario”? We are shutting down a voice that, to me, has a lot to bring to this dialogue. They didn’t have a chance to be heard. Once the bill was made, once the idea that the chief medical officer of health needed more power, those decisions had already been made. Then we asked them to wordsmith the bill. To me, this is contrary to everything we’ve ever done in public health in Ontario. In public health, we’ve always reached out. We’ve always worked things through from the ground up so that everybody had a chance to put in their own requirements. We were respectful of the diversity of Ontario in what we did in public health because we engaged all of those people. But this was not done for that bill, and it is a bill that will further go down the same track by giving the chief medical officer of health power to issue directives to our medical officers of health, to our boards of health.

Let’s see what Toronto Public Health had to say about Bill 141, the bill that we are talking about:

“It is our view that virtually none of any of the identified shortcomings of the response to H1N1, which has been previously conveyed as the rationale for the proposed changes, would have been solved by the existence

of a directive-making power in the hands of the” chief medical officer of health, “such as the power proposed in Bill 141.

“Implicit in the proposed amendments to provide directive-making powers to the CMOH is the apparent belief that if the chief medical officer had had the power to simply direct the response, coordination would have been improved. We do not share that assessment. Directive-making power would not have altered the problems with vaccine supply and distribution, would not have clarified the role and function of local health integration networks (LHINs) in the response, or alleviated the need for local modification to address specific community needs.

“While problems of communication were indeed identified by all parties regarding the H1N1 response, we remain unconvinced that legal directives from the CMOH would have solved this issue. Moreover, the use of legal powers to deal with a communications problem is a somewhat inappropriate, blunt, and potentially counter-productive approach.

“If legal powers alone were sufficient to effect change, all boards of health in the province would at this time have a full-time, fully qualified medical officer of health as required under the HPPA, something which is demonstrably not the case.”

I find this really puzzling. Here we have Bill 141, the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act. We are told that we need this act so that the best practices that we’ve learned from the response to H1N1 in the fall of 2009 could be improved, we are told that H1N1 is the impetus behind this bill, yet we have the largest public health unit in Ontario as well as the report telling us that if this bill had been in force before H1N1, it would not have changed any of the shortcomings that we saw, that it would not have improved our response to H1N1. There are ways to improve our response, but none of them are covered in Bill 141.

So the rationale for Bill 141 is not there. We cannot see, in any of the reports, anything that points to the idea that if the chief medical officer of health had directive-making powers, things would have been better.

I see that you want to stand up and cut me off, so I will let you do that.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. It being close to a quarter after 10, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Kim Craiton: I want to introduce two guests—I know they’re just getting into Parliament: George Hostick and his son Jordan Hostick. They’re from my riding of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie. I invited them up here specifically for question period because I assured them they’d be able to watch

this House being respectful of each other. They’re excited about seeing that here in Parliament.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I trust all members listened to your comments.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Tim Hudak: I have a question to the Premier. Yesterday was Premier McGuinty’s wag-the-dog moment. He tried pulling the oldest trick in the book by picking a phony fight to deflect attention from his own expensive mess on hydro.

Premier, Ontario families have seen you jack up the cost of their hydro bills now for seven years. You want them to think that when they open up their hydro bills, they should blame the Prime Minister, but the McGuinty name is all over skyrocketing hydro bills in the province of Ontario.

Premier, did you really think you could divert Ontario families into thinking someone other than the McGuinty government was to blame for skyrocketing hydro bills?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I’m really pleased that my colleague has raised this matter. I think it’s an important discussion that we should entertain, and I would ask my honourable colleague to give some sincere thought to supporting our initiative in this regard.

This is the bottom line: The federal government recently announced that it has the intention of supporting a \$4.2-billion loan guarantee to help Newfoundland move ahead with a big electricity infrastructure project. The federal government says they’re interested in supporting electricity infrastructure projects if they are of national significance and if they help us reduce greenhouse gases.

I would argue, and I know my honourable colleague will want to support me in this regard, that the heavy lifting that is being done in this country when it comes to investing in electricity infrastructure and eliminating greenhouse gases is being done here in Ontario. If the federal government is going to support the people of Newfoundland, they have a corresponding responsibility to support the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Here’s the problem, Premier, and we know why you’re trying this wag-the-dog gambit: You have made an expensive mess out of our hydro system, and Ontario families are getting stuck with the bills. Instead of trying to fix the mess you’ve created, you started a phony fight about Ontario subsidizing power projects in other provinces.

But Premier McGuinty has his own subsidy scheme. Premier McGuinty has made Ontario families pay \$1 billion to subsidize the export of power to other provinces like Quebec or the state of New York. While families in Belleville and Brampton see their hydro bills going

through the roof, he is subsidizing power to Quebec and New York.

Premier, do you really think that you can get away with this?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There is no foundation in fact for my colleague's assertions.

I want to return to a very important principle here. During the last several years, the federal government has found—and I speak to federal governments of all political stripes; this is a non-partisan issue—its way forward to subsidize electricity infrastructure projects in Yukon, in Alberta, in Quebec, and now they're entertaining a project in Newfoundland. The federal government is telling us they are interested in supporting projects that reduce greenhouse gases and that ensure that we have electricity projects that are of national significance. We remain the country's economic engine, and there is no greater greenhouse gas reduction project taking place in all of North America than here in Ontario. I invite my honourable colleague to join the people of Ontario as we say to the federal government, or any political party that would assume the responsibilities of the federal government: "If you're going to support electricity projects in other parts of the"—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, your own subsidy scheme has resulted in \$1 billion being used to subsidize hydro exports into Quebec and New York state.

You say that the facts are wrong. Well, Premier, we get these from Jan Carr, who is the former head of the Ontario Power Authority. Those are his numbers. You picked him. You built the Ontario Power Authority.

You're stuck with the facts that you have a \$1-billion subsidy to Quebec and New York state. You sunk \$1 billion into the smart meter program, which is nothing more than another McGuinty tax grab. Who knows what you've done with all the money that has been collected through the debt retirement charge?

Premier, the Ontario PCs will stand with hard-working families to say, "Enough is enough." We need to bring an end to the expensive mess you've made of our hydro system.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I would encourage my honourable colleague to set aside the talking points he has received from Ottawa and listen to what the people of Ontario are concerned about. They are concerned about the fact that every time we invest in these electricity infrastructure projects in other parts of the country, 40% of that expense is coming from Ontario taxes. That's the way it works.

Again, I say, and I invite my colleague to support us in this regard, if the federal government is going to invest in electricity infrastructure projects in other parts of the country, they have a corresponding responsibility to invest in our infrastructure projects right here in Ontario. We're doing the heaviest lifting in the country in terms of rebuilding our electricity system and cleaning it up for our children and investing at the same time in an excit-

ing, new clean energy industry. If they've got money for oil and gas in the west, I'm suggesting they should have money for clean energy right here in Ontario.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: Premier, not only have you made an expensive mess out of our hydro system, but you've also made an expensive mess out of our health care system. Just look at the billion dollars you wasted in the eHealth boondoggle. We find out now, Premier, that two years later, you're still making Ontario families pay the price of your mismanagement of the eHealth file.

Five days after the sunshine list came out and showed that Ron Sapsford, the former Deputy Minister of Health who was involved with the eHealth scandal, received \$762,000—your response to date on this outrage? "I can't comment on that." Premier, that is not good enough. Two years after he left the employment, he received \$762,000.

Come clean: Why did this money get taken out of health care to pay off your backroom deal?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I am pleased to take the first question. I know the Minister of Health is going to want to speak to this.

I just want to speak to the whole issue of transparency and accountability. I want to compare and contrast in terms of what we've done here. You will recall that the previous government hid a \$5-billion deficit from Ontarians. We have a new law that prevents that from ever happening again. The previous government refused to include OPG, Hydro One, universities and hospitals under the freedom of information act. We've included all those and more. They had a response rate to freedom-of-information requests of 50%. We're at 88%; that is the best ever. They took OPG off the sunshine list; we put it on. They used taxpayer money for partisan advertising, spending more than \$250 million; we made that illegal in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier obviously does not want to answer a very direct question. This list came out five days ago, Premier, and you have yet to answer why Mr. Sapsford, implicated in the eHealth scandal, still, today, received \$762,000.

I know you want to bounce this to the health minister, but the health minister refused to answer these questions yesterday. They then sent out a junior staffer who had the advice, Premier, that if Ontario families are concerned, well, they should track down Ron Sapsford themselves. What an outrageous answer. What an irresponsible approach by this government.

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Families want to know, Premier: Why do they continue to pay for your eHealth boondoggle and why did Ron Sapsford win the lottery?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the opportunity. Let's be very clear: We are shining the light. We said that

in cases where someone who was on the sunshine list had been seconded from a hospital or from another organization, we would show that person on the sunshine list. We have met that commitment.

In fact, we dedicated an entire section of the sunshine list entirely to secondments to improve transparency, so those who have been seconded show up twice on the list. The information is there.

I can tell you, we will not take lessons on transparency from the people opposite. When we introduced the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, legislation that brings hospitals under freedom of information, legislation that prohibits using public dollars, they—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, Ontario families are looking for a straight answer. I know they're hard to come by from the McGuinty government after seven years in office. I know you're tired and out of touch, and I know you cooked up a backroom deal with Mr. Sapsford, but you've been caught out.

You've been caught by the fact that \$762,000 was paid out to Ron Sapsford, the former Deputy Minister of Health involved in the eHealth scandal, some two years after he left government employment. He won the lottery. Who knows where he's at, and you're asking families who pay the bills to track him down? We have the same thing happening with Sarah Kramer.

So I ask you, Premier: Why won't you come clean with Ontario families? Just tell us simply, just tell us in a straightforward manner: Why do they continue to pay for your backroom deals stemming from the eHealth scandal?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Leader of the Opposition should know, if he doesn't know, that section 42 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act prohibits the employer from disclosing personal information other than what's in the compendium without the written consent of the employee. If he's asking me to break the law, I say, "No, I'm not going to break the law."

What I am going to say is that this is a government that's committed to getting best value for the money we spend on health care. I want to ask you: Where were you when we were fighting to bring down the price of generic drugs? I know where you were; you were at a fundraiser with the owners of pharmacies. We took a position to take \$500 million off the price of generic drugs, and you were nowhere to be found. We know exactly where you were found, and I don't think the people of Ontario are very proud of that.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, I asked about the outrageous amount of money paid to Ron Sapsford, one of the main players in the \$1-billion boondoggle scandal. Mr. Sapsford pocketed more than three quarters of a million dollars in

wages and benefits last year, even though he left his job the year before.

Is the Premier of this province prepared to offer a full explanation today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me say again that our commitment to transparency is complete. We have taken several steps to ensure that the people of this province have access to information, including salaries, for more people than were on the sunshine list, far more people than when we took office. Our commitment to transparency is clear.

We will not take lessons from the party opposite when it comes to transparency. When we introduced the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act—as I was saying, this legislation brings hospitals under freedom of information: an enormous improvement in transparency. It's legislation that prohibits using public dollars to hire lobbyists. The critic of the third party called the legislation worthless. We don't all think that legislation is—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government likes to talk a good game about trying to rein in public sector executive salaries, but where I come from, talk is cheap. In Hamilton, people want to know why Ron Sapsford was paid as much as he was and why his compensation was buried in the records of Hamilton Health Sciences.

Again, is this Premier prepared to give us a good explanation or will he continue to duck and cover and hope it all blows over?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This information was definitely not buried. It was in the sunshine list not once, but twice. So if the research department of the third party had actually taken the time to press control-F and type in the name "Sapsford," they would have found that information not once, but twice. The information is there. It is as clear as clear can be. Whether you have the hard copy or whether you have the electronic copy, the information is there.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government blew \$1 billion on eHealth, with little to show for it. When the scandal was exposed, some folks were made to walk the plank, but less than two years later we learned that some of those same folks are still cashing in, with Ron Sapsford, the three-quarters-of-a-million-dollar man, leading the pack. Given what has happened here, why should Ontarians have any confidence at all in anything this Premier or his government says or does?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I appreciate the question and I am happy to bring the members of this Legislature and the public up to date on where we are with eHealth. We have made tremendous progress. Now almost five million Ontarians have access to electronic medical records in their physicians' offices. Almost two million children have electronic health records. Over 100,000 remote medical consultations have taken place through

telemedicine—that's almost double what we had before. All Ontario hospitals are now filmless, so all of that digital imaging information is collected in one place, with easy access. We are making tremendous strides in eHealth, and I look forward to talking more about that.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Minister of Health. When confronted with the curious case of Mr. Sapsford yesterday, this minister embarrassingly responded by saying, "I wasn't part of the arrangement." Ontario families deserve a full explanation of what happened here. Is that really the best that this government's Minister of Health can do?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said in a question to the official opposition, the FIPPA legislation prevents me from discussing that personal information of employees. I am not going to break the law, no matter how many times you ask me to. That information is protected by law.

Having said that, we are determined to get the best value for health care dollars. In the budget that we are now in the process of debating, we are instructing executives to cut their spending by 10% over the next two years. We have frozen compensation in the broader public sector, and we are continuing to bring down the expenses in our hospital executive offices.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister needs a crash course on ministerial responsibility pronto. But here's the galling part about her unwillingness to offer a full explanation: While Ron Sapsford walks away with more than 750,000 in precious health care dollars, Ontario's health care system is falling apart at the seams. In London last night, sick Ontarians were told to stay away from severely overcrowded emergency rooms. Since the minister won't explain Mr. Sapsford's circumstances to this House, will she at least do so for the families in her own riding, in her own hometown, who couldn't access their ER last night?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The health care system is changing in many ways. It is getting stronger every single day. One of the ways it's getting stronger is that there are far more options for Ontarians than there used to be. Emergency rooms are one option, but there are far more options, which is why we have a website called healthcareoptions.ca. I urge everyone to actually take a few minutes, go on that website, plug in their postal code and they will see how many other health care options are available right in their own neighbourhood. I took the time to do it in my neighbourhood and I was surprised by how many places I could go to if I needed an X-ray or if somebody needed to be stitched up. Emergency departments are one option, but there are many more options, and I urge people to actually explore that website and find out what they are.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister is suggesting that Ontarians go to a website instead of an ER? That's pretty outrageous in terms of health care options.

Here's the state of Ontario's health care system under this minister's watch: Ontario families are told to stay away from overcrowded emergency rooms; some have lost their local ERs altogether; others see cuts to nurses and other front-line staff and services. All the while, well-connected health care executives continue to receive outrageous compensation packages. How can this minister justify sky-high executive salaries in the health care sector for the same people who are squandering those dollars and who are laying off staff people left, right and centre?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'd like to remind the member opposite about one of the items contained in our Excellent Care for All Act. Part of that legislation is about improving quality in our hospitals.

One of the ways we will be measuring quality as we move forward is how patients feel about the care they received in that hospital. Also as part of that legislation, executive compensation will be tied to achieving those quality outcomes.

We are moving forward to strengthen our health care system. We're moving forward in strengthening the quality of our health care system. Part of how we measure quality is the care that patients feel they get. We are moving forward. There are other health care options, and I believe anyone who actually would—

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

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is also to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, in response to a Liberal softball question, you said something that caught my ear. You said, "We have established the Drummond commission to look for better, more efficient ways to deliver" health care. That's odd, since that's what you say that the local health integration networks bureaucrats are paid \$250 million to do. Now that the Bay Street banker who reports to the Premier's office is in charge of health care, what will LHIN bureaucrats do all day?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have to say, I'm disappointed in the question. I think all of us should be looking at ways to improve the health care system. All of us have an opportunity to contribute to that debate—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would like to quote from an article written by Gerry Macartney, who's the chief executive of the London Chamber of Commerce and who actually took the time to visit a LHIN and understand

what was going on there. I'm just going to quote a little bit from this letter: "Chambers have historically argued the more decisions made locally the better. With the LHINs, all decisions are made in our community at open, public board meetings. Previously, decisions were made in Toronto by those dreaded"—his words, not mine—"bureaucrats. And we still maintain local autonomy for fundraising and many other decisions as all health service providers, including hospitals, were able to maintain their boards. So here too it can be argued that LHINs reduce big government."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Premier McGuinty says that you can't cut one cent out of the budget without Ontario simply falling apart. But day in and day out, Ontario families see that there's plenty of waste and duplication you could eliminate. Your Bay Street banker copying what LHINs do isn't the only duplication. You pay four levels of home care bureaucracy but your only defence is to say that you spent almost \$1 billion more on home care. Of course you do: Paying all the unnecessary layers of bureaucracy for duplication doesn't come cheaply.

An Ontario PC government will protect health care by cutting the waste and putting more money back into front-line health care. Why do you continue to spin your record of blatant untruths about what we will do?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I do feel the need to correct the member opposite. The LHINs cost about \$70 million a year.

What they've done is creative accounting. They've added up all the money ever spent on LHINs and come up with that number. So let's be clear: It's \$70 million. To quote Gerry Macartney, because he was interested in that and he heard the rhetoric: "As to the cost of our SW LHIN, it allocates \$2.04 billion to 150 health providers, while the LHIN operates on just \$5 million. In other words, they allocate 99.75% of all funding received to those providers. Not many organizations operate at that level of efficiency."

The other thing the member opposite refuses to acknowledge is that we have replaced two layers of bureaucracy with the LHINs. It costs no more than the arrangement under their government, but it does give people a local voice. You want to silence the local voice because you—

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

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. The McGuinty government is appointing Rosemarie Leclair, chief executive officer of Hydro Ottawa, as the new chair of the Ontario Energy Board. Last year, Hydro Ottawa, under Ms. Leclair's watch, spent almost \$30,000 of ratepayers' money hosting preferred customers in corporate box seats at Ottawa Senators games. The role of the Ontario Energy Board is to protect ratepayers' interests.

My question: How can Ontario hydro consumers have any confidence in the McGuinty government's appointment of the new chair of the Ontario Energy Board?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I've got to tell you, the NDP's trash-a-character-a-day approach to politics in this Legislature is getting very, very tiresome—to make comments like that about Rosemarie Leclair, somebody who has been recognized around the world as a true leader in this particular sector and in others.

Let me just share with you some of the recent individual recognitions she has received. She is considered one of Canada's top most powerful women. She has received awards from the Women's Executive Network, Quality of Life Awards, St. Joseph women's centre—she's an Ottawa-honoured champion—the United Nations Association in Canada, and she was named one of Canada's top 100 most powerful women by the Women's Executive Network.

To take cheap shots like that at somebody with that kind of character is beneath that member and beneath this Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: This is not so much about Ms. Leclair as it is about this government's standards. While Ontario Hydro consumers struggle with skyrocketing hydro bills, the McGuinty government continues to condone excessive executive salaries and perks at municipally owned hydro companies. Municipal employees are on the sunshine list, but municipal hydro employees are not. Golf memberships and professional sports tickets are banned in public agencies but not at municipal hydro companies.

I ask again: What message does the McGuinty government think it sends to hydro consumers when a municipal hydro executive who engaged in conducting business at Ottawa Senators hockey games is the new chair of the Ontario Energy Board?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Once again, the NDP are into this trash-a-character-a-day smear campaign that has been going on here for weeks now.

Rosemarie Leclair not only is fully qualified to serve in the position that she is being considered to be appointed to—let me just go over some of her background, just so that those listening can hear: Yes, she was president and chief executive officer of Hydro Ottawa Holding Inc. since 2005. She served as deputy city manager for public works and services from 2000 to 2005; commissioner of corporate services from 1995 to 2000; director of corporate renewal from 1994 to 1996; director of licensing, transportation and parking—she has an incredible amount of qualifications, but more than that, she will be very well suited, having served at a local distribution company very close to Ontario's consumers. Running that OEB organization—

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

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Minister of Energy as well. Last week, Prime Minister Harper pledged \$4.2 billion in loan guarantees to help Newfoundland and Labrador develop the lower Churchill Falls hydroelectric project. Here in Ontario, that's roughly the cost of the Lower Mattagami and Niagara tunnel hydro projects combined.

Members will know that Ontarians contribute 40 cents of every single dollar the federal government spends. Whether it's their investments in multi-million-dollar projects—my question is around fairness for Ontario.

Ontarians remember well the state of chronic disrepair and neglect that our very own energy infrastructure was left in, in the years leading up to 2003, by the previous government. As we have been rebuilding that infrastructure into a clean, modern and reliable energy system, what are we doing to ensure that Ontarians get the best value for their investment?

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Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for Ottawa Centre for raising what is really a very important question. He's absolutely right on this.

When the federal government pledges specific assistance to another part of Canada for a specific multi-billion-dollar energy project, 40% of that money is coming from Ontario families. We've undertaken the important task of rebuilding our electricity system over the next two decades. There is a cost to that. That's why we've put in place the clean energy benefit that's taking 10% off of consumers' bills.

But I think Ontarians expect that if their federal tax dollars are going to provide special supports for electricity projects in other provinces like Newfoundland, the same level of federal support needs to be available here in Ontario.

We believe in a strong Ontario, and we believe that a strong Ontario means a strong Canada. We're doing our part, but working with the federal government, we can do even more and we can do it even faster.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: The government's long-term energy plan clearly addresses the need for 80% of Ontario's electricity system to be rebuilt and modernized over the next 20 years. It tangibly lays out for Ontarians what those investments are and how much they will be over that time.

There's no doubt that it's a sizable undertaking, but it's one that is absolutely necessary, given the complete shambles of a system we inherited seven years ago in power warnings, brownouts, 127% more coal in our air and a system on life support from leased generators and US coal imports. This is a situation no government should have ever let happen in Ontario. How do we ensure that sort of energy mess never happens again in our province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member paints a vivid and accurate picture of the shoddy state of our electricity system just seven years ago.

Our long-term energy plan provides what's needed to build a modern, reliable energy system that gets us out of coal, cleaning our air and improving our health while building a global, leading clean energy economy. That's why when Prime Minister Harper promised almost \$2 billion of Ontarians' money to subsidize a clean energy project in another province, it was very appropriate for our Premier to speak up for Ontario. Ontario families deserve the same recognition from our federal government as families in Newfoundland.

This side of the House stands up for Ontario. This side of the House is not afraid to challenge Stephen Harper for fairness. The Leader of the Opposition gets tongue-tied when called upon to stand up for Ontario against Stephen Harper. That's why he remains silent and refuses to talk about his plan until the federal election—

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

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the finance minister. Page 71 of the budget describes the job Premier McGuinty has given to his Bay Street banker friend. It says he will come up with reforms to accelerate eliminating the deficit, examine long-term changes to how government works and explore core services and say which areas are core and which can be delivered by another entity.

In any other province, this sounds like the job description of the finance minister. Why should Ontario families have confidence in you when clearly Premier McGuinty does not?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Let me just take a moment on the first question to describe a little bit about Mr. Drummond and his background. He was a Matthews fellow and distinguished visiting scholar in the school of policy studies at Queen's University. He's the former assistant deputy minister at the federal Ministry of Finance. He served the federal government for 23 years, and his service included coordinating and planning the budget. It also included economic analysis, fiscal policy, tax policy, social policy and federal-provincial relations. He is also the former senior vice-president and chief economist at TD Bank. Mr. Drummond is an outstanding Canadian and Ontarian who will serve this province very well.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a moment. I just remind members on both sides that—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Durham, how can you listen to me when you're interjecting?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Halton, that's not helpful either.

We're now past the halfway point of question period. I've tried to be tolerant with a number of members, but they seem to be wanting to push the envelope as far as they can. So we'll be getting into warnings.

Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Minister, this Bay Street banker sounds amazing. He'll do the work that you paid LHIN bureaucrats \$250 million to do. He'll do the finance minister's job. Someone should get his name on a lawn sign; then he could be one of the elected members on the sunset review committee proposed by the Ontario PC leader.

An Ontario PC government would make a review of government spending and services accountable to Ontario families. Why have you given that job to an unelected Bay Street banker?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: It's unfortunate that the character assassination they aimed at us is now being aimed at the good people of Ontario who volunteer and work hard and also provide great service to Ontarians.

But let me just quote to you from somebody whom you might know of, and what they have to say about Don Drummond. It says, and this is a quote:

"Some of the leaders on this forum are quite distinguished, of no partisan affiliation, in our communities. I'm going to mention one of them: Don Drummond, who's ... one of the most respected economists when we look at budget day here in Ontario. Who do we look to when we want an objective, informed opinion? We look to Don Drummond."

That's what John O'Toole, the PC member for Durham, said just last year. Shame on your cheap, cheap senseless attacks on an outstanding Ontarian—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): A warning to the member from Halton.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Essex.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Renfrew. Member from Sault Ste. Marie. Member from Willowdale.

New question.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, your government has introduced Bill 151, the forest tenure reform act. This bill is now ordered to committee. Your government, by majority at committee, refused to allow this bill to travel into northern Ontario. This has got the ire up of a number of people in the north, and I just read from one letter from Roger Sigouin, the mayor of Hearst, who says, "We plead with you to re-

consider the present decision to forgo consultation on Bill 151 in the north."

My question to you is: Why are you ignoring the pleas of a northern mayor like Roger Sigouin?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'm really pleased to answer this question for Minister Gravelle. It's important to know that when this bill goes to committee it will be open for public hearings in which the forest industry, community leaders and stakeholders are invited to provide input either in writing or in person or through video conferencing.

In 2009, our government announced the beginning of a comprehensive review aimed at the modernization of the Ontario forest tenure and pricing system, and since then, MNDMF has held consultations on forest tenure reform throughout northern Ontario. They were in Beardmore, Bower, Cochrane, Chapleau, Fox Lake reserve, Constance Lake First Nation, Dryden, Fort Frances, Hearst, Hornepayne, Huntsville, Gogama, Kapuskasing, Macdiarmid, Marathon, Midland, Parry Sound—

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, the trees are in northern Ontario. Why aren't you at least going to the place where the industry, by and large, resides? People of the north are upset about this act. They see what has happened in the consultations as not being anything remotely connected to what ended up in the legislation.

My question to you is simply this: Why are you ignoring northern Ontarians and not travelling that bill to the north?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: As I said, there were consultations held in Nipigon, North Bay, Pembroke, Sault Ste. Marie, Sioux Lookout, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Toronto and White River.

We conducted over 116 consultations in total, and this legislation was drafted after two years of careful and extensive consultation in which we brought officials from the ministry across the north to meet with members of the forest industry, including OFIA and the Coalition for Putting Ontario's Wood Back to Work, which represents 200 companies representing over 8,600 employees.

We spoke with people in Timmins, the municipal association of FONOM, associations like OPFA, Greenpeace, the Ivey Foundation, and the local members of northern communities, First Nations and aboriginal communities.

We also offered a Web-based engagement tool and met with individual stakeholder groups as part of our consultation efforts.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Mike Colle: To the Minister of Transportation: For 16 long years, since the Harris government killed the building of the Eglinton subway in 1995, the people in

my riding and all the residents living on the Eglinton corridor, from Etobicoke to Scarborough, have been waiting for relief from the bumper-to-bumper gridlock that has created a \$6-billion congestion nightmare in Toronto.

Last Thursday, the Premier and the mayor of Toronto made the long-awaited announcement of a revised transit plan that will finally see the Eglinton cross-town transit line built. Can the minister please let us know the important details of this historic agreement with the city of Toronto?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I sincerely want to thank the member for Eglinton—Lawrence for his promotion of this project. He has been a consistent advocate for a line along Eglinton, and I'm happy to say we're turning the corner on that.

We've reached an agreement on a transit plan that will see the province move forward with our top regional priority, the Eglinton-Scarborough cross-town LRT. The line will stretch underground from the Mount Dennis area in the west all the way to the Scarborough Town Centre. In fact, commuters are getting a 25-kilometre LRT that will be underground. The Eglinton portion will be underground and then it will connect with the Scarborough LRT. The Kennedy station will provide a commuter hub, a transfer hub, for the Bloor-Danforth subway line, the new LRT buses and GO Transit. That's worth 80,000 jobs. It's a terrific plan, and we're moving ahead.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Mike Colle: Thank you, Minister, on behalf of the residents of the Eglinton corridor, from Scarborough all the way to Etobicoke, for this key \$8.4-billion investment that will not only benefit transit riders but also create over 80,000 good jobs for 10 years and get rid of the pollution in the heart of our city.

What is amazing is that there are still the usual critics who continue to say that \$8.4 billion is not enough and that this new agreement with the city of Toronto should be shelved. I can't believe it.

Minister, how is it that these same critics who opposed the building of the York University line and opposed the building of the air-rail link from Union Station to the airport still claim to be transit advocates, when they also oppose this \$8.4-billion investment in the Eglinton cross-town LRT? How can these people—

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is the biggest transit investment in a generation. The reality is that we can't get a straight commitment out of the NDP; we can't pin them down on what they believe about transit. The Conservatives basically filled in the hole that was dug on Eglinton in 1995 after they were elected. So the reality is that we are playing catch-up because previous governments have not made the investments that needed to be made.

We have worked with the city. We believe in the local democratic process and we believed that we needed to work with the city. We have had those negotiations and they have borne fruit. It's good news for the taxpayers of

Ontario because this is a regional line that is going to serve the whole GTHA by reaching across the city of Toronto.

A significant part of this arrangement is the Presto card that will allow people to—

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

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Health: In 2007, the McGuinty government converted the Ontario air ambulance and critical care land ambulance service to a not-for-profit corporation. As has been the practice of this government, that was done without a competitive process. Since that time, the cost of providing air ambulance services in this province has increased by more than 450%.

Can the minister tell us why costs have been allowed to get out of hand through this organization and why the appropriate accountability measures have not been put in place?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the question. I do have to say that I think it's very important that when people need health care and they need to be transported by helicopter or by plane to get that care, we need to be there to get them the care they need as quickly as possible.

I would hope that the member opposite is not suggesting that we actually cut air ambulance services. We do know that the party is determined to cut health care. I hope this is not a signal that air ambulance is what they are planning to cut.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: The minister came awfully close but didn't go quite as far as the Premier chooses to do in this place, and that is to absolutely and grossly misrepresent and tell—

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

Mr. Frank Klees: I withdraw that. The fact is, the Premier insists on speaking untruths about the intention—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Withdraw the comment, please.

Mr. Frank Klees: I will withdraw the comment and get back to the question.

We want to ensure that all of those essential emergency services through air ambulance are delivered in the most efficient, reliable and accountable way. Will the minister agree to call on the Auditor General to conduct a value audit on this organization, to ensure that in fact we are getting our money's—

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I just have to say it is still a mystery as to what exactly their plan is. They are not wanting to tell us what the plan is. But what we do know

for sure is that that is the party that wants to cut taxes. Whether they cut \$3 billion from the HST or \$6 billion from the HST or \$3 billion from the health premium, we know on this side of the House that you cannot cut taxes and fight the deficit without cutting services.

We also know that health care takes up almost half the spending in this province and you cannot cut \$3 billion or \$6 billion or \$9 billion or whatever-the-number-is billion dollars without cutting health care services.

It is completely disingenuous to suggest that you can fight the deficit, cut taxes and improve services, so as long as that's their plan, we will call them on it.

BREAST CANCER

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. We know that regular screening and early diagnosis are essential for surviving breast cancer. However, across the province today Ontarians have radically different access to care depending on the community in which they live.

In Sudbury, the Angels in Pink are holding their second annual fundraiser in order to buy medical equipment for breast MRI scans.

Medical procedures should be available based on need and not on the ability of the hospital to fundraise. Would the Premier agree with that?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We have a long, long tradition in this province of sharing capital costs between government funding and the local hospital. The local share has been used for as long as I'm aware of to help build the hospital infrastructure. I know that in communities across this province, local fundraising takes on an energy and enthusiasm in support for the hospitals that is really wonderful.

I am very happy to speak about how we're going to be improving breast cancer screening. There was an item that the finance minister included in the budget to actually expand breast cancer screening to high-risk women aged 30 and over. We are delighted at the leadership shown by the member from Sault Ste. Marie to really focus our attention on this. Expanding—

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

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Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the minister may forget, but in London last year, patients, community members, nurses and New Democrats fought against cuts to breast cancer screening programs and breast cancer nurses in this member's own neck of the woods. Some services were saved, but the breast screening program was closed.

Why has the Premier been making people fight so hard just to access the medical services that they deserve?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite really does need to get with the program on this. We cannot afford to defend the status quo when it comes to health care. We need to make changes to improve health care for patients.

The member is completely misinformed about what happened in London. She is right: The breast screening program changed, but it did not affect the ability of women to get screened. In fact, every woman in Ontario who is eligible for breast screening is getting that care, and I would urge all women to take advantage of the breast screening program.

What she is talking about is a change in how that service was delivered. The evidence is very clear: We have the gold standard when it comes to breast screening. I'm very proud of our investments, and the addition to the budget is much, much appreciated by the women of Ontario.

LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

Mr. Dave Levac: My question is for Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. As I recall, a few months back there were a few articles about the necessity of continuing support for literacy skills training in Ontario. Many community groups had come forward asking for additional funding, and there were fears that the funding would be cut off after the federal stimulus funding was coming to an end in March of this year. I had asked you before about what the government was doing to continue the support.

In our communities, this is an essential service, particularly in my riding of Brant. In fact, in the riding of Brant, I know how much local organizations have worked—such great work. Literacy Link South Central, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic school board, the Grand Erie school board, the Literacy Council of Brantford and District and Six Nations Polytechnic are valued and needed by our community residents.

I've said before, the investment in literacy is an extremely important aspect of who we are. I know we want to lead a knowledge-based economy.

I want to know from the minister: What have you been doing to deliver these skills that are—

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

Hon. John Milloy: I want to thank the member for his question and publicly thank all those literacy providers across the province who provide such valuable service to literally thousands of Ontarians. I also want to thank members on all sides of this House who have been strong advocates for literacy.

The member is correct in pointing out that the federal government had provided short-term, time-limited stimulus funding which we used to help literacy providers. We were hoping that that funding would be extended because, although the economic conditions have improved, there's still a great deal of need out there. I publicly called on my federal counterpart to continue the funding. I was joined in that, I know, by members of the Legislature and literacy providers who went to the federal government and said that the effects of the recession demand that more money be invested.

Unfortunately, all of us were disappointed when there were not additional dollars in the federal budget. But we made a commitment to continue to work with—

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

Mr. Dave Levac: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate your dedication and devotion to ensuring that literacy is a prime part of our growth patterns here. We see the funding devoted in the basic skills level programs announced in the budget of 2011, and I appreciate that.

I've seen first-hand how effective literacy programs are in an individual's life. I have visited the Literacy Council of Branford and District, and I've met with individuals who have told me inspirational stories about dedication, devotion and hope. I want to say thank you on their behalf to thank you for doing so.

Their overall quality of life improves. It gives them the confidence to become engaged citizens. It raises their employment opportunities and provides them with an opportunity to apply for better-paying jobs even within their own companies. In fact, higher literacy rates can have a positive impact even on their health. I think high levels of literacy are associated with high levels of involvement and volunteerism.

Minister, can you please share with the rest of the House exactly what this government has done to provide continued support for our literacy groups and, indeed, for the future of the citizens of Ontario?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I couldn't agree more with the honourable member about the importance of these literacy groups and the positive effect they've had in communities in terms of transforming lives. It was for that reason that I was very proud that the recent budget announced by the Minister of Finance contained an investment of an additional \$44 million for Ontario's literacy providers over the next three years.

This funding will help support literally thousands of Ontarians who are looking for additional literacy training, which will help them function in their lives, but will also prepare them for training and retraining programs, to complete their high school education, to move on to post-secondary education, to college and university.

I've had the opportunity to visit dozens and dozens of centres across the province that provide literacy training and I have seen lives literally transformed by these investments—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's not funny.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Norm doesn't consider it funny.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Community Safety, a warning.

Please continue.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Premier. Premier, you're out of touch with the north and with Bill 151. The McGuinty government has a responsibility to everyone in Ontario, not just your downtown friends and campaign contributors. You have an obligation to hear dissenting voices and not to subvert the parliamentary process—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. A warning to the member from Peterborough.

Mr. Randy Hillier: —and not to subvert the parliamentary process for your own gain.

The parliamentary assistant cancelled the recommendations of the subcommittee, which approved northern consultations on your forestry LHIN experiments. The parliamentary assistant has prevented northerners from commenting on a bill that places their jobs and communities in jeopardy.

Premier, did you direct the parliamentary assistant to remove northern consultations because you're afraid to hear what northerners will say about your out-of-touch, failed forestry experiments?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'm pleased to answer this question again. I want everybody to know how important this bill is and how hard Minister Gravelle has worked on this issue. He's been a huge advocate on behalf of northern Ontario. I would say that his work has been stellar.

It's important to know that the committee doesn't meet until April 11 and when they do, they're going to work on the existing consultations that have already occurred. I said earlier that they travelled quite extensively in northern Ontario prior to this committee going out. The consultations previously have been in Beardmore, Bower, Cochrane, Chapleau—these are northern communities—Fox Lake reserve and Constance Lake First Nation, Dryden, Fort Frances, Hearst, Hornepayne, Huntsville, Kapuskasing, Marathon, Midland, Parry Sound, Nipigon, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sioux Lookout—

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Once again, the parliamentary assistant says that he's heard enough, but northerners don't agree. The mayor of Timmins wants northern consultation. So does the mayor of Thunder Bay as well as the mayors of Ignace, Espanola, Sioux Lookout and Iroquois Falls.

The Ontario Forest Industries Association says that your tenure experiment will kill jobs and create uncertainty, and so does the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce. Why are you the only one who thinks the north doesn't deserve a voice on a bill that affects them and which kills their jobs?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: This wood supply competition is the largest wood supply competition ever seen in Ontario

and it's turned out to be extremely competitive. It's important that we get it right, and that's why we've taken the time to conduct a thorough evaluation.

We want our wood to work as quickly as possible. We're offering approximately nine million cubic metres of currently unused wood supply through this competition. We maintain continuous communication with our northern partners because this is a very important issue.

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I know that Minister Gravelle has worked very hard on this. We look forward to the input that we get in the travelling committee after April 11. I know Minister Gravelle will take your comments seriously and will work closely with the northern mayors to get this right. We have a lot of work to do, and we continue to accept those consultations going forward.

FIRE SAFETY

Mr. Paul Miller: My question's to the Premier. On Friday, a retirement home fire in Timmins took the life of a senior—the 45th life lost in a retirement home fire since 1980. Like so many in Ontario, this home did not have an automatic sprinkler system. Despite the fact that the province has called a fourth inquest into fire safety in retirement homes and has gone through a recent consultation process, again will the Premier at least commit to a date for action from this consultation process?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The Minister of Revenue.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'm glad to answer this question. First, let me just say how I think everyone in this House is very saddened to hear the news of the passing of a senior. My thoughts and prayers are going out to the senior's family and friends. This was definitely a tragedy, but I do want to say how fortunate we are to have the emergency services, the fire and police of Timmins, who have all come together quickly to make sure that they protect the seniors who are homeless.

What we have is an investigation that's under way with the Ontario fire marshal. What's also very important is, we have a Retirement Homes Act that—unfortunately, that member who pretends to care about seniors didn't even vote for the support of these seniors.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Withdraw the comment, please.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I withdraw.

What's really important is that we have, for 20 years, talked about the Retirement Homes Act, and this government is standing up and protecting seniors.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: I brought Bill 92, the Mandating Sprinklers in All Ontario Retirement Homes Act, 2010, to this Legislature to fill the gaping hole in this government's Bill 21. This government is deliberately keeping Bill 92 from the public hearings that should have happened a long time ago, and while we wait for this

government to do the right thing, another senior has died in a retirement home fire.

Will the Premier and his government finally protect the lives of vulnerable seniors and legislate mandatory automatic sprinklers in all retirement homes before anyone else dies?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: To Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I think all members of the House have a concern about this matter. You know that we have launched—and it's now completed—a very active and comprehensive consultation with virtually everybody in the field moving forward and that all of the options that come out of that consultation are available for implementation. I want to assure the member and all members of the House of that.

We have heard from individuals who have resided in these homes, from those who own them, from fire officials and safety officials—from a large number of people. We are now gathering together all of the information we have from that, analyzing it and reviewing with them. I think you're going to see action that will be forthcoming from this kind of consultation that will add to the many things that have already been done to enhance fire safety in the province of Ontario.

I thank all members who have raised this either through private members' bills or in any way in this House through questions and statements. I think we'll all be able to move forward with the results of that consultation, which, as I say, has been more extensive than any that I can think of in a long, long time.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome a number of guests visiting the Legislature today from the Ontario Environment Industry Association, ONEIA. They extend an invitation to all members to attend their 11th annual environment industry day reception being held later today in the legislative dining room. Welcome to our guests.

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

The House recessed from 1135 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to welcome the students and staff from Regina Mundi Catholic secondary school in London who are visiting in the east and west galleries, and a special welcome to former page Cali Van Bommel. It's great to have you back, Cali.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jim Wilson: The McGuinty government has led us down a path of unaffordable electricity, and opposition leader Tim Hudak and the PC caucus want to turn this high-priced disaster around. A Hudak-led PC government would treat energy policy as an economic policy instead of an expensive experiment that has caused rates to rise 75% since 2003 and a further 46% over the next five years.

Unlike the McGuinty government, which is forcing seniors on fixed incomes to pay higher prices for electricity during all peak hours, a PC government would give families the choice to opt out of time-of-use pricing.

A PC government would have a forensic audit into the debt retirement charge to see why this charge, worth \$1 billion per year, plus \$80,000 per year of HST, has not been retired. We won't allow it to become a permanent tax grab. We'll pull back the curtains and put the remaining total on hydro bills so that families can see how long it will take to pay it off, and if it is paid off, we'll take it off the bill altogether.

We'll scrap the Ontario Power Authority, a bloated government bureaucracy that costs ratepayers \$80 million per year and an agency whose sole mandate is to drive up prices up.

We'll ensure that the interests of consumers come first by creating a dedicated consumer advocate at the Ontario Energy Board to represent the interests of ratepayers and ensure political interests don't trump a family's ability to pay.

For those concerned by industrial wind and solar farms, families can count on us to build them only in places where they are welcomed and wanted and at prices ratepayers can afford.

These are practical ideas that will help Ontario families who are—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Guelph will please come to order.

The member for Ottawa–Orléans.

PAKISTAN DAY

Mr. Phil McNeely: I was honoured to attend, along with my colleague Yasir Naqvi, the Canada Pakistan Association of the National Capital Region celebration of Pakistan Day. The celebration was held in Ottawa on April 2, just last Saturday.

Sana Syed from my riding of Ottawa–Orléans was master of ceremonies. She did a wonderful job, together with co-emcee Imran Zaidi.

Senator Jaffer spoke with great emotion about the history of this nation since its creation in 1947. She spoke eloquently of the hardships recently suffered by this young nation—the devastating earthquake, the recent

floods, and the Afghanistan war, which is fought as well in Pakistan.

With all these challenges, the 300,000 Canadians of Pakistani origin are proud Canadians and remain proud of their homeland.

Ottawa–Orléans is blessed with families of Pakistani origin, and we treasure the leadership of Mashooda Syed, president of the Canada Pakistan Association, Qamar Masood, president of the multicultural committee, and Saeed Bokhari, president of the Cumberland Islamic Society. They will be opening up a new mosque in June this year.

Part of the evening was dedicated to a play on the history of Pakistan, and the youth from the community certainly did an excellent job taking us from the founding of the country to the 9/11 tragedy and to today.

Several awards were presented to worthy recipients, distinguished Pakistani Canadians: Senator Salma Atallahjan, honorary CPA lifetime member award; Serge Buy.

The evening included a fashion show, excellent Pakistani food and a musical program. All in all, this was an enjoyable and learned evening.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Ted Arnott: Today, I wish to acknowledge the outstanding work done by two of my colleagues: the member for Simcoe–Grey and the member for Oxford.

The member for Oxford and our leader, Tim Hudak, have been working in co-operation with agricultural organizations and farmers for several years to push for a business risk management program.

On June 3, 2010, the member for Simcoe–Grey brought a motion forward in this House calling on the McGuinty government to show support for farmers by acting to create a comprehensive business risk management program, jointly funded by farmers and governments. The motion was supported by farmers, including the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, the Ontario PC caucus and our agriculture critic, my colleague the member for Oxford.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government defeated the motion. The member for Oxford kept the pressure on the government, and several times during question period he called on the agriculture minister to stop being a lobbyist and do the right thing for farmers. I completely believe that it was the work of the members for Simcoe–Grey and Oxford, in addition to the leadership of agriculture organizations and farmers, that led the government to finally adopt the Ontario PC plan.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS
MEMORIAL WALK

Mr. Bill Mauro: In 2005, after she lost her son Steven to suicide, Margaret Hajdinjak realized that something had to be done. Suicide happens far too frequently, and the impact on a community, family and friends is devas-

tating. Margaret realized that these deaths are often silent because of the stigma attached to losing a loved one in this way. She believed that people should feel comfortable talking about how their loved one died and should be able to get the support they need. Margaret knew that saying nothing to a family that lost someone to suicide is like not acknowledging that their loved one had lived.

On Sunday, May 1, at 6 p.m., Out of the Darkness, the first annual memorial walk for suicide awareness and prevention, will be held in Thunder Bay. The problem they are confronting is very real. In 2007, there were 3,611 reported suicides in Canada, and according to the Canadian Mental Health Association, suicides account for 16% of all deaths for people aged 16 to 44. The goal of the walk is to help raise awareness, to begin removing the stigma attached to suicide, to support families and friends who have lost loved ones in this way and to recognize and remember the victims.

I want to thank Leadership Thunder Bay, who took a proposal from Margaret and lent their support and guidance to the working group to launch Out of the Darkness. A special acknowledgment to Margaret Hajdinjak, Gregory Brenk, Nancy Campbell, Gloria Deck, Robin Cawlishaw, Samantha Moir, Fern Tarzia and Jessica Cordes, as well as all the other volunteers and supporters who are helping this important cause.

Once again, the walk is taking place Sunday, May 1, at 6 p.m. at Confederation College. I encourage residents of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario to support this effort and turn the Out of the Darkness walk into a significant event in Thunder Bay. As a community, we need to raise awareness of this issue, we need to support those affected by this tragedy and we need to support those who find themselves in difficulty.

ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Randy Hillier: In the last few months, microFIT participants have been receiving notices that Hydro One will be unable to provide them with an offer to connect because of system constraints and that system upgrades are necessary before any of these connections proceed. People across Ontario have invested their life savings into the Premier's green energy dream and are getting burned when they find out that they signed on for nothing more than a McGuinty government backtrack. The government knew the capacity of Hydro One, but made promises that they knew they couldn't keep.

For Paul Mayell of Inverary, the Premier's green energy dream has turned into his personal nightmare. Paul had an agreement to connect. He had a fully signed connection agreement with this government, but when weather created installation delays, his 180-day agreement expired. The government informed Paul that there would be no problem and a resubmission would allow him to be connected. When he did resubmit, mere days from the expiry of his 180-day agreement, suddenly there were system constraints that prevented Hydro One from

connecting him. The constraints miraculously appeared over just a few days.

Nobody can trust a government that says one thing but does another. This government must abide by the agreements they have made and keep their promises to the people of Ontario.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a very important announcement. Finally, after waiting for 16 years, through gridlock, crowded buses and pollution, the Eglinton transit line is back. Ever since Mike Harris made the biggest blunder in transit history when he cancelled the subway in 1995, the community has suffered from massive amounts of fumes from diesel, buses, cars, trucks etc.

Now they can breathe a sigh of relief. The Eglinton Crosstown LRT is back on track, and the community will be able to enjoy the benefits of modern rapid transit. It will run 20 kilometres underground from Black Creek to Kennedy station. One hundred per cent of the funding is coming from the provincial government, and 80,000 families will also benefit from good-paying jobs for the next 10 years of construction, even the families in Thunder Bay, who build the cars, and local small businesses along Eglinton will also find new shoppers and customers.

In co-operation with the city of Toronto and Mayor Ford, last week the Premier announced this critical and long-awaited good news that the Eglinton underground LRT will be moving forward ASAP.

1510

This important investment through the heart of Toronto will take vehicle pollution off the streets and create fast, clean, rapid transit in the Eglinton corridor, connecting some of Toronto's best neighbourhoods. Mount Dennis, Fairbank, Oakwood Village, Marlee Village, Forest Hill, Chaplin Estates, and Yonge and Eglinton will be served by this long-awaited improvement in their city and in transit.

Thank you, Mr. Premier, thank you, Mr. Mayor, and thank you to the people of Toronto.

REGINA MUNDI COLLEGE

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Last Friday, I visited a grade 10 civics class at Regina Mundi secondary school in the London District Catholic School Board in the London area. Today, the same students are here at Queen's Park, so I want to welcome them.

I want to commend grade 10 student Layan Reslan for having taken the initiative to arrange this visit as part of a project she is working on for her civics class. She contacted my office and asked if I would come and speak to the class about what it's like to be a politician at Queen's Park, and I was happy to be there.

The students in the class, taught by Michael Pepe, were bright and thoughtful, and we had an excellent discussion not only about my experience as a member of

provincial Parliament, but also about the importance of civic engagement and active citizenship for young people, irrespective of their political affiliation. These students demonstrated a real interest and engagement with issues affecting them.

I want to thank Layan Reslan for inviting me to join her class and to congratulate all the students, Mr. Pepe and all the teachers who came today for their ability to understand political life, and for convincing other students to participate in political activities. It is important for young students and young people to engage to make sure we have a bright, strong and vibrant future.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton: Forest sector communities across northern Ontario are in shock at the behaviour of the McGuinty Liberal government. Workers and contractors in communities like Sioux Lookout, Dubreuilville and Wawa cannot believe that the McGuinty Liberals would take away the wood supply of their local forest product mill without having the decency to come to the community and talk to the workers, the contractors and the suppliers who will lose their jobs, their businesses and their livelihoods as a result of these closed-door decisions made in Toronto.

People across the north are shocked at the arrogance of the Liberal government that will change something as fundamental as forest tenure and forest licensing without holding public hearings in the northern Ontario communities concerned. Imagine: The McGuinty Liberals will hold a couple of days of hearings in Toronto, where almost no one will be affected by the forest tenure legislation and almost no one cares, but will not hold hearings in northern Ontario communities where tens of thousands of people will be affected by the proposed changes, more evidence that the McGuinty Liberal government is totally out of touch with the interests and aspirations of the people of northern Ontario.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Kuldip Kular: Our Prime Minister recently announced a \$4.2-billion loan guarantee for the hydro project in Labrador. In response yesterday, the Premier said that Ottawa ought to treat Ontario the same way it does other parts of the country.

Ontarians contribute \$6 billion every year to the federal government and only get \$1 billion back. In fact, 40% of all federal money comes from this province and our province is doing the heavy lifting when it comes to reducing Canada's output of greenhouse gases.

Together, we are rebuilding 80% of our energy system over the next 20 years. We are doing more to renew our aging energy infrastructure than any other province and so far we have done it alone. The McGuinty government's long-term energy plan is making Ontario an international clean energy leader and creating thousands of jobs.

Now the federal government wants to use Ontario's money to pay for this kind of energy restructuring elsewhere, but not right here at home. Ontarians won't stand by and let their tax dollars subsidize electricity rates elsewhere. Our Premier made it clear that he will fight for Ontario taxpayers, but the leader of the official opposition has so far refused to take a stand for Ontario families.

This government has been defending Ontarians at the federal level. I wonder why the Leader of the Opposition won't do the same.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated April 5, 2011, from the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

PETITIONS

COYOTES

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas coyote predation is a growing problem in rural Ontario, especially on farms; and

“Whereas there are documented reports that coyotes are attacking people and pets and the attacks are getting more aggressive; and

“Whereas as many as 6,000 lambs and sheep alone are killed by coyotes on Ontario farms every year; and

“Whereas these losses are seriously impacting farmers' incomes; and

“Whereas the current control measures authorized by the Ministry of Natural Resources under the municipal financial incentives for control of coyote predation program are cumbersome and impossible to adhere to;

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

“That the Ontario government minimize predator losses by implementing a province-wide coyote control program that includes a \$200 bounty for each coyote carcass and allow counties to implement their own proof-of-kill collection system.”

Many people have signed this from all over my riding and I'm giving it to Devan.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

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

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

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

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

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

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

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It’s my pleasure to read this petition:

“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 very much agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it to the table via page Daniel.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: This is a petition calling on the Ministry of Transportation to install traffic lights at the intersection of Highway 12 at Fairgrounds Road, Orillia.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the intersection of Highway 12 at Fairgrounds Road in Orillia is a main traffic link for Notre Dame Catholic School, for the Odas Park fairgrounds and a number of local businesses; and

“Whereas we are concerned about the increased congestion and safety of the travelling public and the transportation of children to Notre Dame Catholic School;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to have the Ministry of Transportation install traffic lights at the intersection of Highway 12 and Fairgrounds Road, Orillia.”

I’m pleased to sign this and give it to Leighton to present to the table.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from people all over Ontario:

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

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

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

1520

Ils demandent à l’Assemblée législative « de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu’il relève directement de l’Assemblée législative. »

J’appuie cette pétition et je demande à Gemma de l’amener à la table des greffiers.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

“Whereas Ontario is getting out of coal for generating electricity; and

“Whereas the smoke cessation legislation has decreased second-hand smoke; and

“Whereas the incidence of asthma has decreased by 30% in children from two to seven years old; and

“Whereas Ontario is a leader in world governments in getting out of coal; and

“Whereas the doctors from CHEO supported the ban on cosmetic use of pesticides; and

“Whereas the ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides has reduced the chemicals in our environment;

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

“To encourage Ontarians to support government to maintain the environmental action that is leading to a more healthy environment.”

I'm very pleased to put my signature on this and send it up with Sydney.

RURAL AND NORTHERN SCHOOLS

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to save rural and northern schools in Ontario:

"Whereas rural and northern schools are an important part of Ontario; and

"Whereas rural and northern schools are widely recognized for their high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

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

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural and northern 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 swimming pools open in Toronto schools but hasn't found any money to keep rural and northern schools open in Ontario;

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

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of rural and northern Ontario and suspend all accommodation reviews until the province develops a rural and northern school policy that recognizes the values of these schools in their communities."

I've signed it and I will give it to Gemma.

CEMETERIES

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

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas protecting and preserving Ontario's cemeteries is a shared responsibility and the foundation of a civilized society; and

"Whereas failure to safeguard one of our last remaining authentic cultural heritage resources, Ontario's inactive cemeteries, would be disastrous for the continuity of the historical record and our collective culture in this province;

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

"The government must pass Bill 126, Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2010, to prohibit the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario."

I agree with this and will send it to the clerks' table.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of Ontario feel that this current Liberal government is directly responsible for their rising household debt by slapping them with higher taxes, such as the health tax and the HST, higher fees, higher hydro bills and higher auto insurance premiums; and

"Whereas the people have lost faith in their government;

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

"That the McGuinty government immediately resign and call an election."

I sign this also and give it to Jimmy.

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN

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

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, between 1869 and 1939, more than 100,000 British home children arrived in Canada from group homes and orphanages in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland; and

"Whereas the story of the British home children is one of challenge, determination and perseverance; and

"Whereas due to their remarkable courage, strength and perseverance, Canada's British home children endured and went on to lead healthy and productive lives and contributed immeasurably to the development of Ontario's economy and prosperity; and

"Whereas the government of Canada has proclaimed 2010 as the Year of the British Home Child and Canada Post will recognize it with a commemorative stamp;

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

"Enact Bill 12, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Jim Brownell on March 23, 2010, an act to proclaim September 28 of each year as Ontario home child day."

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

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Steve Clark: I'd like to thank the Food For All Food Bank in Prescott for this petition. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario's economy and deserves investment;

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

"Whereas over 25 million pounds of fresh produce is disposed of or plowed back into Ontario's fields each

year while food banks across Ontario struggle to feed those in need;

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

I feel very proud to sign it in support, and I’ll send it to the table with page Travis.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care at its Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification;

“Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed;

“Whereas the Premier and Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution tabled at Queen’s Park by Newmarket–Aurora MPP Frank Klees on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

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

I have also signed it and will send it with Gemma.

CEMETERIES

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Historical Society, founded in 1888, is a not-for-profit corporation, incorporated by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, April 1, 1899, with a mandate to identify, protect, preserve and promote Ontario’s history; and

“Whereas protecting and preserving Ontario’s cemeteries is a shared responsibility and the foundation of a civilized society; and

“Whereas the Legislature failed to enact Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, which would have prohibited the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the Cooley-Hatt Cemetery (circa 1786) is located in the Niagara Escarpment plan within Ontario’s greenbelt plan in Ancaster, city of Hamilton; and

“Whereas this is one of the earliest surviving pioneer cemeteries in Ontario, with approximately 99 burials, including at least one veteran of the War of 1812;

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

“The government of Ontario must take whatever action is necessary to prevent the desecration of any part of this sacred burial ground for real estate development.”

I agree with this petition and shall sign it and send it to the clerks’ table.

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 Premier 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 this petition and I will sign it.

PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the picketing of the homes of people with intellectual disabilities alienates people from their autonomy; security; privacy; relationships with staff, neigh-

bours and community; and also causes discrimination and harm to citizens who should be free to enjoy their homes without harassment and intimidation;

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

“To support Bill 83 and prohibit the picketing of vulnerable people’s residences during a strike.”

I’ve also signed this and will give it to Leighton.

1530

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: This is a petition to restore 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 the petition and I will sign it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2011 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 4, 2011, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: First, let me advise you that I’ll be sharing my time with the member from Nipissing.

I’m delighted to spend a few minutes today to talk about our budget. There are two or three planks that are really important, that we should not lose focus on, in this budget. One of them—coming from a rural community, and not trying to be selfish—that I want to spend a little bit of time on is the risk management piece. Farmers have been lobbying me for quite some time, and I’m delighted to say that we were able to deliver, although we waited a considerable amount of time to have our federal

government come to the table to strengthen the risk management. Some four years ago the grains and oilseeds came to the province once again, when the doors were closed by our federal counterparts, to show some leadership. Well, this government did, and by doing that—it had expired less than a year ago, and this government committed to renewing that commitment for one year, and hence the budget now; not only are we going to extend the grains and oilseeds, but we’re going to go to the other sectors in the agricultural industry as well.

What does this really mean? We talked about agriculture as being important. It will create for our farming community the stable resources so that they can afford to plant their seeds and grow their seeds. Sometimes, when it comes harvest time, whether it’s weather or economic conditions around the world—frankly, the farmer who farms right behind my house has no control over those jurisdictions, and we’ve seen in the past where it was cheaper for them not to harvest their corn or soybeans because of some of those prices that were so bad.

So what is that going to allow that particular farmer to do? When he plants those seeds and he grows them, he will at least have some income from this risk management—by the way, farmers are contributing to it—to go to the bank and pay his costs or at least what it cost him to plant those seeds.

I want to give credit to the folks of the farming community in my riding. I’m not a farmer, I will admit, but I do represent a predominantly rural riding. They met with me a number of times, trying to explain the importance of this to me. Frankly, they provided a lot of good advice that allowed me, within our government caucus, along with my other rural colleagues, to lobby for this really important plank in the budget.

I would just say this: Even today, during members’ statements, some of the members from the opposition will brag—I’m going to say the word “brag”—that it was they who held our feet to the fire to make this happen. I have a really hard time, because I remember, back in my municipal days, when a certain member who wants to take credit from the other side happened to be—although for a very short time; he was given marching orders. You can tell, because he was there for a very, very short time. He closed an agricultural assistance office—guess where? In Brighton, a community I was mayor of. I had to fight like you-know-what to retain two specialists. And do you know what made it even worse? The member that was sitting for Northumberland at that time—that’s the name of the riding—a certain Dr. Galt, who was a member in this House, used to run that agricultural office. He was the person who directed it. He stood here—

Mrs. Liz Sandals: And the Minister of Agriculture still closed it. Wow.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: He still closed it. If they want to take some credit, credit should be due where credit is due. As a minister, his credit should be to have destroyed some of the agricultural components that made our farmers what they are today. We’ve been rebuilding.

I could go on, because it really bothers me when I hear them speak to that extent. During my tenure as mayor, while they were in government, they closed hospitals. They closed two hospitals, although they did rebuild one. I give them credit; they did rebuild one. But they closed two hospitals. They destroyed the life of Port Hope. They took their hospital away. If you're going to take credit, take credit for what you've really done.

They closed a driver test centre that served the west end of my riding in Port Hope. Guess what I did today? I opened a brand new driver test centre. It took some 15 years, but we did it. If they want to take credit where credit is due, then I think they should talk about their past record.

I see that I'm running out of time. Part of our budget commitment was to enhance the education system we have. I want to tell you that when we formed government in 2003, I had a school in Port Hope with mould. They had to move kids out of that school. Guess what's in that same school—actually across the street, because there was a better piece of property. There is a brand new school. There are five brand new schools in my riding. I don't think there were any new schools in my riding while they were in government. I think that's the type of credit that they need to look forward to taking, because I can tell you that people from Northumberland—Quinte West don't forget those things.

I just want to go back to the municipality of Port Hope a little bit. They lost a hospital, because their hospital restructuring commission deemed that hospital gone. What happened in the last four or five years? They have a community health centre which this government funded: over \$2 million for the bricks and mortar and over \$2 million a year to keep the community health centre running. Just a few months ago, the Minister of Health had the opportunity to be in the riding to open up a brand new diabetes centre in Port Hope. That has been expanded. As a matter of fact, I just met with the CEO yesterday.

The demand has been extraordinary. The need is there, now that we have a diabetes centre in the west end of my riding, for more space, and I'm certainly going to work towards trying to achieve that goal.

I'm just going to touch on a couple of other minor things. Mental health: We had an all-party committee that travelled the province for some length. Something that was really scattered within that mental health provision to our folks: We've made a commitment for the future of this province that that's one of the things we need to tackle, and that commitment was in the budget.

Breast cancer screening: We talked about it over and over and over again. There's money in the budget to provide that breast screening process to women, down to 30 years young—not old; young.

So we've made some huge strides in this budget. I am glad that the opposition is going to support it because they want to support risk management, frankly, and I'm delighted to hear that. But for them to take credit, I really have an issue.

1540

I want to go back to risk management, because it is so important in my riding. I want to thank those farmers—the hog—

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Cattle.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: —and the cattle.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: And seeds.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: And the grains and oilseeds. I think they had me on speed-dial—and horticultural. They had me on speed-dial, and I'm glad they did it. I'm really glad they did it, because now they have some stability. I could go on by reading all the comments they made, but I'm going to leave some time for my friend from Nipissing.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Nipissing.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's my privilege today to speak to our 2011 budget. Certainly Ontario is turning the corner.

I share my colleague from Northumberland's enthusiasm about risk management. I know that Klaus Wand and his family up in the Powassan-Trout Creek area will be very excited about this. They are strong agriculturalists in my region.

As the member for Northumberland had outlined a number of priority areas that he wanted to focus in on, I want to focus in on a couple today. One would be children's mental health, which I think is incredibly important. I'm delighted to see that our government is moving forward with that initiative and ensuring that families get the support that they need when they need it. I know many families who have been impacted by mental health issues—their children and their youth—and I think this is an incredibly important investment by our government.

I also want to focus in on a smaller issue that has not been raised as much, and that's the funding that we're seeing going towards literacy. While the federal government deserted this particular area, we are seeing a new investment in literacy of \$44 million over three years, and I think this is an exciting initiative. I am a huge proponent and supporter of the North Bay Literacy Council. Jane Jackson and all of her volunteers and learners are a wonderful group of people who add so much to our community.

Madam Speaker, I recently had the chance to meet with some of those learners when they had literacy day here. I think you might have been there as well. It was a very heart-warming day to see those learners expressing how important it was for them to go back and get that extra help and that education to get them back on track.

In support of the North Bay Literacy Council, a few weeks ago I had the opportunity to play Scrabble at Northgate Square in North Bay. I challenged our new radio show hosts, Joël Lamoureux and Kevin Oschefski—Kevin and Joël in the Morning, who are on EZ Rock—to play me in a game of Scrabble. I'm proud to say that I won.

We did, of course, have a small wager on the game. If I won, they had to talk about the literacy council every morning on the radio—about what great work they did, about how anybody could come and be a learner, and how people could volunteer—and they lived up to the bargain and did, every single day. If they won, I was supposed to go on the air with them for an hour during their Longest Morning Ever, which lasted 53 hours, and/or I was to speak about them in the House. So this is my opportunity to give a hats-off to Kevin and Joël in the Morning on EZ Rock, who spent so much time supporting another great organization which has had a lot of support from this government, which is children and youth with disabilities.

They did the Longest Morning Ever last week; it was 53 hours of live radio, with the two of them quite tired by the end but holding up, and supporting a couple of great organizations in our community: NADY, the Nipissing Association for Disabled Youth, which supports disabled youth in our community, and Rotary for Kids, which works hand in hand with NADY in providing support. Over 53 hours of radio, they managed to raise \$92,000, which is incredibly impressive. I had an opportunity to chat with a lot of the students, a lot of the youth and children who benefit from this fundraising, which all stays right in the North Bay area and provides supports to families with children with disabilities.

They had a chance to talk to Bryan Ceppetelli, Shawn Venasse and Mathew Vigna, who are my guys, who live at Cam's Place and who are just wonderful young men and have this lovely new home that we opened last year, with some support from the government and their families. It provided them with a wonderful living arrangement. Lori Venasse, Shawn's mom, was there, and his sister—a whole bunch of family members.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Dooley and Lucie Ricci, who were the founders of NADY 30-some years ago. They ran it out of their basement for years and years, and only last year, with the opening of our new children's treatment centre, found themselves with a new home and an office at One Kids Place.

Dooley and Lucie were there, hugging and supporting everyone through the 53 hours. Hats off to them, to the NADY group and to Rotary for Kids. Our local Rotary Club, Madam Speaker, as I'm sure in your riding and everyone's riding, contributes so much to the community. They were all there to support Joël and Kevin, who managed to raise \$92,000, as I said, and who did yeoman's service for over 53 hours. Kudos to the boys for doing that.

I have now met at least part of my commitment. I did show up at 9 o'clock at night, during the 53 hours, to try and help them out, but they were so tired that I think they forgot to ask me to come on the air with them. So that was okay; I didn't have to do the whole hour.

These are the types of community events that bring people together in support of wonderful organizations like NADY and support our children with disabilities.

Through a variety of programs, our government has supported these children as well: through the Passport program; through the child tax benefit; and through our funding of One Kids Place, which received funding through this government to actually create a home for these children and services. It is one of the landmark institutions in our riding that I'm particularly proud to leave as part of the legacy of my time here, in providing those families with those services that they needed.

I think we are turning a corner. I think this budget is setting us on the right track to move forward. I'm delighted to see that there was another \$10 million in it for the north as well, through the—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Comments and questions?

Mr. Jim Wilson: I just want to say to the honourable member from Northumberland—Quinte West that, yes, we do support the farmers' business risk management plan, and you're the ones who are late to the table, frankly.

Here's what my resolution read in this House in June of last year—which you voted against; we voted in favour. And it wasn't until Tim Hudak said at both the 2009 plowing match and the 2010 plowing match that he fully supported this business risk management plan being expanded to all commodity groups—finally, you guys came around when Tim, once again, just days before the budget, reiterated the fact that if you didn't do it in this budget, he would do it, if he had the opportunity to become Premier of this province in October.

Here's the resolution that you voted down: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario act to help farmers by supporting reforms to the national AgriStability program at this year's meeting of the federal and provincial Ministers of Agriculture, and by acting to create a comprehensive business risk management program, jointly funded by farmers and governments, as presented to the province of Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition, and that regardless of any other level of government, the provincial share of the business risk management program be in place for the 2009 production year, which is currently being marketed."

We were way out ahead on this. I firmly believe the Liberal government would not have done anything. You would have kept your excuse that you were using for the last three years that the federal government had to come to the table before you would bring this program in. It was certainly Tim Hudak saying he would do it that made you change your minds.

It's just like when he came out with buck a beer; three or four days later you came out with the liberalization of our liquor laws. You're copycats, you're not leaders, and you'll be replaced in October.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I listened with some interest to the member for Nipissing and, as well, the member for Northumberland—Quinte West. I have to give government

members credit. They have a job to do; their job is to try to sell the government's budget.

But let me respond from my perspective. I represent constituents who have a very difficult time paying the hydro bill every month. In fact, I talk to seniors and to low-income people who are saying, "What do I do? Do I simply eat macaroni for the rest of the week in order that I can pay my hydro bill?" That's where it's gotten to.

Those people got absolutely nothing in this budget. They were hoping for some kind of relief from a hydro bill that just continues to skyrocket and skyrocket and skyrocket, and those people got absolutely nothing. In fact, they're shocked when you point out to them that their hydro bill is going to accelerate by another 50% over the next few years.

The second reality is this: People who are now being forced to pay the HST, who have to pay the HST on the hydro bill, who have to pay the HST on the heating bill, who are watching food prices escalate through the roof—I'm talking here about people who are forced to rely upon Ontario Works benefits or Ontario disability support benefits. They're seeing their cost of living go up by not 1%, not 2%, but by 5% and 10% a year, if not more. I'm left, at the end of this budget, to ask: What happens to those people? Because there was hardly anything, if anything at all, in this budget to help those people, compared to the huge cost-of-living increases.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Essex.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I'm pleased to comment on the words of my colleagues from Northumberland–Quinte West and from Nipissing, and I'm equally pleased that they mentioned the risk management program.

The member for Simcoe–Grey seemed to have a few words about it. He reminds me of the rooster who takes credit for the sun rising. We started our risk management program with the grains and oilseeds long before any resolution or any comment came from the other side. We asked the other commodity groups to bring to us a plan, because they in fact wanted one. But the folks who are really responsible for it are the farmers. They're the ones who brought it to us; we were willing to listen.

I think that some credit should go to our Minister of Agriculture for her foresight to listen to them, to understand what their needs are. I think also there should be some credit to our rural caucus, who continually brought this up. I don't recall the opposition bringing it up in the pre-budget hearings, but they may have. I think the rural caucus did a lot of work, because we sat down with the finance minister and the Minister of Agriculture and echoed the words of our farm community.

Really, it's when the rubber hits the road that you should take credit for something. Frankly and simply, it's this government, through Premier McGuinty, Finance Minister Duncan, Agriculture Minister Mitchell and the rural caucus, that took it by the horns and put it in place, and we have put it in place permanently. When the

national agri-group was mentioned—we only wish that the federal government would do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Northumberland–Quinte West made some remarks, but I do want to read it to the point of—we know that there is code language in here for "tax increases," and it's an election budget.

Here's what my constituents in the riding of Durham—this is an email that I'm reading. It's very appropriate here.

"What is this government doing to taxpayers?" This is an email from Wanda Shea. "What are you people doing with our money? We pay enough taxes that the government should give us a break. Stop giving severance packages to ... any person who works for the government and does a lousy job. If they are fired or step down, why are they given \$300,000 or more? I am finding it hard to put gas in my car to get to work. Grocery shopping is a joke. Why doesn't the government wake up? We are going to have to gather ... and protest the waste from the government. You people are elected and sit back and write letters." You don't do anything. "It would mean jobs for everyone. Maybe this is the end as predicted in the Bible. I cannot see a future. Tell Dalton [McGuinty] we are pissed off about the money"—pardon me for that—"he threw away on windmills."

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: Pardon me; I'm just reading it here. I apologize.

"We are pissed off about the HST, green fees, payroll taxes, smart meters, health premiums etc. We have had enough. Please do something for your people. We don't deserve what is being done to us" right now.

This is a real story about a real constituent. You're living on your high horse and you refuse to listen. I'm sure that this constituent—there are thousands of them in Ontario, in your riding and in your riding.

Stop raising taxes to solve every problem. The Liberal legacy is clear: tax and spend. There's an insatiable appetite. They have their hand in everybody's pocket. I can't believe that the people of Ontario haven't thrown you out already.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Northumberland–Quinte West has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Let me thank the members from Simcoe–Grey, Kenora–Rainy River, Essex and Durham for their comments.

The member from Simcoe–Grey said that they were off the pole. They passed a motion some time back. He seems to forget that they were here for eight years prior to that, and I think if he was paying attention to my comments, that's when they stripped everything out of agriculture. They were here for eight years.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: They destroyed it.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: They destroyed it. They closed an agricultural office near my riding in Peterborough.

I would say that the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills would probably support this, but I wonder what Jack MacLaren will think. I think he probably wrote their notes. I know that the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills would probably be in this House today—

Interjections.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I think we touched a sour note. I really think we touched a note.

My good friend from Durham, for whom I do have some respect—we're sort of neighbours—not once did he mention farmers. I believe he has—

Mr. Khalil Ramal: He's anti-farmer.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: He's probably anti-farmer.

They can talk a good talk sometimes, but I tell you, they're very, very clear. The people can see right through their rhetoric. How much are they going to cut to destroy our programs? That movie played between 1998 until 2003. I'm not sure the people of Ontario are ready to play that movie again. We've come a long way; we're not going to go backwards.

I know that there are a couple of things they really want to support, and I'm counting on them to come to the plate and do the right thing and support this budget because there's just so much to help Ontarians here that we cannot ignore them anymore.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm going to have up to an hour tomorrow to speak to the budget bill, so I will be sharing my time today with the member from Wellington–Halton Hills and the member from Thornhill.

What I would like to do is move an amendment to the budget motion. The amendment is that the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on March 29, 2011, “that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government” be amended by deleting the words following “that this House” and adding thereto the following: “cannot support a budget that will increase reckless spending and waste and will result in tax increases or new taxes to pay for it.

“Further, the budget fails:

“—to provide relief for Ontario families; and

“—to give small businesses a break by appointing a member of cabinet responsible for meeting measurable, hard targets on red tape reductions; and

“—to end corporate welfare schemes that pick winners and losers in the marketplace; and

“—to fix the broken arbitration system and ensure that public sector agreements reflect the ability of families to pay the bills; and

“—to scrap the wasteful LHIN bureaucracy and the bloated Ontario Power Authority and invest those tax dollars into front-line services; and

“—to halt the doubling of Ontario's debt.”

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Miller has moved that the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on March 29, 2011, “that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government” be

amended by deleting the words following “that this House” and adding thereto the following: “cannot support a budget that will increase reckless spending and waste and will result in tax increases or new taxes to pay for it.

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“—to fix the broken arbitration system and ensure that public sector agreements reflect the ability of families to pay the bills; and

“—to scrap the wasteful LHIN bureaucracy and the bloated Ontario Power Authority and invest those tax dollars into front-line services; and

“—to halt the doubling of Ontario's debt.”

The member for Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to speak in support of the amendment that has just been tabled. I'm glad to have this chance, on behalf of the people of Wellington–Halton Hills, to respond today to the McGuinty government's budget, which I believe will be this government's last budget, and deservedly so.

1600

I say this because I believe the people of Ontario will see it for what it is: a work of fiction, arguably even a fantasy, and, without a doubt, a failure. Much like the government that authored it, this document is dishonest.

Ontario families have been through more—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I have to ask you to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I withdraw.

I'll rephrase it: This document can't be trusted, just like this government.

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I withdraw.

No objective person would call it credible.

Ontario families have been through more than seven long years of broken promises, higher taxes, runaway spending and ballooning debt. This is a fact; it's beyond dispute. Instead of articulating a credible plan to address this government's failures in these areas, the finance minister went into attack mode, channelling his energies into an attack against the official opposition. His focus was on our party's leader, not on the minister's job, not on his responsibilities, not on the problems facing hard-working Ontario families, many of which are struggling to make ends meet.

In my 21 years in this Legislature I have never seen a performance like it. It was unprecedented in its presentation, irresponsible, even reprehensible in its tone and content. He actually implied that our party, if elected, would cut health care, lay off 33,000 teachers, reduce the number of doctors in Ontario by 12,000—

Interjection: It was a lie.

Mr. Ted Arnott: —all of which are lies. But in a budget of—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'll have to ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I withdraw—all of which are 100% false. But in a budget of so little substance, it's perhaps understandable that the finance minister thought he needed to fill time.

We know that this government will say anything, no matter how incredible, if it believes it will win votes. It's also clear that this government will spend without restraint, again, if it believes it will win votes. And with government spending that's out of control, the result will always be higher taxes, higher debt or both.

Unfortunately for this government, no one believes them anymore. People know that this government has fallen woefully out of touch with their everyday concerns and their hopes and aspirations to become economically secure amidst uncertain times. This budget will only cement their accurate perceptions about this government. That's because the budget simply reinforces the approach this government has taken for some time.

We're told that this government has ramped up program spending by an astounding 77% since they assumed office. Meanwhile, in the same period, we're told Ontario's economy grew by only 9%. As the leader of the official opposition has said, "You can't run your house that way, you can't run your business that way, and we can no longer continue to run the province of Ontario that way." He's absolutely right.

Also correct is the Waterloo Region Record in its editorial of March 30, which says that the Liberal budget "represents a colossal lost opportunity to tackle the most serious economic threat facing this province—its massive, surging and crippling debt." The editorial goes on to say, "During their eight years in office, the Liberals have been too willing to live with annual deficits that drove up Ontario's debt by 74%—from \$138.8 billion in 2003-04 to \$241.4 billion in the coming year. They have never lacked a vision to introduce new programs, simply a plan to pay for it all. That is a major oversight.

"What makes this trend more alarming is the government's willingness to continue piling on new debt to the mountain it has built. It plans to continue running annual deficits until 2017-18. By then, according to its own predictions, Ontario's debt will have risen to a \$307.5-billion Matterhorn casting its chilling shadow over the entire province.

"Debt may not be on the radar screens of most Ontarians. It should. In the coming year's budget, Ontario will spend \$10.2 billion merely to service its debt. After health and education, that stands as the province's third greatest expenditure. If interest rates rise, as they are expected to later this year, debt costs will become even more burdensome. And as more of" your "tax dollar goes to fund debt and less for programs and services, taxpayers will increasingly feel cheated.

"Moreover, the Liberals are taking a risky gamble in allowing the debt to continue its upward spiral for the

next six years. By then, Ontario could be engulfed in yet another economic downturn—which could necessitate new stimulus spending and even higher debt."

This is a colossal failure on the part of this government. Our children will be spending their working years paying for the Liberals' legacy of debt, and they deserve better.

What does the finance minister have to say? How does he intend to come to grips with this shameful legacy of spiralling spending? He pledges to restrain spending growth to just 1%. What a preposterous claim. Who do they think they're kidding?

Again, I quote the Record: "It is the same government that increased program spending by 62% since taking power (from \$70.1 billion in 2003-04 to \$113.7 billion this year) and now suddenly thinks it can limit annual program spending increases to 1.0%. Considering that Ontario's aging population will demand more health care, not less, such budget dreams are hued in Technicolor."

Over and over, year after year, this government has rapidly ramped up the debt, and now they promise to limit their spending increases to just 1% a year? This number is indeed hued in Technicolor. It's a work of fiction, arguably even a fantasy, and, without a doubt, inevitably a failure. That is the history of this government.

Its history tells us something else: Massive spending increases lead to massive tax increases, massive increases in the debt, or both. They say they won't raise taxes, but nobody believes them anymore. We can only guess what new taxes the McGuinty Liberals will introduce after the next election. After explicitly promising not to raise taxes, they brought in the health tax—raising taxes not to benefit health care, but to benefit general revenue, this government's great big black hole of waste and mismanagement.

After explicitly promising not to raise taxes, they brought in the HST, raising taxes on essentials such as heat, hydro and gasoline. Let's not forget their eco tax fiasco. They've done it before, and we believe, if given the chance, they'll have no hesitation to do it again.

I believe that if re-elected next October, the McGuinty Liberals would raise the HST somewhere between two and five percentage points. It would go from 13% to between 15% and 18%.

Like taxes, hydro bills are a huge issue across Ontario. Government members are no doubt hearing from their constituents, as we are, about the high and still rising cost of hydro. I'm hearing it from across my riding: from Centre Wellington to Erin, from Puslinch and Guelph/Eramosa township and Halton Hills. People are fed up, not only because their hydro rates are going through the roof, but because they feel that the government is indifferent to the problem. Not surprisingly, the budget didn't even mention this issue.

In November, I told this House about a constituent and mother who, unsolicited, wrote to me to say she would have to choose between paying her hydro bill and going to the grocery store. Her message reads as follows:

"I'm a single mother and work very hard for everything I bring to the table. I ask for no handouts and am proud that I can raise my son on my own. I do have a very tight budget, and having electric heat puts a real strain on my son and I, especially in the winter months.... Question: Do I keep my son's tummy full or do I keep him warm, you tell me because HST is going to affect my hydro bill big this year. I'm really concerned about how much I have to subtract from my grocery bill in order to keep the house warm and my son from getting sick.... I don't know where to turn but I'm sure hoping you can help."

My time is limited because I want to share my time with my colleague. I'll have more to say about this when I have a chance to speak to the budget bill.

Thank you very much for listening to me this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: In the few minutes that I have left, I want to add a couple of comments on this budget motion. I think it's very important—looking across the way at the Liberals who are occupied, I don't know, signing Christmas cards or reading newspapers. I want to talk to the people who are watching on television, to tell them something. No matter what anybody says to you, the HST is going to rise by 2%, minimum. That's the plan over there. This government has taken great pains to tell you that they're not going to touch your taxes, but that's not the truth. The truth is—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I withdraw the comment.

That is not accurate. The truth of the matter is that as time goes on, they will have to pay for what they're buying, the same as every one of us does. What we're looking at this year is approximately a \$17-billion deficit to add to what's already there, for a sum total of what Ontario owes approaching a quarter of a trillion dollars. None of us can even fathom what that means, what a stack of hundred- or thousand-dollar bills of that stature would look like. The fact of the matter is, you're paying for it, your kids are paying for it, and at those numbers, your grandkids are paying for it. That's what you can expect.

It has been said, but it needs to be said again: The Minister of Finance did not present a budget in this place last week; he presented a work of fiction. This is what he presented. If you hold it in your hand and look at it—and I'm not using a prop here; this is the budget—it's a book approximately the size of the Bible. It is their bible. It is their blueprint for the future. It is a blueprint for the tax increases that I've been talking about. If you fold it up, it looks a lot like a bottle of shampoo, doesn't it? It's about the same size. I like to call this the shampoo budget, because if you look at a bottle of shampoo, there is an instruction on it that says "lather, rinse, repeat," and that's an awful lot like "tax, spend, repeat." That is pre-

cisely what this government does, because it doesn't know how to do anything else.

1610

Let me talk for a minute about the basic difference in philosophy between how that party funds what it wants to do and how this party, after October 6, will fund what it wants to do. They like to portray us as neanderthals who don't want to take our social responsibility. They like to say that the deficits they've been ringing up to bring their vast social programs to you are about their responsibility and the fact that we would cut is about our lack of responsibility.

As a matter of fact, in the budget speech itself the finance minister spent quite a bit of time talking about what this party would cut. He enumerated for us: "If you cut 12,000 doctors, you can save \$3 billion; if you cut 37,000 nurses, you can save \$3 billion," and on and on. The fact of the matter is, nobody here has been talking about cuts. What we've been talking about is maintaining a great health care system and moving dollars to front-line health care and doing the same in education, while that party insists on saying that in order to do that, they have to run deficits.

What we believe in is what comes down to the basic difference in philosophies between liberalism and conservatism. The Liberals want to take money out of the economy from you by way of taxes—and like I said, not 13% HST; 15% HST—and they want to fund their programs, whereas we believe that you can take money and put it back into people's pockets through tax decreases, and contrary to what they want you to believe, that doesn't decrease what you have to spend. It increases it. Why does it increase it? Because if you have more money to spend, you spend that money. It goes into the economy. It creates economic activity. Economic activity transposes itself into jobs. Jobs are people, and people pay taxes, and when they pay taxes, you fund it. If you don't believe me, the much maligned Mike Harris, no matter whatever else you say he did, created one million net new private sector jobs in his time in office, and you people have created none.

You've created public sector jobs. That's what costs the money. That's why you're taxing people to death. That's why there's a deficit as big as all outdoors, and you sit there pompously and you support that. That's what people in Ontario now know, and that's what people in Ontario are going to vote against come October.

You may think that we're somewhat smug, that we think we know better because the polls favour our party. We don't pay any attention to the polls favouring our party. They'll go up and down a lot of times between now and October. But there's one piece of the polling that is absolutely consistent, no matter whether it's Nik Nanos doing the polling, Ipsos Reid doing the polling or COMPAS doing the polling, and it's on the question, "Do you feel that Ontario is in need of change?" No matter who does the polling, that number comes out at approximately 75%.

So get yourselves ready. It's not about what the polls say about parties right now; it's about the fact that Ontarians have finally gotten wise to you. They're wise enough to know that they're tapped out. They're wise enough to understand that provinces run like businesses, run like homes.

There's a pie. It's only so big. You can carve it up only so many ways. Most of us have no opportunity to create a second pie. We only get one, so we have to feed everybody with it. In your world, when you run out of pie, Dalton McGuinty and his finance minister can go out and bake another one, and if they run out of that, they can bake a third one. It doesn't work that way.

You've been hearing us talk about the fact that Dalton McGuinty sees Ontario's public as his own personal ATM, and that's because it's true. I, for one, am sick and tired of this back pocket with my wallet in it being the slot where he can put in his hand, grab it, and take what he needs from me. It's not a question of whether you're prepared to fund social programs or whether you're prepared to put more money into mental health. Anybody would applaud that. You would do it; we would do it. It's a question of how you control the efficiencies of it.

You also take great delight in talking about us. For the last four years, I've heard about how we're going to come in and we're going to cut \$3 billion out of health care. We have never, ever, ever said that we were going to cut \$3 billion out of health care. All we've ever said is that we would remove \$3 billion in health tax in an ancient platform. We are a great Progressive Conservative Party in waiting to form a great Progressive Conservative government that will not do anything to health care but improve it from the shambles that you people have made it. We believe in providing front-line services to Ontarians, the services that they have paid their hard-earned taxes to get. The same thing is true in education. That's what people expect. People don't expect to pay no taxes; we simply say that if we get enough people out there working, because everybody has a right to work in this province, there will be a pool of dollars that is sufficient to fund what Ontarians need, what Ontarians want and what Ontarians are prepared to pay for, and they won't have to feel that hand slipping into the back pocket to take care of them.

We believe, as the amendment to the budget motion has stated, that we cannot support a budget that will increase reckless spending and waste and will result in tax increases or new taxes to pay for it. That's what we've said in the amendment. That's the amendment we'll be voting for. I can promise you: Your budget, from our perspective, doesn't pass muster.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I've got to tell you, I'm a bit disappointed today, because the Conservatives and New Democrats have been together for quite some time attacking Liberals. We've been doing so well. Then the member, my good friend from Parry Sound-Muskoka, introduces an amendment, and it now focuses my atten-

tion and energy to attack what they brought forward, versus me attacking Liberals. Why would you do that? We had such a good thing going for such a long time, and then all of a sudden you just take me from there and you bring me here. Why would you do that? I'll be speaking in approximately eight or 10 minutes, and I'm going to have to spend 20 of my minutes attacking your former Premier, whom some of you served under and some of you—

Mr. Peter Shurman: Knock yourself out. Rosie, I'd love to listen to you speak.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And I used to love doing that—

Mr. Randy Hillier: Talk about Bob Rae while you're at it.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm going to give you that opportunity in your two-minute response.

I had 20 minutes to focus all of my good energy on the Liberals. You spoiled it. I wish you hadn't done that.

Stay tuned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions?

Mr. Pat Hoy: The last speaker didn't use his time to attack us. I believe what he says, that he is going to go after the official opposition, because he didn't use all his time there. He's saving up that energy for his next chance to speak.

As one of the very few farmers in this Legislature and one who is proud of that profession that I'm in, I want to spend a bit of time talking about the risk management plan, or what is commonly known in the farm community as RMP. We introduced the risk management plan four years ago for grains and oilseeds. It was a three-year pilot project designed, in the main, by the Grain Farmers of Ontario. They designed the program. We looked at it, put the financial aspects that would naturally have to be accountable and transparent to that plan, and initiated it some four years ago. Then we extended it for another year and have now made it permanent.

We are also looking at a self-directed risk management program for the edible horticultural sector, and we also want to help the cattle, hog, sheep and veal farmers of Ontario.

On both sides of the House, and particularly from the official opposition, they are trying to claim the credit for this plan when clearly it was the Ontario Liberal Party who brought it in four years ago in the first place.

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But the real thrust and cut to this is that the grain farmers of Ontario and the cattle and hog producers of Ontario have won the day with this plan. It's their plan. They brought it forward. They are the ones to be commended for having the thoughtfulness to design such a plan that provides for them. I just wish that the federal government would join with us in protecting our Ontario—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments and questions?

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to this amendment. I will start off by saying that when I was listening to that thoughtful discussion and debate by the member from Halton, all I heard on the other side—the members from Guelph, Northumberland and Chatham–Kent–Essex were laughing and chuckling. It continues to show their utter contempt and disregard for this House and for the people of Ontario. It is the utter contempt that they're showing for the people of Ontario with this budget.

Interjections.

Mr. Randy Hillier: We hear them heckling and cackling over there. They get so upset and so righteously indignant when people speak the truth on this side of the House. That's what we can say. There's one thing that is liberal about this government: The one thing that's liberal about this government is their blatant use of falsehoods in this House—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I ask the member to withdraw that.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'll withdraw that.

Maybe there's one more thing: their liberal use of breaking promises. That's another part of this Liberal government.

We have put forth an amendment on this budget: that we cannot support a budget that will increase reckless spending, and that's what this budget is all about. We are going to see, the people of Ontario are going to see, another rise in their HST. We'll see another rise of 2% to 5% with this Liberal government. We've seen them as they've doubled the debt of this province in seven years; they have doubled the debt. They've given nothing to the people of Ontario other than to saddle them with another debt burden. They're going to hit them with another tax, just like they did with the eco tax, just like they did with the HST—we're going to see a rise in that—and their smart meter tax machines. This is a reckless, out-of-control government, and the—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments or questions?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'd like to take this opportunity to speak about the budget that has been presented in this House.

I wanted to comment on the speech that was done by the member of the official opposition. The budget that is being presented has been very well received in my community of Ottawa–Vanier.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: The Ottawa Citizen.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Even the Ottawa Citizen has supported the budget. The budget had a discussion of about 48 hours, and that's it. Everybody found something that they liked in the budget, and they were very pleased.

But one question that my constituents are asking me—every time they meet with me, they say, “What is the plan of the provincial Conservative Party?” We've heard them talking about reducing the HST by two points, so that means \$6 billion. Then, they said that they are going to cut the health tax, which is another \$3 billion. So it's \$9 billion. What are they going to do?

They all remember 28 hospitals that were closed down. They almost closed my Montfort Hospital in my riding. It's a good thing that people got their money together, hired a good lawyer, Ron Caza, and went before the court, and then the appeal court. They won at both levels. So they cannot close my hospital in my riding anymore. But all the other hospitals are on the chopping block if this party is elected.

We have one of the best health care systems in Canada and in the world. I wanted to commend also the good work that is being done by health professionals in my riding: by the nurses, the doctors and everyone who works in my hospital.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Thornhill has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Shurman: On behalf of myself and the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, as well as Parry Sound–Muskoka, thank you very much for the comments to the members from Trinity–Spadina, Chatham–Kent–Essex, Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, and the Minister of Community and Social Services, who managed to promulgate that interesting rumour again that, somehow or other, we on the Progressive Conservative side have in mind to lower the HST by 2%. I've never heard that rumour, not even in my caucus room.

Here's what isn't a rumour: The Liberal Party, under the guise of this budget, suggests that there are no tax increases coming when we know that the HST is going up, so that you're going to pay a total of 15%.

Interjection: Shame on you.

Mr. Peter Shurman: And shame on you for not coming clean and saying so.

The Progressive Conservative Party is focused on making a difference and meeting the needs and the interests of Ontario taxpayers, and if you don't believe me, take a look at the budget discussion that has taken place and the budget discussion that will take place over the course of the next week or 10 days. Take a look at the fact that months ago, our leader, Tim Hudak, talked about doing a review of the ABCs, the agencies, boards and commissions of the province of Ontario, and there the Liberals have—I won't say “borrowed”—stolen a page out of our book, and in their case, they have to hire a high-paid consultant. Don Drummond, a well-known economist, is going to come in and study that very same thing for them. And you know what happened the last time that was done. What happened then is, the HST came along. So it's a very easy jump to realize that the Premier, who has run this government for the past eight years, who said “no new taxes” and brought in a health premium that has never gone for health, who brought in the HST when there was going to be no tax increase, will raise your HST by 2%.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The Tories have introduced an amendment, and I'm going to speak largely to that. I have to admit that their last point about the budget failing

to halt the doubling of Ontario's debt is a fact. It is absolutely true, and that's something that we need to deal with and deal with quickly. If interest rates increase as we are anticipating and as they seem to be going up, every accountant in the Liberal Party there would know that it's going to destroy us. And the reason why debts are at \$220 billion versus who knows what is because the interest rates have been low. Think of the debt and the deficit when those interest rates skyrocket, as they might. I hope they don't, but I think they're going to start increasing sometime soon, and if that happens, we are in trouble. In that respect, the Tories make a good point.

But where I begin to get riled and begin to activate that memory that from time to time is numbed by experience and that I wish would go away is when they just bring me back to the language that Mike Harris used in the 1995 election, and it brings me back to red tape reduction. Man, oh, man, did I have to hear Mike Harris repeat those words day in and day out for eight and a half years. I was so sick of red tape stuff that it was just clogging the mind, like it was wrapping itself around my head and just sapping the energy and couldn't make me breathe.

I said to myself, "How long does it take to get rid of all that red tape?" Man, oh, man, eight and a half long years of red tape being cut and cut. I said, "How many more years does the Conservative Party need to cut red tape, if eight and a half long years is not enough?" We're going to give the Tories yet another four or eight more years to keep on cutting red tape? Surely we ran out of scissors. Surely you would think the tape would have been cut many, many, many years ago.

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Mr. Jim Wilson: There were thousands of regulations—thousands.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And my good friend Jim from Simcoe–Grey says there are thousands and thousands and thousands of kilometres or miles of red tape to cut. You would think that with the majority government they had, with their scissors all ready to cut, they would have done an effective job of cutting those miles and miles of red tape. It seems clear to me that they haven't been able to do a good job of it and that they need to get the young ones who have been elected—young and old—in the Tory caucus to keep on helping, because the ones who were there are just tired. They need a new team to just keep on cutting. Man, oh, man, oh, man.

Then they talk about an end to corporate welfare schemes. Jesus, you would think that the Tories had done their dutiful work in that regard, because by the end of their eight and a half long years, they cumulatively cut \$13.4 billion of corporate giveaways—and income tax giveaways, to be fair. If that's not good enough, why don't you consider the \$6 billion the Liberals have cut and will cut in two more years, which cumulatively amounts to \$6 billion—which is what I wanted to talk to, but I'm dragged into talking about the past instead of the present.

I'm going to try to leave some time for the present, but in the past the Tories cut \$13.4 billion of corporate tax giveaways. Imagine what we could have done if we kept all that money as government revenue. Because, you see, I happen to believe, as a good socialist, that corporations have a duty to give back. Their duty is to give some of the money they take from the working men and women and give it back to them—give it back to them in the form of a good health care system, in the form of a good education system, in the form of a good long-term-care system that some of us are going to need in a little while. I don't know how many of you Tories are independently wealthy, but I'm not.

Based on the money that Mike Harris took away from me, on the basis that I won't have much of a pension, I am profoundly worried about the long-term-care system, about the home care system that existed in the past, that you left us with, and that exists in the present, that the Liberals are leaving us with.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I know, but you introduced an amendment that I have to speak to. Why would you do that?

Mr. Norm Miller: Why aren't you going after Sarah Thomson?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But I have to speak to your amendment.

Mr. Norm Miller: What about the Liberals?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm going to go after them, too, but I need to give my fair share to you as well.

Mr. Peter Shurman: That's history. Talk about now.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But the point, member from Thornhill, about history is that it could come back and repeat itself. That's what I'm afraid of.

So Mike Harris left with \$850,000 out of his vested pension, and he leaves the rest of us, particularly the new ones from 1995, with RRSPs that the government gives, to the tune of \$4,000 or \$5,000, for a good long eight or 10 years. Now we get what, \$10,000, \$11,000, \$12,000 for RRSPs? That's our pension. I don't know, but I know many Tories are not happy about that, that RRSP versus a pension that I believe would be fair to us.

Red tape: They didn't do it in eight and a half years. And in terms of ending corporate welfare, good God, they gave away \$13 billion. If we had held onto that money, we would not be talking about a deficit or a debt, because it would have been long paid, particularly the deficit, and the debt would have been reduced by significant levels. If only we had held onto that money.

I get worried, because in Mike Harris's world of dealing with his financial problems, he sells the 407 for \$1.2 billion or \$1.3 billion and gives it away as corporate welfare for 100 long years. We would have soon had that highway back in our hands had it been left under the old rules, but the Tories, under the corporate welfare scheme, gave it away for \$1.2 billion or \$1.3 billion for 100 long, painful years.

I think to myself, what did the Tories do by way of their legacy? Hmm. These are fiscally minded Conserv-

atives who know how to handle budgets, who know how to mind your pockets, who know how to treat you well because your money is a big concern to them. And in the end what do they leave us with? Cinco, cinque, cinq billion dollars' worth of deficit—this in a good economy. How do good fiscal Conservatives in eight and a half long economic good years leave a \$5-billion deficit even after selling the 407 for \$1.2 billion?

Then they talk about red tape and ending corporate welfare. Please. Why do you bring me back into that discussion? You could have had me as an ally today, attacking Liberals alone. Now I have to attack Tories and Liberals.

The Liberals say, "If we elect a Conservative government, they're going to cut health." What else? Help me.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Education.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Education. Anything else?

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Infrastructure.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Infrastructure. Anything else?

But that's enough. Presumably they're going to do that by—what again? Cutting taxes, correct?

Mr. Peter Shurman: No, we're going to cut your heart out.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My heart out? Member for Thornhill, be gentle: This heart is very sensitive.

Good Doctor, I hope they use you as a surgeon because I'm worried about it.

Mr. Mike Colle: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: That was a very offensive comment made in this House, and I think it should be withdrawn.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Don't you understand a joke when you hear one? Come on.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Lisa, not to worry; it's all okay. Lisa, we're good. Madam Speaker, we're good.

And so back to the Liberals. I often say, why wait for the Tories when the Liberals can do it for you now? Because the Liberals say, "Wisconsin: Look what happened. It's terrible, an assault on working men and women, and it's going to happen if you elect the Tories." And what do the Liberals do? In the same breath as they attack the Tories, they end the right to strike for the transit workers in Toronto.

But presumably that's okay because when Liberals do it, it's nice; they mean well. They're not brutal, really. And besides, they're only doing it because the city council asked them to, and Rob Ford asked them to. Again, as I say, when Liberals do it, it's benign. If Tories do it, it's malign. Wisconsin is only bad if Tories are there, but Wisconsin is not so bad if Liberals are there. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Minister of Citizenship, you know what I'm getting at, right?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: You're wrong.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: How could I be wrong when I'm stating something that I think is factual? And then—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: If I could proceed for a moment just to make another point which I think is very relevant.

You've got the Liberals saying how bad Tories are because of all the cuts they made and how bad their \$5-billion deficit was, even though you guys got rid of that deficit but now have \$20 billion, and they're slowly reducing it, and how bad those—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: They had no recession.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I beg your pardon?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: They had no recession.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No recession; they didn't have a recession.

By the way, you weren't here because you were a city councillor, but the hapless Bob Rae had a recession, but if you recall, your Premier, then MPP, used to make fun of Bob Rae for his spending problems. Now that you've had a recession, you say, "Oh, how hapless we are, because we had a recession." But poor Bob Rae didn't have one; he had a spending problem.

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Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: A small one.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, Madam. That recession was bigger than this one. It was—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd just ask the member to speak through the Chair.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I beg your pardon, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to look at you more often. You're so right. How could I have done that? You're so right. Thank you.

And so now you've got Liberals cutting corporate taxes to the tune of \$6 billion in two more years—six billion bucks. That's why I say, why wait for Tories when Liberals are doing it now? They are as fiscally conservative, with the exception of a few left-leaning Liberals who dare not speak out; with the exception of a few who privately say, "My God, why are we doing this?" but have no power—and I love that, by the way, Minister of Citizenship. I love that.

When I say these things, they say, "Oh, but you were in government with Bob Rae. What did you do?" as if to suggest there are so many strong ministers in that Liberal caucus that on a regular basis in their cabinet meetings are attacking the Premier for doing what he's doing. I dare say none of you say a word about your disagreement with the Premier.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: You don't know all of these people.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, yes, I do. While there may be some silent differences, and while some of you may state some of your differences politely, at the end of the day—through you, Speaker—it's the Premier who has le pouvoir, that one single man.

By the way, he's not the only guy who's got the power. It's the staff, and the staff have more power sometimes than the Premier does, because the Premier doesn't have all the time to deal with all the problems. Staff are incredibly powerful. I don't see them back there, although there are some nice people back there. I

just thought I would make a comment in that regard because it's so amusing when some ministers say, "But you were there in 1990," meaning I should take some responsibility for what we did. I want to say, "Power, whether they're Tories, New Democrats or Liberals, resides in the Premier's office and his staff." Billy, you know that. We all know it. That's just the funny thing. We all know it but we dare not say it publicly. It's just the way it is.

Okay, back to the point: Liberals are doing you guys a big favour. They're cutting back on corporate taxes because they, like you, believe—including my friend from Eglinton–Lawrence, because he said it in the program we had together—that if we don't do this, corporations are going to go away, which is what you guys say. That's the Liberal line. I hope I'm being fair. The Liberal line is, "If we don't cut the capital tax and the tax on assets"—which is just capital tax reduction—"these people are going to go away." Sorry, they are already going away.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But we can't compete with China, where they're still paying, what, a couple of cents a day.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Then let's give up.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, but you know what? You're right. Let's reduce our salaries, right? Let's make sure people are underpaid. Let's get down to the salaries of China. Is that what you would like?

Mr. Bruce Crozier: No.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, you wouldn't like that. Okay. But we need to compete with China, don't we? And how do we compete with China when their salaries are a couple of cents a day? Let's be fair: maybe a dollar or two a day.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Rosie, you tell us how.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Mon ami the accountant from—hold on, hold on.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Essex.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Essex, yes. There are probably a couple of names there, right? Essex. That's it—simple, yes.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I always want it to be accurate and fair.

We say that we would give corporations some money back, on the basis of whether or not they produce long-term jobs—not temporary, but permanent, long-term jobs. If they can show that they're creating long-term jobs, in my mind, those are the people I want to help. But if they're not creating any jobs—for which, by the way, to Liberals and Tories, there is no evidence that any of these giveaways create jobs—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Who's saying "aw"?

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Louie.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Louie from—Lou, where are you from?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Northumberland? Come on. You disagree, right?

Let's help those corporations that are creating long-term jobs rather than part-time, which is what we're witnessing. It's a phenomenon that started a long time ago and continues today. Half of our college staff are part-time—half of them; 20% to 30% of our university staff: part-time. Many people are working part-time. As a result, they're working two or three jobs to have one full-time job. Why are they working part-time? They can't get full-time jobs. Why do they get part-time? Because these people, organizations or entities, whoever they are, don't have the money to give them permanent positions, because when you have a permanent salary, you are not just getting a better salary, but you get benefits out of it, and those benefits are costly. If you don't have the money, you hire them on a part-time basis because you squeeze more blood out of them than you would a full-time person. That's what we would do in terms of how we would help the corporations.

But to give away \$6 billion when you've got a \$17-billion deficit? You want to attack the Tories? Please, Liberals, a \$17-billion deficit, a \$220-billion debt: We've got a serious problemo. Don't give money away that you don't have. Hold on to it so that you can have a better education system, a better health care system, a better system that helps our seniors and a better system that has home care, so we can protect those people when their needs manifest themselves in the way that they do.

I'm not happy with this amendment. I was quite happy to attack you guys for 20 minutes, but it was a pleasure to attack the both of you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mr. Mike Colle: I was going to say I come here not to attack Rosario, but to praise Rosario. I think—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: He has a lean and hungry look.

Mr. Mike Colle: Et tu, Brute.

I think the member from Trinity–Spadina has really outlined the parameters of the difficulties that all governments face and that our government has faced in terms of the reality that we've gone through an incredible transformation in our economy. We've had the historical meltdown out of New York. We've had the shrinking of economies all over the world. I don't have to talk to you about what's happening in—the Celtic Tiger is basically a pussycat now. We've got Spain with 25% unemployment. We've got New York state that just increased its taxes and laid off thousands of public workers. He mentioned Wisconsin. This is the reality of the world right now, so our government has to make some very challenging decisions.

You're never going to please the right wing or the left wing, and you try to do something that's reasonable. Part of the program that we had is to ensure that companies, basically, whether they're big corporations or small, stay in Ontario, because the bottom line for these companies or corporations is that they employ people. Whether we like it or not—whether it's General Motors whom we had

to bail out or whether it's RIM, they need the support of a government that's very cognizant of their reality. That's the reality we face in this budget.

At the same time, we did not lay off massive numbers of teachers, doctors or nurses. We didn't close hospitals. Our schools are still fully funded. Our municipalities: The uploading of all those taxes and services the Tories downloaded, that's still continuing to take the burden off municipalities. That's still in the budget—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments and questions?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure for me to respond to the member for Trinity–Spadina. After he has his 20 minutes, my cheeks hurt because I'm smiling so much.

I can remember that we talked about his participation in the Bob Rae government. He did the same thing when he was a minister that he did today. He comes forward and he grabs people, puts them in the palm of his hand. He's very theatrical. You should have been an actor, because you just do a wonderful job.

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Mr. Bas Balkissoon: He is.

Mr. Steve Clark: He is. Oh. See what they're saying about you? They're taking liberties with you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They pay better.

Mr. Steve Clark: The pay is better. There you go.

I appreciate the fact that you agree with us about the concern about the fact that this government is doubling the debt. However, I have to say that the member for Trinity–Spadina does have a bit of phobia regarding red tape and scissors. I think you need to have some therapy on that because you really had some issues. It brought you back and you talked all about 1995, and I think you really need to get some care on this. I really do, because I was worried about you partway through. You really have a thing with scissors and red tape.

I want to speak in favour, just in the short time, because on this side of the House we've certainly heard the concern of Ontarians: the things that weren't in the budget, the reason for this amendment. I really believe that people were looking for relief in the budget. They didn't find it, and I just think we have a missed opportunity if we don't pass this amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Pickering–Scarborough East.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes to respond to the 20 minutes from the member from Trinity–Spadina. Like the member from Leeds–Grenville, I very much enjoyed the 20 minutes, as I often do, but I also enjoy it because he's thoughtful. We may not always agree across the House on the positions being taken, but he puts forward a case and speaks to the matter at hand—the budget—and very serious concerns. I was particularly pleased that he took some time out of the 20 minutes to focus his attention on the official opposition and the Mike Harris years, and draw attention to the amendment that was put forward and look at it from the context of what I'll call a third party view, if I can do that.

There are a few in this House, as we reflect upon it, that we think of as deans of this place. I can't recall when the member from Trinity–Spadina first arrived. I know certainly it was 1990 or earlier. Whether it was prior to that, I'm not sure, but I know that it was at least at that point.

Interjection: Many years ago.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: A long time ago. But I would consider him now to be one of the deans of this place. We have a member on our side that we often speak of, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the member from St. Catharines. We often refer to him as one of the deans this place. Unfortunately, we're now one dean short, and that's the member from Mississippi Mills, the member Norm Sterling. It would be nice, during this budget debate, to have the other dean of this place on the opposite side, the same as the member from Trinity–Spadina, speak to this budget, speak from that context of history and experience and continue to offer that in this place, but he's going to be denied that opportunity on a go-forward basis. I'm saddened by the fact that we don't have that opportunity to hear from those with that incredible experience, the gift that comes with being a bit of an actor, that each of those brings to this place.

I'm looking forward to the—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: In the two minutes that I have, I'd like to speak about the speech we heard from Trinity–Spadina. As my honourable friend beside me here said, he should have been an actor. The NDP have many people like that. I remember Gilles Pouliot, who would probably beat you in acting, but I don't know where he has gone. Maybe he is acting now; I'm not sure.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: He's in Quebec.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: He may be in Quebec, yes. A lot of you over there never heard him, but he was quite a person too.

I want to talk about one of the things that the member from Trinity–Spadina said about industry leaving. I was here in 1990 to 1995 when the NDP were in government, and a lot of them did leave when your taxes were there. They went to Nova Scotia. They went to New Brunswick. They went out west. You've got to be careful—it's a fine line—and understand what some governments try to do to keep them here. But we did lose a lot back then also. It is tough dealing with China and places like that right now. That's what we have to do.

I would like to talk a bit about our amendment. I think that would be hopefully voted on by everyone here and approved. I can't see why they wouldn't approve it, and I'm sure our friends in the NDP would agree with us on that. We never really heard whether the member from Trinity–Spadina agreed with our amendment or not, but I'm sure he would if he has looked at it. When he has his two-minute wrap-up, maybe he can tell us whether he approves that or not, but I would think he would, because it's very straightforward.

There was no relief in this budget. It was a terrible budget, as we all know and as all the people across Ontario know. Fortunately, we probably won't have to go through any of those bad budgets in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Trinity–Spadina has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thanks to all the friends in the Legislature.

By the way, member for Leeds–Grenville, I just couldn't afford to be an actor. It just doesn't pay. These guys work for nothing. The good ones get paid well, but you've got to be really good and you've got to get a permanent job. I don't know how many of us would make it in the field. I couldn't afford it. This pays much better. There's no pension, but it pays better.

To my friend from Eglinton–Lawrence, I've got to tell you, nobody speaks about Ireland anymore. Jim Flaherty, the Minister of Finance, used to talk about Ireland all the time and would have the green tie. He hides it now. He don't ever talk about Ireland no more. You know why? They went bust. They had the lowest tax jurisdiction in the world, and they said it was a great tiger then. Nobody talks about Ireland no more. They had reduced taxes to the lowest, and people went, because they said, "Yes, this is a great place to go. Wild West—let's go get that money." As soon as it went bust, they all left. That's the problem about being the lowest tax jurisdiction in Canada and the US: You're not going to make it any better; you're going to make it worse.

You went and bailed out banks and the auto industry. Now banks are making more money than ever before, the auto industry is making more money than ever before, and workers are earning less than ever before.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The people who are there have got jobs. Yes, it's true.

By the way, red tape—how long does it take? Give me a timeline, because you guys talk about timelines. When does the red tape end? I need to know that before I can support that amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Guelph.

We're looking at what governments are spending money on, and we have to consider what the opposition's federal cousins—they believe in building jails.

I want to go through a few things that I think relate to what happens in our society and show what our government is doing to give our kids, our youth, a much better opportunity.

We can start with full-day kindergarten, which is going to take our young people and give them that big opportunity. We're now at 600 schools, and 35,000 children are getting full-day kindergarten. In 2011, it will be 200 more schools and 50,000 kids. In 2014, full implementation: 247,000 children in this province will be getting full-day kindergarten, giving them that chance that many of them wouldn't have had otherwise.

Support for children and youth with special needs: The government also spends over \$186 million annually to support children and youth with autism spectrum disorders. Since 2003-04, the government has more than quadrupled support for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders and their families, and that funding is increasing again this year.

In addition to full-day kindergarten and class sizes—class size is down to 20 per class for the first three years—we've put a lot of dollars into a very important part. The government is also providing support to struggling high school students so they can get back on track to graduate. We invested over \$300 million in 2009-10 to help students graduate and move on to college, university, apprenticeship or the workplace. In the 2010-11 school year, the government is providing over \$275 million for student support and for additional secondary school teaching.

1700

Every school board has a student success leader who works directly with the principals to facilitate implementation of the student success initiative, which focuses on improving graduation. Student success teams, which include the principal, student success teachers, guidance counsellors, special education teachers and other educators, provide extra attention and support in every high school to students who need it.

What that investment has done—and it's one of the things we're very proud of in this government. The graduation rate has gone from 68% in 2003-04 up to 81% in 2009-10. That means more than 72,000 additional students have graduated since 2003-04—72,000; that's almost a small city of kids who now have a chance. They have gone on further and they're going to be able to contribute to the economy much better with that high school degree. When they get through high school, there will be 60,000 new spaces created as part of this budget. This is so important. When you're looking at success for kids, successful youth, I think this is very important. Even the Ontario child benefit, which is \$1,100 per child, which has been fast-tracked to that level this year, is very important; giving our children a better chance.

The money that has been put in for mental health is something important to me because in 2003-04 we started talking about the great need—I have many people come into my riding office—for additional funds, additional services for mental health, the support that families need etc. It was an all-party committee that has come out with the recommendations. It is our government that has written the budget and provided funds for that, having a personal connection with the mental health issue and how difficult it is for youth and how important it is that the treatment, the assistance, is given early.

I know that. I have three nieces, Sharon, Nora and Katie, and a nephew, Jesse, who would have to be very interested that the government has finally taken that action to put additional funds into mental health. It's never enough, but it's extremely important. When you have the cousins of the opposition putting those dollars

into jails, then it's going to cost us money in Ontario. There have been figures like \$700,000 a year—just our cost for the new laws. We have to wonder where the priorities are.

I would also like to talk about infrastructure, because infrastructure is extremely important, and deal with infrastructure that's been covered in this budget for my own hometown, which will help the commute from Ottawa-Orléans to the jobs in Ottawa, Kanata and Nepean.

"The Ministry of Transportation"—this is from the budget, page 128—"is working with municipalities to mitigate the impact on local traffic" in Ottawa.

Future work in the corridor includes winding from Nicholas Street to Regional Road 174, which will provide additional capacity and also support Ottawa's transit plan.

This government has provided, through Infrastructure Ontario, \$300 million for the new light rail transit in Ottawa, and then they came back and put in another \$300 million. So there's \$600 million towards an approximately \$2-billion project in Ottawa. But this announcement which was in the budget adds another \$160 million for the widening of the Queensway, which is made necessary because when the light rail transit is being constructed, the existing right of way will be closed down for two or three years, and the widening of the Queensway is needed. So there are 160 million additional dollars for Ottawa in this budget. I thought it was important to let the councillors know that we are spending a lot of money in the Ottawa area.

There's \$1.1 billion over four years, beginning in 2007, for different community programs under the aging at home strategy. These are extremely important dollars. There have been 58% more clients receiving home care since 2003.

That's why, even in these rough times, you can look at what we've gone through since 2009 and say, "Okay, that's irrelevant," and that seems to be where the opposition comes from on this. But we've gone through the worst recession since the Great Depression and we lost a lot of jobs in that. Ontario, as a province, was the most susceptible to a loss of manufacturing jobs in all of Canada. But we have recovered 91% of those jobs, and that's extremely important.

In order to keep those jobs going, the stimulus funds were put out, and one of the things that's not acknowledged is that for every dollar the federal government—you see them taking credit for everything that's happening—puts into infrastructure in this period, Ontario put \$5 in.

This infrastructure investment continues. We're trying to recover from the 1990s, when very little investment was made in their infrastructure—and we know what happens with roads, sewers, water and hospitals. So for 2011-12, we're maintaining a high level: \$12 billion of investment in infrastructure. As we move along and as we come out of the recession, we're not just staying put; we're making big investments in research and develop-

ment, and the \$3.6 billion in 2009-10 is 50% more than was put into research investments in 2002-03.

I'm very supportive of this budget. It is the right direction to go. We're probably ahead of almost every other country in recovery. Ontario is the strongest province. We lead Canada with our wait times. In many ways, we're moving forward in the right direction and we're making those investments in our young people.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Guelph.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to join the debate on the budget motion this afternoon. I must say it's been a fascinating debate on whether we should increase taxes or cut taxes in a budget which in fact does neither; it maintains taxes at the level that they are currently at. In fact, it's quite a prudent, careful budget in that we are working to control spending and to get rid of the deficit at the same time that we're making a few new key strategic investments.

I must say, though, that I was offended by the remarks by the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, who is the member who has shown the ultimate contempt for the dean of his own caucus. He accused me of showing contempt because I was laughing during the remarks of the member from Wellington-Halton Hills, so I actually sent my staff out so I could explain why I was laughing.

The reason I was chuckling was because we had quite a passionate speech from the member about how reckless our spending was and how we needed to cut more spending out and get the deficit under control and what a reckless budget this was.

When the member spoke to the local media, he did in fact follow the party line. He started out by saying that he condemned the spending increases in the budget. But do you know what he said in the very next breath? He complained that we had failed to fund a new hospital project in Georgetown, a new hospital in Fergus and a great, big new highway bypass around Morriston at the south end of his riding. I do wish the members opposite could figure out what their story is. Are they going to cut or spend? I don't know. I can't figure it out.

1710

With respect to the amendment that has been put forward, it talks about not supporting a budget with reckless spending and waste, and I thought that I would like to talk about some of the presumed reckless spending which they cannot support.

I am a member of the rural caucus because so many of the agricultural stakeholders are based in Guelph: research based in Guelph, education based in Guelph. I was absolutely ecstatic to find that the risk management program was funded in this budget. I thought, rather than giving you my reaction, I would give you the reaction of Owen Roberts, who is a well-known agriculture columnist who writes in the Guelph Mercury but also writes in a number of other agricultural publications. I'm quoting Owen Roberts here:

"You might not consider the creation of an insurance program a historic day in your profession or trade.

"But consider the plight of an Ontario farmer.

"A single animal in western Canada gets tagged with having BSE, and the US border suddenly closes to beef exports. Including yours.

"Your harvests are plentiful, but when an agricultural trade war breaks out between two superpower exporting nations, prices tumble. Including yours.

"Mother Nature decides it's time for a late spring frost, or a summer deluge, or a harvest-time blizzard, and as a result crops fail. Including yours.

"You plead to governments for an insurance program. Ottawa comes up with one that doesn't work, so you and other farmers design one, and offer it up to the feds and the province. It hinges on contributions from both levels of government, as well as premiums from you"—the farmers. "Before long the province kicks in with a pilot program that runs quite well and becomes popular. But years go by (four years, in fact), and still there's no help from Ottawa.

"Then the federal government folds, for the fourth time in seven years.

"Who can do business in such an environment?"

"Farmers say not them. They've repeatedly said it's unreasonable to expect them to feed the nation without an equitable, predictable and bankable insurance program. Farming is a big user of credit; just imagine trying to get a loan for anything big without decent insurance, or based on income that depended on the entire Canadian livestock sector staying healthy.

"Scant hours before last Tuesday's provincial budget, Ontario farm groups were issuing news releases clearly stating they had one priority, and one only—that is, for a permanent, provincially supported risk management program.

"They didn't ask for anything else. They just wanted an insurance program that they could take to the bank.

"And, it turns out, on what's being called a 'historic day' by a farmers' coalition known as Ontario Grains and Oilseeds, that's what they got.

"On budget day, they received from the provincial government a \$150-million permanent risk management program, an insurance plan they describe as a 'self-directed, cost-shared farmer-designed program that will help them through the market's ups and downs.'

"There's still no federal help, given that there's no federal government. But the pressure was on the province to come through, with spring planting around the corner and farmers feeling they'd waited long enough. The timing for this program was excellent, and the thanks from farmers [have] been profuse.

"'Ontario grain farmers should celebrate (this) news,' said Don Kenny, chair of the Guelph-based Grain Farmers of Ontario, adding that the McGuinty government's leadership 'sets a new standard in the province and ensures the stability of our family farms.' Bette Jean Crews, chair of the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition, said establishing the program

'was the single most important action the provincial government could have taken in the budget.'

"Curtis Royal, president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, called the announcement great news for Ontario farmers, rural communities and everyone involved in agriculture and agri-food. 'It will give our farmers the tools they need to sustain their operations so they can continue to provide high-quality, locally grown food to Ontario consumers,' he said.

"And Wilma Jeffray, chair of Ontario Pork"—also based in Guelph—"said the fact that the province took action during tough fiscal times and without the participation of the federal government 'makes this announcement that much more significant to Ontario farmers.'

"The only people who won't be celebrating this plan are federal Conservatives campaigning in rural Ontario. Why didn't Ottawa get behind a program that was so needed and desired by farmers in the province? Good question."

I've just got a few minutes left, and I'd like to briefly mention something else which is very close to my heart, which is the work that the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions did and that all three parties supported. I'm absolutely thrilled to see that in this year's budget we have a commitment to a 10-year mental health and addictions strategy, but also the beginning of that strategy with money attached, rising over the course of three years to \$93 million a year, with the initial focus of the strategy being on child and youth mental health.

I have to tell you that wherever the select committee went around this province, people told us that while there are a lot of cracks in a lot of parts of the mental health and addictions system, the consent was unanimous and the advice was unanimous: You need to start first with children's mental health and addictions. Again, I think this motion, which labels this as reckless spending and waste, is totally uncalled for.

In Guelph, given that we have both a university and a community college, I'm also very pleased that we are continuing to invest in additional spaces for post-secondary education. We know that we're coming into an age when 70% of new jobs will require post-secondary education. Our target is a 70% participation rate, and these 60,000 additional students will help to get it there.

I will not be voting for an amendment that says this is reckless spending. I will be voting for this budget, an excellent one.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a couple of comments to the member for Guelph and the member for Ottawa-Orléans.

I guess, as part of my questions and comments, I would like them to address a question. The member for Guelph talked about the business risk management program. I have to tell you, I was extremely proud when the PC leader, Tim Hudak, at the International Plowing Match in St. Thomas, mentioned his commitment for the

business risk management program. I know many members on this side of the House have spoken in favour of that. I guess I'm surprised, when I read the budget bill and look at all the sections that were amended, that I don't see any legislative detail in the budget bill regarding the business risk management program. The legislative session is winding down, so I hope that the member will let us know the timeline on the legislation that they're going to be bringing forward after this.

As well, the member for Ottawa–Orléans and the member for Guelph talked about mental health. Again, the budget bill contains no legislative changes regarding mental health. I was a little surprised, because I know that the select committee for mental health talked about some pretty radical changes in the way that it's being delivered. Again, I'd love to hear an answer from the members opposite on whether they're bringing in a new bill, and the legislative timeline for that. I hope that they'll include that as well.

Recently in my riding, I just want to put on the record, there have been a lot of issues. I know that the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington and I share a health unit. There have been issues that have been released, both in the Ottawa Citizen over the weekend and in the Brockville Recorder and Times today, about the stress levels and the high rate of suicide in our ridings. I know that some recent surveys by the Child and Youth Health Network of Eastern Ontario have indicated that this is a big issue in my riding. So I hope that the two will address it in their questions and—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Trinity–Spadina.

1720

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Two minutes to the members from Guelph and Ottawa–Orléans.

We've got a big problem on our hands: a \$220-billion debt. And we've got a \$17-billion deficit: *my grande*. And it's a problem.

How are we dealing with that? How do Liberals deal with that? Let me just see. We're going to give away \$6 billion in corporate tax giveaways because we gotta. Somebody made them do it; \$6 billion in two more years. Someone made you do it. The other is a \$1.3-billion tax in income tax so as to benefit those of us who earn over 100,000 bucks—gone, permanently gone.

You understand what I'm saying? A \$220-billion debt, a \$17-billion deficit, and you guys are just giving money away. We're helping people because they need it; right?

Hon. John Milloy: Your leader stands every day and says we need help for ordinary citizens.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes, so let's give our revenue away. Take it away from those of us who could afford to give it a little more and just give it back to them because we only have a \$17-billion deficit. CEO salaries, that's okay, they work hard. Some of these CEOs make three times more than Dalton McGuinty, the Premier. I don't understand it. Let's cap those salaries. Let's bring back those corporate tax giveaways. Let's bring some of that income tax back because that's a progressive way to

go, and let's go after those of us who earn over \$100,000 and put a little back into the system so we have better health care, a better educational system, a better home care system. Instead, we have none of it. We're just giving money away. God bless you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I'm pleased to join in the debate and comment on the words from the member from Ottawa–Orléans and the member from Guelph. I thank them for their comments on this government's commitment to the people of Ontario.

Specifically, they talked about the economy and jobs, helping our farmers and the risk management program, which, for the farmers in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, is a huge commitment and they are very happy with this government's commitment to that.

They mentioned education and more than 60,000 post-secondary spaces and, of course, thanks to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, John Milloy, for that commitment from this government.

Also, the member from Guelph talked about education and full-day kindergarten. I wanted to take this opportunity to acknowledge the member from Guelph, Liz Sandals, who was parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education at the time that full-day kindergarten was being designed, constructed and implemented, for her work at the Ministry of Education on behalf of the children of Ontario. There are approximately 800 schools that will have full-day learning by September 2011. That's about 50,000 students. In the end, by 2014, 250,000 students in the province of Ontario will benefit from the work of the member from Guelph, who was PA to the Minister of Education. So congratulations to her for all of her hard work in that area.

In the area of health care, which the members talked about, more than 90,000 breast cancer screenings will now be available to women in Ontario. We sat here today in this debate and we heard the Tories call this budget a fantasy. One out of nine women in Canada will face breast cancer in their lifetime and this budget will help them, will be preventive and will make a difference in their lives, and that's real.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I listened with interest and I jotted a couple of notes from the speech by the member for Guelph. She said that the budget was a tempered document with no tax hikes and no tax reductions. On the face of it, that would be true. But if you take a look at that document for what it is, I would say to the member from Guelph that it sets the stage, and what I truly believe is, it sets the stage for a 2% hike in HST, at an absolute minimum.

There's one thing that we know about Liberals, and eight years of history proves it: They are wired to tax and spend.

You can't honestly tell this Legislature and, through this Legislature, the people of Ontario that with a \$17-

billion deficit, you are prudently working your way towards a balanced budget. If that's prudent, then we won't see a balanced budget in our lifetimes. It's not even remotely there.

You also can't single out individual positives. Goodness knows, screening for breast cancer is an individual positive and increasing money for mental health is an individual positive, but we're looking at an overall document that charts the course for an entire province.

What it does is it puts people at a disadvantage. People sit around the kitchen table, they talk as a family about their problems and they look at what they might be able to do about them. One of the things that they have to confront is a tax bill. Another thing they have to confront is being able to divide the money that's coming in as an overall household income and make ends meet. They're not making ends meet. They're looking at electricity bills that are sending them into the street—literally, not figuratively.

This budget is not a good budget. This budget is a very negative budget going forward in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 58(d), there having been eight hours of debate, I am now required to put the question.

On March 29, 2011, Mr. Duncan moved, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

On April 5, 2011, Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka, moved that the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on March 29, 2011, “that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government,” be amended by deleting the words following “that this House” and adding thereto the following: “cannot support a budget that will increase reckless spending and waste and will result in tax increases or new taxes to pay for it.

“Further, the budget fails:

“—to provide relief for Ontario families; and

“—to give small businesses a break by appointing a member of cabinet responsible for meeting measurable, hard targets on red tape reductions; and

“—to end corporate welfare schemes that pick winners and losers in the marketplace; and

“—to fix the broken arbitration system that ensures that public sector agreements reflect the ability of families to pay the bills; and

“—to scrap the wasteful LHIN bureaucracy and the bloated Ontario Power Authority and invest those tax dollars into front-line services; and

“—to halt the doubling of Ontario's debt.”

The first question to be decided is the amendment to the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that Mr. Miller's amendment to the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I have received a deferral slip: “Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government motion 51 be deferred.”

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Smith has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow. I would just remind members that today's late shows are rescheduled for tomorrow at 6.

The House adjourned at 1729.

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Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
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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, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
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Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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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) Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Oakville Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldeep (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	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)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	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)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	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)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	

**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
Clerks / Greffiers: Valerie Quioc Lim, 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
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: Katch Koch

**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
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 / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on the proposed transaction of the TMX
Group and the London Stock Exchange Group / Comité
spécial sur la transaction proposée entre le Groupe TMX et le
London Stock Exchange Group**

Chair / Président: Gerry Phillips
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Frank Klees
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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