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**Wednesday 6 April 2011**

**Mercredi 6 avril 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 6 April 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 6 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 Islamic 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

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 5, 2011, on the motion for third reading of 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):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was just yesterday morning when I was in full flight and I was interrupted by the clock, so I will try to rebuild the momentum that was going on at the time.

I would like to start by acknowledging what a pleasure it is to see Dr. King, our chief medical officer of health, in the assembly this morning to take in the proceedings. It is truly appreciated, and certainly shows your commitment to the improvement of public health throughout Ontario. I thank you for being here.

Yesterday, I had started to talk about some of the concerns I have with the bill. Bill 141, the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act, is focused on one initiative: It is focused on bringing central control of public health units. As I said, I can see why, in certain very narrow circumstances, this extra power of the chief medical officer of health could be needed. I have full confidence in Dr. King, in her judgment to use those new powers wisely. The issue is that this bill will be there way past when I won't be here anymore, and way past when any of us won't be here anymore, and only the words will remain—the words on a piece of paper that describe the bill. This is where the worries start.

The worries start because some of the words that we have used in this bill have not been defined, and some of them could be defined in broad terms. That brings me

worries because we have, right now in Ontario, a system of 36 public health units. Each of them serves a geographical area, and the entire province is covered. No matter where you live in Ontario, you're always within the district of one of the 36 health units. This being said, those health units have been there for a long time and have worked with their communities for a long time. They know them inside and out. Because of the work they have to do with the environment, they know all of the health care providers. They know each and every one that has a fridge and keeps vaccines. They know where they are. They know the ones that work well and the ones that have broken-down fridges. They know where all of the restaurants are, the ones that, here again, keep the food. They know their districts. They are there in their communities, day in and day out. They have a relationship with the people in their community, and this is part of their strength: their knowledge, their linkages to the community, because Ontario is very vast. Ontario is a land of opportunity and Ontario has a beautiful diversity.

If you look at the little communities that make up Nickel Belt and you compare this to where I work in Toronto, it's like we're on two different planets, but yet we are all Ontarians and we all belong. The strategies that my health unit has put forward to make sure that they stay in contact with the people in Nickel Belt are very different from the strategies that the Toronto health unit puts forward to make sure that they reach out to their diverse population. So I continue to have some worries about this.

What I had started doing yesterday is, I had started to quote from some of the deputants who had come in front of the committee and shared some of those worries. Yesterday, I had quoted from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, and their quote was pretty clear. This bill had come without any consultation with them, and they thought that if we all put our heads together, all the resources in 36 health units and the office of our chief medical officer of health, we may come up with something better. But they never had an opportunity to put their heads together, because they were presented with a fait accompli. They were presented with a bill where the decision had already been made that the chief medical officer of health would be given those extra powers, and all that we asked their input on was on wordsmithing: Would they like to see changes after the fact?

This is not the way we traditionally work in the public health units. In the public health units, work is usually done from the ground up. That is, everybody is involved, whether the medical officers of health of the 36 health

units or their boards of health; they all put their shoulder to the wheels. They move things forward together, making sure that the diversity of all of the health units is taken into account.

But this was not done by this minister. This minister brought forward a bill that she said is based on the recommendations of what we've learned from H1N1. Unfortunately, she brought the bill forward before the report was released, and when the report was finally released we looked at all 60 pages of it and nowhere in the report did we see that, had we had central control by the chief medical officer of health, better public health outcomes would have come out of this. We don't see this at all.

I also quoted yesterday, before my time was up, the Toronto Public Health unit. The Toronto Public Health unit is huge. It covers a very dense urban area of our province, and they are in charge of public health for many, many Ontarians. And there again, they have shown in what they've presented that—and I will quote again: “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 ... in the response, or alleviated the need for local modification to address specific community needs.” So, had we had this new bill, had Bill 141 been there before H1N1 hit the province of Ontario, it wouldn't have changed the outcome.

I would like now to quote from another agency, and this is the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. It goes as follows: “We also do not see the relationship between the proposed HPPA amendments of section 69 respecting the appointments of acting medical officers of health and the pandemic response. It was not an issue referenced in Dr. King's H1N1 pandemic report. The proposed amendment is again an example of the increasing provincial involvement in local board of health governance and administrative responsibilities.”

If you look at this from the association of municipalities, you have to understand that every health unit has members of their local municipality appointed to it, and their municipality has to foot some of the bill. They share in the expense of the health unit.

#### 0910

I would ask a page for a glass of water, if any of them is not too busy.

The municipality has an interest in what goes on in the public health unit. Not only do they have a pecuniary interest, as in, they pay a part of what goes on, but they also have an influence. Because here again, the municipality works at the local level to try to improve public health. They are also closely connected to the people. In the brief that they presented, they really show that if the power now is not even going to be with the local health unit, where they share a geographical area, they share constituents because of where they live—now it's going to be the chief medical officer of health who directs what goes on. They look at this as, “Why are we there? If we're not going to have a say in it but we're still going to have to pay, how is this going to be beneficial to our municipality?” They have some issues with that.

The member from Whitby–Oshawa did make reference yesterday to a couple of changes that were made to Bill 141, but some of them remain. One of the big ones is the term “public health event.” It is a term that is used in Bill 141 but is not defined anywhere. A public health event would be something that would trigger and justify the chief medical officer of health exerting her power over health units and more or less issuing directives that tell the health units, “It doesn't matter how you want to do things; you're going to do things the way I tell you to,” which is what a directive is all about. Not only can she issue directives to the medical officer of health, but to the board of health and to one or many or all of the health units. This extra power is triggered by a public health event, but we have a bill that doesn't describe what a public health event is. This is worrisome to me, because a reasonable person could see a public health event in many different ways.

My health unit is organizing a smoking cessation seminar. To me, this is a public health event. It's an event of the health unit. They're also organizing all sorts of training for new moms and expectant pregnant women. This is also a public health event, but that certainly would not form the basis of triggering the chief medical officer of health to take over, to issue directives to my local health unit. So I would have liked this term to be described, and to be described in really, really narrow terms. Because when the good Dr. King is not there anymore and when all of us are not here anymore, those words in that bill will continue to be there, and we don't know how they're going to be used. Way back when they drafted the bill—the name escapes me right now—nobody thought that it would be used during the G20 to justify a perimeter while the world leaders were having their little chat here in Toronto. So we have to think in those terms. We have to think that those words are going to stay way, way longer than we will.

Stakeholders were very concerned with the generality of this term, and nothing was done to define it or to constrain when the chief medical officer of health has power to act in the event of a public health event. I don't know why we refuse to make the bill clearer. Why do we refuse to define a term that hasn't been defined and that can be interpreted in such broad terms by reasonable people?

The bill could have a significant impact, including a significant financial impact, on public health in municipalities. But here again, there is nothing in Bill 141 that acknowledges this or provides support for public health or municipalities. What that means is that the chief medical officer of health can issue a directive. That means that local public health units have to carry out whatever the chief medical officer of health decides is in the best interests of the public health of Ontarians. But in the action of carrying this out, they may incur significant costs. Those significant costs will be borne by the local health unit and by the municipality, which has to chip in their share, but they have no control over what they do.

What if it makes sense to do this in some health units, but in your health unit you look at your resources and

say, “Frankly, I would have done things differently”? But you don’t have an opportunity to do things differently, because a directive was issued by the chief medical officer of health, so you have no choice but to spend all that money with no guarantees that somebody will help you pay the bill. You’re on the hook to spend a whole bunch of money whether you agree with spending that money or not and, frankly, with whether or not it’s the best strategy to achieve quality public health in your geographical area. You’re on the hook for the money, and there’s nothing in the bill that will guarantee that you will ever recoup part or all of those expenditures.

This is worrisome to health units, but it is especially worrisome to municipalities. Municipalities are partners once removed, yet they are on the hook for the payment. It doesn’t make for a very good relationship. A more trusting relationship would be to have the municipalities at the table and make sure they have a say as to how we will respond to this public health emergency or pandemic or whatever else is going on. But this is not it. The directive could be issued and the municipality would have to pay their fair share, and there’s nothing in the bill that addresses this. It’s always worrisome.

From the start we know there are people who have everything to lose and nothing to gain. This win-lose situation is never the right one. The win-win situation is what we should be aiming for, and the win-win situation is to make sure we get all the partners in public health at the local level to have a say.

Toronto Public Health talked about issues with the protection of personal liability for boards of health and medical officers of health who are following a directive from the chief medical officer of health. Local authority may have to act on a chief medical officer of health directive, but they have no protection for their action. You have to understand that not everyone who works in public at the local level health is an employee of public health. In the example of Toronto Public Health, some of their employees who do the work of public health, and who would be directed by a directive from the chief medical officer of health, are actually employees of the city of Toronto.

So, while the chief medical officer of health, through a directive, will direct public health workers to do certain things, we haven’t really settled the issue of protection and personal liability. You are no longer doing what your employer has asked you to do; you’re now answering to what a third person once removed has directed you to do, and nobody has figured out what would happen to the personal liability of those workers who, in all truthfulness, are not following the directive of their employer anymore. This is something that needs to be looked into. This is something that needs to be addressed and needs to be settled.

#### 0920

It is there in the bill that we can issue directives, but we leave this loose end out there. Thousands of workers who do public health work will now find themselves in this weird situation where they won’t be answering to

their employer anymore—they will be answering to the chief medical officer of health—and we have no idea if their personal liability would cover them if, God forbid, something happens. And we all know that something will happen, because something always happens. Life is like this. Life goes on. Life happens.

It makes me uncomfortable to put forward pieces of legislation where we have loose ends like this and the minister won’t even acknowledge, “We will deal with this,” even were to say, “We will address this in regulation. We will make sure we consult. We have a task force in place that is looking into this.” But to simply leave it out there with no follow-up—it’s just something we have uncovered, and we won’t do anything until a worker gets in trouble. That would be a little bit too late for me.

I would like this bill to be tighter, to have fewer loose ends and have fewer words that have not been defined and could be interpreted in different ways. The government did nothing to address this problem.

The problem is that this bill is moving on an issue—that is, the issue of centralized control—which, now that we have both the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s and Dr. King’s reports on H1N1, was certainly not a priority for either one of those reports. There are pressing issues. There are best practices that we have gotten from those reports. H1N1 was a big, big practice for public health units. I’m really proud to say that our public health units rose to the challenge and did a fantastic job. But they were also lucky that although the virus seemed to spread really easily, it was not as, I’d call it, virulent. It did not make people as sick as other viruses could.

So in a sense, we had a good opportunity to put our health units to the test at the max in a real-life situation, with a collective agreement that needed to be negotiated in Sudbury while all of this was going on. This was a real-life event, and we’ve learned an awful lot from it, for the good of everybody in Ontario. But nowhere in this learning does it say that having centralized power for the chief medical officer of health would have saved the day, would have made the long lineup go away, would have made the jumping of the queues better, would have made the private school that went ahead of everybody else better. None of this would have been changed by Bill 141.

The pressing issues were things like a lack of coordination between the local health integration networks, public health and primary care. That was a real issue. Who was responsible for what? Who was to do what, and when? The local health integration networks had not been there for that long. Their role in that particular instance was, let’s just say, not defined. Nobody knew exactly, and different local health integration networks responded in very different ways.

The same thing with primary care: Primary care had been the main delivery system for all the flu vaccines in the past. They were the one. Health units hold their clinics and everything, but the primary care sector had certainly played a huge role in delivering flu vaccine in the past, and for long periods of time during H1N1 they were held at bay. That was a pressing issue that needs to be

looked at and needs to be defined, so that we can move forward with best practices.

There are no easy answers when it comes to issues of local control versus provincial coordination. If it was clear-cut for everybody that, “Had we had provincial coordination of power, things would have been way better; here’s how it would have changed everything; here’s how everybody in Ontario would have been happy with the H1N1 rollout,” then I would be the first one to say, “Please, let’s go ahead and move.” But nobody is saying this. We are saying that the balance between local control and provincial coordination is something that needs to be thought through carefully. It’s something that needs to be defined carefully. It’s something that will forever change the way public health units work in Ontario.

I would say that Ontario is really privileged to have developed, over the years, a system of health units that have worked together, that have coordinated their efforts and that have always worked in this way that everybody had a say, everybody came to some kind of agreement and then rolled them out in the way that made the most sense in the geographical area that they serve. We’re changing this. The page is turned; we are changing this forever. But I’m not ready to say that we are changing this for the better. There could be areas where it would be for the better, but they’re not defined in the bill. So it’s worrisome.

In 2003, when Ontario was battling SARS and the SARS pandemic shook the confidence that Ontario had in its health care system—we learned from SARS. Things were supposed to change. Dozens of recommendations were issued to make things better. Yet seven years later—almost eight, actually—we are left asking many of the same questions: How could there have been such poor coordination? How come our health units fell short in some areas? And why was the communication plan such a disaster? Those are all questions that are valid. Those are all practices that we can improve on and that I know we will improve on; we have learned. The willingness to change is there. But out of all of this that happened during H1N1, the minister comes out with Bill 141, focused on one thing: taking away local control in favour of central coordination. This falls way short of my expectation and this falls way short of what we could do to improve our health units.

I must say that following H1N1, Ontarians’ confidence in their public health system was shaken yet again. I will always remember the first weekend that the vaccine was available. The vaccination point was at the new Sudbury shopping mall. It was a horrifyingly bad-weather day in Sudbury. We had sleet and wind and snow and it was just awful out there. The roads were awful to get to the mall, and there was this long, long lineup outside the mall of pregnant women and families pushing strollers, waiting to get in to get their H1N1. I remember looking at this—it is tattooed in my brain—and thinking, “We are failing those people. Those pregnant women and those young families with strollers should not be out in that sleet and wind and snow,” that we had that Saturday morning at

the new Sudbury shopping mall, yet they were. We failed them. We have to do better; everybody agrees. We did improve, and we will continue to improve. But all of those issues that we’ve learned—none of them are addressed in Bill 141. Bill 141 has one narrow mandate: Take away public accountability, public control, in favour of centralization. I think I have made my point.

#### 0930

I come from northeastern Ontario. I spent 25 years of my life in health care in northeastern Ontario, and I have seen the results of decisions that are made in Toronto, that are Torontocentric and that do not respect the reality of what it is to deliver health care and to deliver public health in northeastern Ontario, where the distances are different, where the temperature is different and where the diversity is different. We’ve had many a good laugh at provincial initiatives that would come to Nickel Belt. We would look at this and say, “My God, those people must be on Mars. This has nothing to do with good-quality care,” and we would all laugh.

We are setting up a system against the proven good-quality public health that we have, where we have this decentralized system in public health. We’ve had local controls for many, many years. We are now putting forward a bill that takes this away and that focuses on central control, and it is worrisome to me. It is not defined well enough in the bill and it leads to many loose ends.

Ça me fait plaisir de vous parler du projet de loi 141. Le projet de loi 141 est un projet de loi à portée assez limitée. Le projet de loi, en lui-même, sert à donner des pouvoirs supplémentaires à notre médecin hygiéniste pour pouvoir donner des directives à tous les services de santé publique de la province.

En Ontario, nous avons 36 services de santé publique qui couvrent toute la province. Peu importe où vous vous trouvez en Ontario, vous êtes toujours dans une des 36 régions géographiques des 36 services de santé publique. Les médecins hygiénistes qui sont en charge des services de santé publique sont là et ont une bonne relation avec la région géographique qu’ils desservent. Ils connaissent tous ceux qui offrent des services de soins primaires.

Si vous avez un frigidaire pour conserver des vaccins, vous pouvez être sûr que le service de santé publique vient vous visiter pour vérifier que votre frigidaire est en bon état et pour vérifier que vous conservez les vaccins. Ils ont une relation avec tous ceux qui offrent des soins primaires. Ils ont une relation avec pas mal tous ceux qui servent de la nourriture également, parce qu’ils vont vérifier que la nourriture est gardée dans les frigidaires à la bonne température, etc. Du côté de l’environnement, c’est la même chose.

Donc, on a cette richesse dans 36 services de santé publique en Ontario qui ont une relation directe et qui connaissent leur région en profondeur. Ils connaissent la diversité des régions qu’ils desservent. Ils connaissent la diversité des personnes qu’ils desservent. Ils connaissent leurs habitudes, ce qui fonctionne bien et ce qui ne fonctionne pas, et c’est une richesse qui a bien servi la province de l’Ontario pendant des années de temps.

Maintenant, on se base sur ce qui est arrivé avec la grippe H1N1 pour motiver des changements. Après la pandémie de H1N1, on a eu plusieurs rapports, des rapports qui nous ont démontré où on aurait pu mieux faire certaines choses. Aucun de ces rapports-là nous dit que les choses auraient été mieux ou qu'on aurait eu une meilleure qualité de soins si on avait eu la centralisation des pouvoirs par le médecin hygiéniste en chef. Il n'y a aucun rapport qui nous dit ça.

Par contre, on a un projet de loi qui, je dois dire, est sorti avant même que les rapports nous soient disponibles et qui nous dit que tout ce qu'on a appris de la pandémie de H1N1, c'est qu'on aurait besoin de concentrer les pouvoirs de notre médecin hygiéniste en chef pour qu'elle puisse donner des directives.

Maintenant, je dois dire que j'ai plein de confiance en la D<sup>re</sup> King. C'est une femme de confiance qui a beaucoup d'expérience, qui s'y connaît en santé publique et qui veut améliorer la qualité des soins en santé publique. Je fais confiance à son jugement, et dans le court terme, je n'ai aucun doute que les choses vont bien aller.

Le problème, c'est qu'un projet de loi va être là beaucoup plus longtemps que moi et vous, monsieur le Président. Le projet de loi va être là quand chacun de nous ne sera plus là; quand la D<sup>re</sup> King aura été remplacée par quelqu'un d'autre, le projet de loi va être encore là. Et là, tout ce que tu as, c'est des mots en noir sur blanc pour te dire quoi faire. Dans les mots en noir sur blanc, il y en a qui n'ont pas été définis; on les a laissés très larges.

« Un événement de santé publique » peut être n'importe quoi. Ça peut être mon service de santé publique qui nous offre une session sur comment arrêter de fumer. Ça, c'est un événement de santé publique; c'est un événement. Le service de santé publique nous invite—il invite les fumeurs, en tout cas—au service de santé publique. Ça, c'est un événement, mais pour moi, pourquoi est-ce qu'on ne prend pas le temps de définir dans notre projet de loi ce qui sera considéré un événement?

Même chose : il y a des travailleurs qui offrent des services de santé publique, mais qui ne travaillent pas pour le service de santé publique. Toronto est un exemple où il y a plusieurs travailleurs qui offrent des services de santé publique, mais qui travaillent pour la ville de Toronto. Ces travailleurs-là, qu'est-ce qui va arriver à leur assurance lorsqu'ils ne font plus le travail de leur employeur, mais commencent à faire du travail de notre médecin hygiéniste en chef? C'est dans la loi; c'est dans le projet de loi qu'ils devront faire ça, mais on ne définit pas comment on va s'assurer que ces travailleurs-là sont toujours couverts par leur police d'assurance.

Je vois que je n'ai plus grand temps.

Bill 141: In the short term, there's no danger to it. I have full confidence in the judgment of Dr. King and I know that she will listen to the public health units and do, in the long run, what is best for the people of Ontario. But I am worried when a bill goes out with terms that are not defined and with loose ends that have not been tied.

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

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** It's a pleasure for me to speak to Bill 141 this morning. I just recall back to when the H1N1 epidemic was on; what I remember most was the inability to get the vaccine. The second thing was the long lineups of parents with their kids outside of a public building in the cold. So this is very pertinent to that.

I'd like to say that I read parts of the report of the Ontario chief medical officer of health. Dr. Arlene King is here today. Really, what we're doing is much in line with what came out of that report. I'm sure that there was a lot of study of the epidemic here and in other jurisdictions. What came out of it was that basically, the chief medical officer of health must have the authority to direct public health units in real time. I think that, without doubt, is extremely important.

We have an opportunity now to use the lessons we have just learned to build on the spirit of collaboration that currently exists; to make changes that are necessary so that we will continue to be ready, no matter how grave the threat. To think that the member who has just spoken sees 36 separate public health units as the way to go on something so serious, where best practices have to be looked at, have to be adopted, and the plans have to be integrated and have to be right.

When we give that authority to the chief medical officer of health, that is the right thing to do. Those plans that will no doubt be made, or are made now, based on our last experience, that the medical chief medical officer of health has the authority to look at those public buildings—it would have been nice to have that all set up so that these families weren't out in the cold for three or four hours waiting for the vaccine. That would be quite important.

All in all, I think this is a good bill. That's what we should be supporting.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I did listen, as I usually do, to the member from Nickel Belt, who put forward a very strong position. She probably has very good reasons, with her experience in the health care field.

**0940**

I'm very pleased to say that Dr. King is here this morning, which is important. In most bills that I've spoken on—I try to speak on every single bill—very seldom are the civil servants here. They're probably watching from their plush offices somewhere.

Respectfully, I think it's important, because this is important. This is about protecting public health.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** That's your office.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** My office is fairly plush too, but it's not mine, actually. I'm just a temporary resident there.

But I would say that when you look at H1N1—I believe that a couple of the very first people identified, when they arrived from, I believe, Mexico or wherever they were coming from, were actually from Port Perry, in

my riding. It was quite an interesting event. If I look back in the history—and I might even get a chance to speak on it this morning—it did cause some concern.

Then you get down to the whole argument of command and control. In many respects I think the report that Dr. King issued said very clearly that there's a certain time where there's almost a declaration of war, as she put it, where there would need to be a central Churchillian war room response to these pandemics. You can't have 500 decision-makers and make very prompt and efficient decisions. That's really the problem I have.

But you know, when I heard Dr. Low and those people who would be on television, I think it often—they urged the public to panic, almost. I'm not sure how effective—but the communication strategy itself needs to be coordinated as well to give proper information at the proper time and not raise the alarm before it's appropriate. Otherwise—

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

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I am also very pleased to be able to speak to the comments that were made by the member for Nickel Belt. I want to first of all say thank you very much to Dr. Arlene King for being here. It gives me an opportunity to personally say thank you for the work that you have done on the health impacts of wind turbines. It has been very important for me to follow all of this along.

When I hear the member from Nickel Belt talk about the concerns she has around the centralization of all of this, I'm going to speak to this from a slightly different perspective, and that is from the perspective of the farmers. When I see things such as H1N1, which is also transferred to animals and to birds, we have a situation there where our commodity groups are working very hard to make sure that we isolate those situations, and the commodity groups are doing their part to make sure that we do that and make sure that it doesn't spread.

But we also need the ability, as farmers and those commodity groups, to have the opportunity to make contact with one central point. That is how we can manage to contain this, not only in our own particular farms, but in order to protect the public health. For a farmer to have to concern himself about where he's going to make that contact, who he's going to talk to—is that the local level? Does he talk to his commodity group first? And that is actually what we're told to do as farmers; we're told to contact our commodity group. Our commodity group will then ensure that everything is taken care of. The commodity organizations then need to be able to make contact with that one point, and I believe that we need to do that through the chief medical officer of health for the province—not the local one, but for the province—because it's something that can easily spread. Those are the situations where I see that centralization is critical to ensuring that we protect public health.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Nickel Belt, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank the member from Ottawa—Orléans. Certainly I agree with him that

the spirit of collaboration that exists in our public health system is something to be cherished and something that has served us well. I recognize that we have to be ready for a pandemic, and like what he remembered—I guess they had bad weather out his way, same as we had out our way, when the flu vaccination centres were open.

I don't want to lose sight that there are best practices that have been recommended. If you look at the medical officer of health's recommendations, she makes recommendations regarding the roles and responsibilities of different agencies, including the LHINs. She makes recommendations about the designation of flu assessment centres and the need for a real-time surveillance system. I don't want Bill 141 to be our only response to H1N1. We've learned way more than this.

I thank the member from Durham and the member from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex. Certainly the farming analogy still works, because animals get sick just as much as humans do and public health could extend beyond humans into birds and farm animals.

I'm not against having clear lines of communication. This is also one of the recommendations that Dr. King does in her report: having a clear line of communication. Where you draw the line is this local-control-versus-directive. To me, those would only happen when they are at odds, and it should happen very, very rarely because locally, people should realize that it's better for them to—

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Briefly, because this is such an important topic and perhaps there are a few things that haven't been said—or at least said twice, because there has been more said than has actually been done. I just wanted to put a few things on the record. I did speak on this in second reading, so I'm not unfamiliar.

I want to give credit to, certainly, our critic Christine Elliott, the member from Whitby—Oshawa. She has been most thoughtful in her observations and her recommendations to caucus position on this. It's my understanding that we'd be supporting the bill. Nothing is perfect, I suppose. I guess there were some amendments that had been moved.

But I also look at it from a personal perspective. I would guess, as I said in my response to the member from Nickel Belt, that the first four people who were identified with H1N1 on April 28, 2009, originated in Durham region. In that respect, Durham region saw 92 hospitalized due to the seasonal flu in 2009-10, nearly three quarters of those attributed to H1N1. The number of infections was so large: A number of at least 292, these being only those cases that were confirmed in the laboratory. At least five of these people did not survive their illness. I guess that's a kind way of saying they died.

This illness did not affect the usual numbers. In fact, this strain was especially aggressive amongst younger-aged cohorts, and this is one of the surprises that I found. Normally, they always talk about vulnerable groups. This

is kind of what I said earlier, too, that often it's the frail elderly who are most affected and, most obviously, treated. Then it comes down to prioritizing those people who receive the vaccination, or whatever the treatment modality is.

This is why I kind of think that—I'm not second-guessing. I do support, sort of, the recommendation, and I want to quote this, because in the report, *How Ontario Fared*, by Dr. King, I think she makes quite a good argument. The way Christine Elliott has summarized it for us, she recommended that we need to "extend our chain of command to the local level," i.e., Durham or Halton or other parts of southwestern Ontario—all of Ontario. There are 36 different public health authorities. They're not aligned totally municipally, so there are some overlapping jurisdictions.

"The system as it is presently constructed does many things well in what I will refer to as 'peace time.'" That's the point I think the member from Nickel Belt is making, that autonomy in the local health authorities is a long-standing discussion: How well they're funded or not; how many of them actually have a doctor, a medical officer of health. Many of them don't. I don't know what the status is at the present time, but it's always a problem with getting doctors to fill those positions in remote or hard-to-service areas.

But it goes on here to say, "In 'war time'"—this is where I think of the war room in the Second World War in London—"however, when people are getting sick and people are getting scared, the health system needs to accommodate the kind of strong central oversight and management that currently doesn't exist. The chief medical officer of health must have the authority to direct public health units"—the word "direct" is very instructive—"in real time as he or she sees fit." Well, there will probably be a panel of people.

**0950**

If I look back prior to that: When we were government, at that time, I had the privilege of being parliamentary assistant in health for Tony Clement and, for some time Elizabeth Witmer, and saw just how complex the organization really is. It's amazing. It's half the budget, but it's a huge organization with lots of pressures.

I guess that's the whole point. I don't think any one person, as I saw it—I remember listening and watching CNN and all the various media outlets. It was absolutely—some of these news outlets actually feed on events, or tragedies really, and exacerbate the command and control model. That's what I'm saying. Now, when you've got all the social networking interactions alarming—and raising up, even, some of these young children who are singing a song and all of a sudden there are five million hits. This is a significant communications challenge; we'll just leave it at that.

I worked in systems for about 15 years, I guess, or 13 years, and I see this as being the large issue. It ties primarily into how well and how well informed—and the World Health Organization, I thought, was completely over the top, and I'm not qualified. When they came on

from the United Nations, they were just inflammatory. People who were getting sick were becoming sick because they were frightened, and they had what I call resonance. They felt sick.

When I talk, I don't want to be an alarmist here; I just feel that given today's—what's missing? This is not hypercritical, because I sat for a short length of time on the first version, under Premier Mike Harris: the Smart Systems for Health board. I was there. I'm a systems guy; I know. In fact, I was quite surprised how much of it was kind of modularized back then. I reported back to the minister—I think Tony Clement was the minister at the time—and I said, "Jeez, how are they going to glue this thing together?" Because there are really nine modules: there's long-term care; the OLIS, the Ontario lab information—there are several different modules that feed in, and who can see what information, when and where? It's a layered-access security, because when you log in with a health card, they shouldn't know that you've been on mental health medication or lifestyle medication. Who can see what, when? Can the anaesthesiologist see? They only need to know certain information for giving you a needle to put you to sleep. The general surgeon on orthopaedics might need to know your bone density, but who needs to see what? It's a very important, fundamental question to this whole issue. And who puts that information in? Who interprets it?

Why is eHealth not working? Nobody can read a doctor's handwriting. Honest to God, when they transcribe those patient records, good luck to you. "Will," "may," "shall," "must"—all these key operative words become very instructive to what the next procedural medical personnel would do.

Now, eHealth is still not working. In fact, here is the real issue on this: This is the question that Christine Elliott mentioned yesterday. It makes eminently important sense. Yes, we must be able to know who's been treated. They must be able to identify homogenous groups that should receive it. It could be a cultural kind of thing; it could be a whole bunch of things. You need to manage the data, for sure. If you've got all these health records, and you can almost tell where they live and all the rest of it, and these age groups, young, old, whatever, and people with native backgrounds or whatever it is that you might want to be treating, it's very important to manage it properly.

Giving it to everyone? Some people may have risks with it. They may find there are other things. So there is a management component to it.

I want to spend a bit of time on the whole eHealth thing, in a way. There's already one in operation. It's the children's health information. What the hell is going on here? Why aren't we using it? It's already in place. Dr. King, give me the nod. Well, it's true. It is in place.

There's also the whole—I forget, but there is a pan-Canadian system in place, too. Canada Health Infoway, I think it's called. If I happen to be on vacation and I'm in Nova Scotia, where my son-in-law's family is—and they're good friends of ours—and there's this alert, I want to be told that I'm one of those exposed. It should

be pan-Canadian. It's hideous. Developing a system that isn't pan-Canadian is completely unproductive. What about the visitors here? I find that the design has to be national. In fact, there is a federal—it's the Panorama system. I know nothing about this in technical detail but I know how systems work and I can tell you that this is a case to make where, if you want command and control, it's not just Ontario.

You've got the health quality council federally. They can't make it work on anything: on what drugs are available to who or to what age group. So it's not a system that glues together as easily as people think.

I commend Ontario for this report. I believe that, like anything, it's a first step. It's not going to solve all the problems; it's going to give some authority to do things. Responding to public health emergencies is important. I think we all agree with that. If you look at the history of this topic we're talking about—in my brief review here, it says that there have been three pandemics in the last century, with the most severe being in 1918-19—there weren't many systems around then; they had smoke signals, I think—the Spanish flu, where 20 million to 40 million deaths occurred worldwide. Many experts believe that a pandemic is certain to happen. The question is when, and it's not known when.

It becomes critical that all of these health experts—I think it must be very difficult now to be a doctor. I was at a lecture at the University of Toronto on nanotechnology and how they're going to treat things differently in the future using nanotechnology to get the medications to the actual organs or part of the body where it's really needed, as opposed to radiation, which goes through all the organs. If I look in the future, I think there will be new solutions that certainly weren't available then.

This article goes on that the World Health Organization and other international agencies, including Health Canada, "have recommended the development of pandemic plans to help reduce the impact of the next pandemic on the world's population."

If I can legitimize the argument of Ontario having control, I have no problem with that. I could also use the same arguments to legitimize having a pan-Canadian response and have no problem, because I've already suggested that I'd support that in certain conditions, which the civil servants can figure out. But I could also say, "I guess the United Nations are going to run the whole show." I don't think so. So where did that break down—or "those darned Americans. Or some pharmaceutical company trying to make millions of dollars out of this." So you've got into the whole idea of cultural trust and respect. When I've got the UN telling me something, I get very afraid. I'm not sure they know what's going on in Libya. They have an idea of what they want to go on.

When I think I'm off topic here, I say that the command and control—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** It would be nice to come back to it, yes.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, I am getting back eventually. I like to roam around this landscape because there are so many important and interesting things.

I'm going to agree that the final result here is to say that Ontario needs to have a plan. The biggest single thing is to have well-qualified people in those positions of decision-making, and it's a team; it's never one person. Nobody knows everything about anything. Einstein died, and it's unfortunate, but he didn't know everything about everything either.

I think we need to have panels of people, panels of experts, and we need a stronger communication strategy during these pandemics so that the public are engaged and informed. It's better, in this public safety thing, to give everybody a paintbrush. Then you say, "Doesn't that dilute the legitimacy of it? They're saying it's impossible." I don't think they know who is until it's all done—"Oh, gee, you know what happens? All kids five and under already had enough natural immunity to whatever, or didn't have any or whatever."

**1000**

Then there's the adjuvanted version of the vaccine. What is all that about? Too much information—it's a very difficult job; I'm not being critical. Thank God you're the doctor, is all I can say.

It is a fascinating topic from the point of view of purely management; managing the communication, managing and regulating the distribution and managing who knows what about what. Because these things are invasive, and there's no real response to it. They start to develop these vaccines or whatever in a lab that says, "I think we have the solution." I remember them talking; I think it was, "We're trying to develop the vaccine." You know, it's tough. I really don't know, but you have to have some confidence that there are organizations, like Dr. King's organization, that can manage these things in difficult times. That probably, to a civilized society, is very reassuring to be able to say, "I have a lot of respect for that function being well performed."

I would hope that these things do move forward in a fashion where there is a system tying the lab information, the testing information and the actual science together. This is sorely needed, absolutely critically needed. In fact, when you start to model health outcomes without systems, it's just somebody's guess, really, and there's random data that is used to do these forecasts. I would think we'd have to talk to Dr. Cavoukian, the privacy commissioner, to find out if she has any aversions to who knows what about who. Because that becomes the bottom line: the privacy issue and the personal right to be informed—and how they're informed. Is it informed consent? Is it implied consent? What kind of consent is it? Because you live here you're going to get it?

I don't like medication myself. I don't take any of this stuff. I don't take any of it because I feel my own immunity system has allowed me to arrive at 68 and still function reasonably effectively. Some people have no immune system and they need it; they need all this stuff every day. In fact, they have no immunity systems because they've all been sort of overcome by having replacements injected into their body. Those are my own opinions, and those are totally off topic.

I guess my point being is, when it did affect Durham, it affected me because I have the responsibility and the privilege to represent the area, and I hope to do it effectively for another five or 10 years at least. I would only say that—I was reading some of the stuff that was prepared here. This whole chain of events—when I look at the people involved, they were some of the most respected health people who were doing the very best they could do under an emerging emergency situation.

It's almost like looking at what is going on in Japan. Japan has probably some of the most focused, productive people—it's sort of a generalization here—but they haven't got the foggiest idea of what is going on in those poor nuclear reactors. They have some idea, and they say they're going to put sawdust in there to make the—I mean, even the brightest and the best have difficulty.

But when I think of Dr. Margaret Chan, who is the World Health Organization director and—in my own region, when I was a regional councillor in Durham, Dr. Robert Kyle was a very, very pleasant man to work with. He always had people's interests first. He was very professional without being overarching, opinionated. He always brought very well-informed reports to council and let council make those decisions—and, of course, Dr. Arlene King as well. I believe these people need the tools, and it's up to the government, and in our case now, Premier McGuinty's government.

I hope this bill doesn't get lost in the election, you know, because we need its third reading. We need it to get in. I guess there is a whole regulatory framework to it here. That is how bills are constructed nowadays; there is a kind of a framework, and then they hang onto it a bunch of modules called regulatory opportunities to bring it into effect. There's not too much that I found in this very small bill that was glaring in any way. I would only say that in the preamble section I guess is the point that would have to be reasoned out with the member from Nickel Belt. I think her point was very good about when and where and why these pandemic or overarching command-and-control procedures would be put in place.

The other part is, what happened to the \$1 billion in eHealth? I want the eHealth system delivered. I want a date it's going to be delivered, and let's get it operational. Let's say right now that OLIS, the lab system, works already; the pharmacists already use it in their own system. So in that case, let's get going with eHealth. What's causing all the trouble? In fact, they're paying Sarah Kramer, I see in the disclosure, \$100,000. She's still getting paid. What's that all about?

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sorry; I wasn't sure if it was my turn or not.

The member for Durham makes for interesting listening, to say the least. Sometimes we are not sure exactly if we're still on Bill 141, but nevertheless it is interesting. One piece of what he's talking about—the need for electronic health records—is certainly something that the critic had talked about and something that is addressed in

the report from the lessons we've learned in the pandemic: The fact that we had no opportunity to share in real time what was happening on the ground was truly, truly worrisome. It would have made things a whole lot easier had we known how many vaccines had been rolled out, to whom and where, and to be able to report back on that. I think that would have gone a long way to alleviating fears that the distribution system was inequitable. Because when you don't have the right information, then anybody's best guess is just as good as the next one. The need for an electronic health record that allows the right providers to have the right set of information to be able to do their jobs is something that we should all work for. It is mentioned in the report that came after H1N1, but it is certainly nowhere near Bill 141. Bill 141 has this narrow focus on local control versus central coordination, and it doesn't address some of the serious issues that we've learned with H1N1.

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

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I listened to the member from Durham for quite some time. He spoke about many different things, and I get the sense he's supporting this bill. Even though he travelled to many different topics, he came back and went off and back. Anyway, I think the most important thing is, from what I sense, he is going to support the bill and his party can support the bill. This is a great, important bill for all of us across the province of Ontario to coordinate all the medical health units across the province if a pandemic or a natural disaster or a provincial or national or international issue happened in the province. It would be very important to have all the medical units respond in the same way, with the same method.

The third party—I listened to the member from Nickel Belt talking about many different things, and I think she is not supporting the bill, for different reasons. One of the reasons is, she thinks the chief medical officer of health would have all the power and would ignore regional and local input. But I don't think so. This would give flexibility to the chief medical officer to choose and alter, and to accommodate all the people across Ontario, to make sure the medical health units perform in the best way in order to protect our population in Ontario.

I think it's a great bill, and I hope the third party will change their minds, because in the end it's the aim of the bill to coordinate all the efforts, to create a way to look after the people of the province of Ontario in a professional manner in order to protect them and to be able to respond quickly, fast, in the right time. It's important. In the past, we witnessed so many different chaotic situations: Every unit, every place responded differently. So that's why the aim for Bill 141 is to coordinate those efforts.

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

1010

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to offer a couple of comments in the time available on the remarks

made by my colleague from Durham. I think there are a couple of things that we need to focus on in the remarks he made.

Obviously, a pandemic is something that is very serious, generally life-threatening and highly contagious. If you put it in that kind of a context, then a response has to be unified, coordinated and timely. It seems to me that that's the essence of the bill that we're discussing here.

The issues that we're concerned about are, of course, the question of the leadership between the province as a whole and individual areas across the province. It seems to me that everyone agrees that there has to be one person at the top, one person who has to have that ability to provide overall direction.

Many members have identified certain circumstances where their experience differs from that which has been centrally envisioned. I think the important thing here is to see that central voice as one that is interested in outcomes and responsible for providing appropriate resources, not micromanaging.

Finally, I'd like to draw attention to a point I don't think has been emphasized enough, and that is the important role of the media. When I think back to the H1N1 pandemic, I think the media was caught between the sense of urgency that they had and making it into a media circus. I think they created a lot of angst within the community at large by constantly showing long lineups and focusing on that. People who weren't even in the areas of prime concern were busily lining up because there had been so much pressure put on them. I think we have to—

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

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I appreciate this opportunity to respond to the member from Durham on the small amount of time that was referenced to Bill 141.

But I'd just like to correct the record on eHealth: There are five million Ontarians with electronic health records now. All hospital imaging now is electronic: MRIs, X-rays, etc. It can be shared with and diagnosed by physicians no matter where they are in Ontario, so we can get the best treatment for people. That is coming along very well. It started in 2002, and I think that 2015 was always the original date for completion. It's on track; it's going to help, and will certainly help with pandemics.

I'd like to address issues that are more relevant to what has been said by the third party. We're broadening section 95.1 of the HPPA, the Health Protection and Promotion Act, to cover municipally employed public health workers; so the issues raised there are looked after.

The whole issue of centralized command: That kind of terminology is not proper terminology here. The public space aspect still bothers me. Right beside the lineup of people outside waiting to get into 255 Centrum, which was the old town hall in Cumberland, was a public building, yet it wasn't being used. Those plans are all going to be made now. Those mistakes aren't going to be made, and the authority is at the right place to make sure that we're prepared for the next pandemic that's going to come, that we're ready and that we have a good plan.

Having the chief medical officer of health looking after that: I feel very confident in Ontario.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to thank the member from London–Fanshawe; the member from Nickel Belt, who has participated in this very thoroughly; the member from York–Simcoe—I believe the idea of context and media are very important observations; and the member from Ottawa–Orléans: Thank you for bringing us up to date on the status of eHealth; it's important.

I'm kind of disappointed that Dr. Helena Jaczek, who's here this morning, wasn't able to respond to this, because she was a medical officer of health and, I think, probably should still be a medical officer of health. She'd have a more demanding role in life.

I also want to thank Dr. Robert Kyle. This is the report that I got most of my information from, so I want to give him full credit as a footnote here.

I believe that moving forward on this bill would be the appropriate thing. As I said, even in my review of remarks, I want to make sure that I make it clear that Dr. King did say she suggests that the province make full use of Panorama, a program developed to track and manage immunization jurisdictions across Canada. That commitment there shows that she has a sense of duty to the national response to pandemics.

I think that really, Bill 141 should have that put in there: to try and develop a national plan. Not just Panorama, but the whole eHealth system should be. I should know that if I happen to move, that I'm possibly allergic to something or whatever else that system—because I'll tell you; that is the future. Can you imagine modelling human health by age and subsets of all that? There are some real, valuable efficiencies in health care that aren't being made use of. I've never understood why, but again, this bill may help that develop.

I think the debate is over now, and I will have a coffee in another minute or two.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

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

*The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'd like to welcome John Winston from Tourism London, who's here in the west gallery. Welcome, sir.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** In the west members' gallery, I'd like to introduce two constituents: Mr. Hanif Ebrahim and Mrs. Samina Ebrahim, who are the parents of our page Fatemah Ebrahim.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I've got quite a few guests here today, so bear with me.

With us here today is Nancy Kirby, who is the president of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. Welcome, Nancy.

Gord Butler, the chair of the Ottawa Catholic School Board, is with the Catholic schools' delegation today.

Also I've got quite a few student leaders who are visiting Queen's Park for some meetings. For the Canadian Federation of Students, we have Sandy Hudson and Nora Loreto; for the Ontario undergraduate students' association, we have Meaghan Coker, Alexi White and Sam Andrey; and for the College Student Alliance, we have Heather Brekelmans, Tamara Popovic and Jim Robeson. Welcome, all, to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Today is Tourism Industry Association of Ontario Tourism Day at Queen's Park, and I want to welcome the members and also my ministry's partners: Beth Potter, Emily Harper-Hawkins, Tim West, Gary Masters, Phil Casey, Troy Young, Don Braden, Bruce Gravel, John Winston, Gerry Ginsberg, Tony Elenis, Grace Sammut and William Swan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I'd like to introduce my niece Kristianna Martiniuk-Kingdom and her children Morgan, Bradley, Avery and Blair.

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

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome to the Speaker's gallery today my brother Joe Peters and my nephew Nicholas Peters.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, in October 2009—

**Interjection:** There's Norm.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, in October 2009, a committee of the Legislature grilled then-Deputy Minister of Health Ron Sapsford over his role in the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle. According to media reports, on November 13, 2009, just a few weeks later, Sapsford suddenly quit as your deputy minister. Yet, Minister, strangely, the sunshine list of bureaucrats paid over six figures shows that you handed Sapsford three quarters of a million dollars in 2010, despite the fact that they say he quit in 2009. A simple question, Minister: Did Mr. Sapsford actually leave employment with the government of Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I understand that the Leader of the Opposition is concerned. I have to tell you that I am concerned, too. I think that all of us want every penny possible going to improve front-line health care. That is what I think the people of Ontario expect of us.

The question is, how are we improving health care? I do want to take a moment and talk about some of the

successes related to eHealth. I'm going to give you one example of a telemedicine success story. The diagnostic imaging department at Weeneebayko General Hospital, in Moose Factory, is a great example how eHealth's success is leading to better patient care. This department is connected with the Timmins and District Hospital—

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, with all due respect, that wasn't even close to addressing a legitimate question from the Ontario PCs and the people of Ontario. We appreciate the minister's concern, but families want to see answers, and they want to see action. I asked you a very simple question: Did Mr. Sapsford actually quit government, or did he continue to be employed by the province in 2010?

Six days have passed since the sunshine list came out. For six days, you continued to dodge, to duck, to weave—straight answers to straight questions. We find out in 2010 that Mr. Sapsford's salary went from \$500,000 in 2009 to \$762,000 after he allegedly quit.

Minister, why did the McGuinty government give Ron Sapsford a raise in 2010 after he quit?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I think the people of Ontario want to know is, is health care getting better? Are we getting value for money?

I can tell you that the women along the James Bay coast would say, yes, they are, because the department at Weeneebayko is connected with Timmins general hospital via a dedicated T1 line. It gives people in the region access to imaging specialists in Timmins 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in many cases preventing the need for them to be transported. Weeneebayko was the first hospital in North America to use this connectivity directly as a result of investments in eHealth, the first hospital to use it for a telemammography program, where mammograms done in one hospital can be read in another.

This is just one of many examples—

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, with all due respect, Minister, Ontario families simply want to know why they continue to pay for the eHealth boondoggle now, two years later. You gave Mr. Sapsford a raise in 2010. You refused to answer any basic questions about when he actually left government and why he was continued to be paid in 2010.

If anything, Minister, you've led the media and members to believe it was a severance payment. But yesterday, a Ministry of Finance spokesperson confirmed that severance payments are not reported on the sunshine list. This clearly is not severance; it's something else altogether.

I'll ask the minister again: What exactly was the three quarters of a million dollars that you handed Sapsford for? Secondly, did he actually get severance on top of all that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The member opposite knows that I have answered the questions to the extent that I am permitted to do so under legislation.

But since the member opposite seems interested in knowing how eHealth is going, I'm more than happy to

share another success story. Digital diagnostics: Every hospital in this province has now gone filmless. That means they're using digital diagnostic scans; whether it is a CT, an ultrasound, an MRI or a mammogram, it's all digital.

Then under the diagnostic imaging/picture archiving and communications system, DI/PACS, a program led by eHealth Ontario, diagnostic imaging is connected to all other hospitals. What that means is that diagnostic imaging can happen in one hospital, in Owen Sound, for—

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

#### EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Minister of Health: Minister, you're not even making an attempt to answer these straightforward questions on behalf of families. It's actually breathtaking, the level at which you're trying to avoid simple, straightforward questions.

Let me try a different tack. It's not only the mysterious salary and raise that you gave to the deputy minister implicated in the eHealth scandal, but it goes beyond that.

1040

Let me tell you about Angela Tibando. Angela was a consultant at the Liberal-friendly Courtyard Group. After a scathing auditor's report and grilling here in the Legislature because of Courtyard's friendly relationship with the Ontario Liberal Party and the sweetheart deals, the Liberal-friendly Courtyard Group was forced to close its door, but Tibando found new life as a bureaucrat at none other than eHealth Ontario, making \$134,000 a year—

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It is becoming increasingly apparent to me, through this line of questioning and other comments, that the party opposite opposes initiatives when it comes to eHealth. I think this is a big step backwards, and I'm—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd remind honourable members that your leader just asked a question. It is important for him to be able to listen to the Minister of Health, and you're not helping with your interjections.

Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Make no mistake about it; if we want to have a universal health care system that is here not just for us and our generation but for our children and our children's children, we must embrace electronic health records. That is why we are determined to keep moving forward, despite the ongoing opposition of the party opposite.

When we took office, only a handful of physicians had electronic medical records. Now, five million Ontarians are seen by doctors—

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Ontario families are rightly concerned about the incestuous relationship between the

eHealth figures and the McGuinty government. You've made some sort of secret backroom deal with the Deputy Minister of Health implicated in the eHealth boondoggle, Mr. Sapsford. You refuse to answer questions about that.

We find out that Angela Tibando, a former Courtyard consultant, has now found a happy home at eHealth, the very place where Courtyard received millions and millions of dollars in sweetheart deals, and it goes beyond that. Another member of the Liberal-friendly Courtyard Group by the name of Ian Fish, a former Courtyard consultant, is now another eHealth bureaucrat, making more than \$100,000 a year.

What's with this incestuous relationship between Liberal-friendly Courtyard Group and the McGuinty government?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What's important to me, and what I think is important to the people of Ontario, is that we're getting results when it comes to eHealth, and we are getting those results.

Let me share yet another eHealth success story. I was very pleased to be at St. Joseph's hospital in Toronto just recently to celebrate the 100th and final hospital to connect with the emergency neuro trauma—

*Interjection.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The ENITS program is designed for people with neurological trauma, so an accident, perhaps a stroke. Thanks to the good work of the people at eHealth Ontario, we now have every acute care hospital in this province hooked up, so that 24 hours a day, seven days a week, there is a neurosurgeon who can read that—

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You're getting results all right. It's too bad it's for the wrong people.

What we're seeing here are consultants from the disgraced Courtyard Group, which had to close its doors, now getting a very soft landing on the public payroll. We think that's wrong, and it doesn't end there.

Karli Farrow, your former health policy adviser and architect of the Liberal health care platform, did a turn as a Courtyard consultant. While at Courtyard, Ms. Farrow was billing over \$10,000 for less than a week of work as part of the eHealth boondoggle. But once again after Courtyard closed its doors in disgrace, Karli Farrow was handed a lifeline. She's now a health bureaucrat at Trillium Health Centre, making over \$150,000 a year.

Why is it that the only Ontario family you care about—

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Quite to the contrary: On our side we are determined to continue to improve health care. Unlike the party opposite, we are committed to spending more when it comes to health care year over year. Their approach is to turn the clock back, to go back

to the days before the computer. We are determined to keep using technology to provide better health care.

Let me share a quote from Dr. Ron Charach: “Let’s hope the endless buzzing around the cost of the ambitious eHealth initiative doesn’t end up sidelining the project. There are far greater costs to the public of not having centralized medical data, in terms of tests being frequently re-ordered, and specialists asking questions for which patients have no answers.”

We are determined to continue to make progress when it comes to eHealth.

#### EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. For two days, this Premier has stonewalled on the compensation pay to Ron Sapsford. I’m hoping today is the day that we get some clarity on this issue.

Mr. Sapsford quit his Ministry of Health position in late 2009. Will the Premier finally explain to Ontarians why Mr. Sapsford still received \$762,000 in wages and benefits in 2010?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The member opposite does know that I answered the question yesterday to the extent that I am able to under FIPPA. We had that conversation yesterday. Section 42 of FIPPA limits what I can say about personnel issues.

But let me tell you, we are absolutely committed to getting better value for health care dollars to improve health care for the people of Ontario. Our record speaks for itself—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would just say to the members of Her Majesty’s loyal opposition that during the rotation of questions, you have two opportunities to ask questions and the third party has an opportunity to ask questions. I would appreciate it if you would give some consideration to the leader of the third party as she asks her questions and requires to be able to listen to the answers to those questions, and not interject on behalf of the third party.

Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We are getting results for the people of Ontario. That is what matters for me.

When it comes to access to primary care, the fundamental health care request of the people of Ontario, we’ve made tremendous progress. Over a million—1.2 million—more Ontarians have access to primary care than when we took office. That’s 94% of Ontarians. We know where the other 6% are—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Let’s face it: What we are talking about here is the mother of all golden handshakes, yet this government refuses to reveal the details. Here is one detail they’d probably prefer not to tell Ontarians: In 2009, an order in council lists the maximum annual base salary for a deputy minister, like Mr. Sapsford, as

\$220,000. Even with allowable incentives, this would add up to about \$266,000. Why did Mr. Sapsford pocket half a million dollars more than he should have according to the government’s own rules?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I want to make this very clear—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** On this side of the House, we are determined to continue getting better and better value for our health care dollars. We have taken steps to demonstrate that commitment. One of the elements in the most recent budget was that hospital executive expenditures are required to be reduced by 10% over the next two years. Every penny of those savings will go into front-line care. We are determined to continue getting better value.

One of the ways that we’re getting better value for taxpayer dollars when it comes to health care is moving people from very expensive hospital care into care in the community. We are determined to continue—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Ontarians who have contacted my office are livid about the Sapsford affair, as well they should be. We have someone who quit his job amidst a cloud of controversy, who then received half a million dollars more than he should have, according to the government’s own rules. Clearly, there’s something rotten here.

When will the Minister of Health and the Premier of this province come clean on the details? Or will they continue to show complete contempt for the people of this province?

1050

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What is important to the people of Ontario is that we continue getting better results. Our aging at home strategy is just one example of how we are getting better results and better value for taxpayer dollars: a \$1.1-billion strategy designed to help people stay in their home as long as possible, to come home from the hospital and stay at home rather than moving into long-term care. These are the innovations in health care that I think the people of Ontario are very interested in.

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. In this morning’s Globe and Mail, an independent analysis of Statistics Canada data proves beyond a doubt what New Democrats have been saying all along: Corporate tax cuts don’t create jobs, period.

When the Premier read the front page of the Globe and Mail this morning, did he stop for even one minute to ask himself what \$4 billion could have meant in relief to Ontario families struggling to pay the bills?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I’m pleased to receive the question. As I’ve said a number of times before, every-

body is entitled to their own opinions but not their own facts. Here are the facts.

So far, we've recovered 91% of the jobs lost during the recession. My colleagues opposite take issue with that. I would suggest that they contact Stats Canada and dispute it with that particular authority. By way of contrast, the United States has recovered less than 17% of their jobs, and the United Kingdom has recovered fewer than 40% of their jobs.

In the supplementary, I'll also talk about a few more facts to speak to just how strong our recovery has been.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, here are the facts: In 2000, the combined provincial-federal corporate tax rate was 42%. In Ontario, the combined rate is 28% and will soon fall to 25% because of the Premier's corporate tax giveaways. At the same time, business investment in plant and machinery has fallen from 7.7% of the GDP to 5%. Ontario still hasn't, by this Premier's own admission, made up the jobs lost during the recession.

Has the Premier ever thought, couldn't the \$4 billion that this government dolled out to corporations have better been used to help struggling Ontario families?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** As I said, one fact, of course, is that we've recovered 91% of our jobs. Here are a few more that are specific to our economy here in Ontario.

Private sector investment in building machinery and equipment rose 10% in the third quarter of 2010; that is the strongest gain since 1998. Manufacturing sales are up 24% compared to 2009. Let's take a look at the auto sector, comparing March of this year to March of last year: For GM, sales are up 26%; for Chrysler, they recorded their 16th consecutive month of year-over-year sales growth; and Ford has had the best March in a decade. Those are facts.

The fact is, our economy is turning the corner, and our tax reforms are helping that.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, this is how things look to me: Statistics Canada data proves that corporate tax cuts don't create jobs. Even the federal Liberal leader says, "Make me Prime Minister because I don't believe corporate tax cuts create jobs." Ontario families worried about jobs, about reduced incomes and about soaring household bills don't believe corporate tax cuts create jobs either.

Why won't the Premier do the right thing and redirect at least some of his \$4 billion of corporate tax giveaways to things that make life affordable for Ontario's families?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I want to remind my honourable colleague of a few of the facts. We now know that we've recovered 91% of our jobs. We now know that, when it comes to specific indicators like the auto sector, manufacturing and year-over-year growth, Ontario is doing better than any of the other provinces.

I would also encourage my honourable colleague to heed the advice offered by former Prime Minister Tony

Blair, who said this: "In the past, social democrats became identified with high taxes, especially on business. Modern social democrats recognize that in the right circumstances, tax reform" and reducing the tax burden "can play a critical part in meeting their wider social objectives."

We are reducing the tax burden on businesses and families to strengthen the economy so we can have better education, better health care and better social supports.

## EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is again to the Minister of Health. In June 2009, Sarah Kramer left eHealth Ontario in disgrace, just as the billion-dollar boondoggle was unfolding. It was well reported in the media at the time that the former CEO, who was hand-picked by the Premier of Ontario himself, was handed a \$317,000 severance. Yet the sunshine list last week shows that you paid Kramer another \$106,000.

Since the Ontario PC caucus and the government's own ministry have confirmed it was not a severance, why did Ontario families have to pay another \$106,000 on top of the \$317,000 she was given as a gift on the way out?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm thankful for the question. What I want to say is that I am restricted in what I can say, as the member opposite well knows, about those arrangements.

What I can reiterate is our commitment to keep on moving forward when it comes to eHealth, because eHealth is making a real difference for people. And we are not alone in advocating a continuation with eHealth. Let me read from the Toronto Star—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Release yourself from the chains.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** If the member from Renfrew wants to be released so badly, I do have the power to set you free.

Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me read a quote from Dr. Suzanne Strasberg, the former president of the Ontario Medical Association, in speaking about electronic health records. She says, "This is a grand task and one that requires a long-term commitment. The expectations are both promising and exciting, and it is imperative the government and physicians get on with the job."

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Ontario families have no idea why they keep paying for Sarah Kramer, Ron Sapsford and so many others for not doing a day's worth of work on their behalf, particularly in the health care system.

You paid Sarah Kramer over \$100,000 after she had been given a quarter-million-dollar severance, after she had presided over the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle. Now she's fled to the United States to take another job. So we want to know: Why did you continue to pay Sarah Kramer after the severance was out? Is it because you cut the same deal that you cut Gérald Savoie from the Mont-

fort Hospital, who, after two years of not doing a thing, will actually be paid over \$1 million? Will Sarah Kramer be on the sunshine list, just like Gérald Savoie is, next year?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I know the party opposite is having great fun with this. What is important to me—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order. I would just ask that they be conscious of these desks; they are antiques and we do not want to damage them permanently.

Please continue.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** On this side of the House, we're determined to continue to get results for people, and that includes the people of Nepean–Carleton riding. We now have two family health teams in Nepean–Carleton with 28 doctors and 15 health care professionals providing care to over 30,000 patients, 8,000 of them previously unattached under your watch.

Under their watch, Speaker, it was a different story. They cut funding to hospitals. At the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, for example, they cut \$6.3 million. Almost 11% of the budget was slashed when they took office. Ottawa—

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

1100

#### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Under the watch of CEO Rosemarie Leclair, Hydro Ottawa spent tens of thousands of dollars last year hosting corporate clients in luxury boxes at Ottawa Senators games even as they were hiking hydro rates paid by residents and businesses.

Why won't the Premier condemn the former Hydro Ottawa CEO's waste of taxpayers' money instead of condoning her actions by appointing her as chair to the Ontario Energy Board?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** As the member knows, Hydro Ottawa is registered as a private company, and it is indeed wholly owned by the city of Ottawa. I want to commend the mayor of Ottawa today for his prompt response on this matter. It's always good to see our municipal partners working hard to ensure good value for ratepayers.

That's very much in sync with the approach that we're taking and the culture that we're building in our own energy agencies. Over the last year, we've worked very hard with our energy agencies to save over \$1 billion. Hydro One is reducing its operational costs by \$170 million this year. In fact, all of our energy agencies are bringing down their operating budgets this year. They recognize that we need to get value for money, and this government remains committed to working with our agencies to ensure that we indeed do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, excuse me and the rest of Ontarians who think the culture that you're building is a culture of entitlement.

The Premier is appointing as head of the OEB a hydro executive who is unapologetic about spending \$30,000 on luxury suites at hockey games. The OEB chair pulls down approximately \$500,000 a year in salary. Is this what the Premier looks for when he's deciding who gets the plum promotions and pay raises in this province: the ability to spend taxpayers' dollars on wining and dining at NHL hockey games?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Once again, this is the smear-a-day NDP campaign that goes on day after day in this place. I'll tell you, though, what we look for when we're looking for people who are going to lead our energy agencies. We look for women who make the top 100 most powerful women, hosted by the Women's Executive Network. We look for people who in 2010 won the quality of life award by St. Joseph's Women's Centre. We look for people who in 2009 were honoured champions of the United Nations Association in Canada. We look for people like Rosemarie Leclair, who was a member of the University of Ottawa's board of governors, who sat on the board of directors for the United Way of Ottawa, who was a member of the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, who has more credentials in energy than you can shake a stick at. This is a very qualified person, and we're looking forward to her serving very—

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

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, Ontario's long-term energy plan lays out for Ontario families the investments needed to turn the inherited Tories' dirty, unreliable and outdated energy system into one that is clean, reliable and modern. It lays out the cost of these critical investments in full transparency and stands in stark contrast to the approach taken by the Leader of the Opposition, who is afraid to share his energy plan with Ontario families.

Over 20 years, energy plans indicate that these investments will result in an average increase of 3.5% per year for those 20 years, but many of these investments are needed early on, so the next five years may see increases in the range of 7% to 8%. Can the minister outline how the government will help Ontario families adjust through this period of investment?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to thank the member for Pickering–Scarborough East for that question. The opposition leaders are indeed trying to convince Ontario families that somehow they can build a clean, reliable, modern energy system without increasing energy costs. Ontario families will see right through that. These investments are crucial, and the fact of the matter is, these costs are unavoidable. So we're helping Ontario families. We're providing them with a clean energy benefit that's taking 10% off the bills of Ontario families, small busi-

nesses and farmers. We're also helping Ontario energy consumers with our energy property tax credit.

Let me tell you: If Stephen Harper were to provide a similar amount of assistance to Ontario that he's committing to providing other provinces across Canada with our money, that would surely go a long way to help us bring down the price and cost of energy in this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Minister, you've said in the past that the work done over the past seven years to turn around the rather ugly energy legacy left by the PC Party has been successful to date. But it hasn't been easy. We've had to make significant investments in our transmission system that have been neglected under previous governments.

You've indicated that making those transmission upgrades at the same pace as the expansion of clean energy projects has been quite challenging. While I'm pleased efforts are being made to overcome that challenge, would the minister tell this House what other potential obstacles stand in the way of making our global-leading clean energy economy even more successful?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I agree with the member. Our efforts to transform our energy system from the mess we inherited under the Tories into a modern, reliable and clean energy system have been extraordinary, but it hasn't been easy. We're seen globally as trailblazers in building a clean energy economy and transforming our energy system. We've overcome every obstacle in our way, and we've done this despite the continual opposition from the members opposite, who have opposed our efforts every step of the way.

What I can't understand is why the Leader of the Opposition simply refuses to stand up for Ontario families when it comes to Prime Minister Harper's commitment to spend our money subsidizing clean energy projects in other provinces. Harper's slogan is, "Here for Canada." The Leader of the Opposition's slogan should be, "Here for Harper, not Ontario."

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just remind the honourable members that we need to deal with provincial issues.

New question.

#### EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Minister of Health.

The minister is not answering simple, straightforward questions. She is behaving as though she does not need to account to Ontario families for the obscene amounts of money that are still being handed to the people implicated in the \$1-billion eHealth boondoggle.

The three quarters of a million dollars that was paid to Ron Sapsford is not severance. The Ministry of Finance's guide for the preparation of the sunshine list indicates that severance is not reported. So the question is: Why have you implied that it is severance and what are you hiding?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Just to be clear, I have not implied anything. I am not permitted to speak to the particular issue. What I am absolutely committed to and able to speak to is how health care is improving right across this province, including in Whitby–Oshawa.

Let's just talk about one thing that is very important to the people of this province, and that's wait times. When we came to office, people were waiting an outrageous length of time to get the care they or their loved one needed. We went to work. At Lakeridge Health, serving the people of Whitby–Oshawa, hip replacement wait times are down by 272 days, a 58% reduction. Outpatient CT scan wait times are down by 60%—

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Minister, there's no hiding the three quarters of a million dollars that you paid to Ron Sapsford; it's simply too large. His \$80,000 in expenses alone is more than the average income of a typical Ontario family for a year. These are very straightforward questions, but you're refusing to answer them. It's like you have something to hide.

What is Ron Sapsford being paid for, and why did you give him a raise? Simple question.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I have said repeatedly, I cannot speak to that particular arrangement. But I sure can speak to improvements that we have made, in Whitby–Oshawa, for example.

The member opposite and I together were at the opening of Lakeridge Health Whitby just last week. It was a splendid day. People were worried that that hospital would never reopen—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The Minister of Community Safety will withdraw the comment that he just made, please.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I withdraw.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** People who were at that event—the nurses, the doctors, the volunteers at that particular hospital—told me they were worried the hospital would never open. Thanks to the good work of my colleagues in the Legislature, that hospital has reopened. It is now fully occupied. People are getting excellent care close to home. Jobs have been provided right in the riding of the member opposite.

1110

#### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Life-changing events, life-and-death events, take place in Ontario hospitals each and every day. Sometimes a family is worried and wants answers and information. But now, buried on page 31 of the 146-page budget, we see that the government has included an amendment that will block public access to freedom-of-information requests in hospitals. The NDP stood up against that same amendment back in November in order to protect the accountability and

transparency that Ontarians fought so hard to secure in their health care system.

Why is the minister trying to curtail hospital accountability by sneaking in this defeated amendment in the budget bill?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to that question. I am delighted that we are moving forward on bringing hospitals under freedom of information, expanding transparency and accountability in our health care system.

We are at a very important time in our health care system because we are now starting to turn our attention to quality improvement. I think the member opposite understands how important it is that we take a good hard look at quality in our hospitals throughout our health care sector. Part of the process of improving quality requires that, within hospitals, they're able to have very open and frank conversations about where quality was not what it should have been. After consultation with the hospital sector, we have made this change that will allow improvements in quality to continue.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Let me tell you something about trust: Trust is a pillar of quality. If the minister wants to talk about quality care, she has to take into account trust.

New Democrats have been working hard to restore trust and accountability in our health care system. On the heels of a damning report from the Auditor General on hospital consultants and lobbyists, the McGuinty Liberals had hoped to change the channel by introducing Bill 122, that you refer to. But now, without anyone looking, they are trying to retreat from transparency, from accountability measures that they more or less wanted to take credit for and that Ontarians have been demanding for years.

Will the minister explain to Ontarians why our government is trumping the public right to health care information?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me tell you that patient safety and patient quality of care is paramount for us. After very careful consideration and very in-depth conversation with the hospital sector, I was persuaded that we simply must make this amendment to allow that very, very important job of quality improvement to continue. I do not want hospitals—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I can't believe it either, the number of times that I've warned the honourable member. I would just remind him that if he is going to choose to sit in that front row, he needs to do so silently.

Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's important that people understand that we are talking patient safety. We are talking life and death. We know we can reduce deaths by focusing on quality. I want the hospitals to be able to do that in the way they know how. I want to encourage the work on quality improvement.

## IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Last December, the federal government announced it was cutting \$44 million in funding to 35 Ontario newcomer settlement agencies. These agencies help new Canadians get employment and language training to get settled and find good jobs. In my riding of York South–Weston, organizations such as the York Weston Community Services Centre and the Community Action Resource Centre have been devastated by the unilateral federal cuts.

The federal government's reckless cuts have hurt thousands of newcomers. Ottawa now wants to repossess the assets from agencies whose funding was cut. This will make it even more difficult for these agencies to continue helping newcomers get settled in Ontario.

To the Minister: What is Ontario doing to help these agencies keep the basic equipment they need to serve newcomers?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** As you can appreciate, I was extremely disappointed that Ottawa unilaterally cut \$44 million in funding to immigrant settlement agencies in Ontario. I've spoken with the impacted agencies and they tell me that Ottawa's cuts will absolutely devastate the agencies, the employees and the newcomers that rely on their vital settlement services. To make matters even worse, these same agencies have been told that they may have to hand over their equipment and their furniture.

I've written to federal Minister Jason Kenney to strongly urge him to allow our settlement agencies to keep the assets that they purchased using federal funds, as their contracts allow them the discretion to do. These assets include desks, chairs, phones, computers and even child care and child-minding equipment. I call on Minister Kenney to immediately—

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

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** In February, the minister announced that the government created a one-time stabilization fund to help stabilize the operations of settlement agencies whose funding was cut by Ottawa. Many settlement agencies, including agencies in my community, were extremely happy to hear that Ontario was doing what it could to help. At the stabilization fund announcement, one agency told me that every bit helps when it comes to supporting newcomers.

Some agencies have applied for this funding to help them get through in the wake of Ottawa's unilateral cuts. They desperately need that funding now to continue to help newcomers get settled and get job-ready.

Can the minister tell us if his ministry has completed its funding application process so that settlement agencies can continue to provide important services to newcomers?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** First of all, I'd like to thank the member from York South–Weston for her tireless advocacy on behalf of newcomers in her community.

Minister Kenney and the federal Conservatives may not respect the important work of our front-line settle-

ment agencies, but the McGuinty government respects their tireless efforts. That's why we've created a stabilization fund to help eligible settlement agencies whose funding was completely slashed by Ottawa. These agencies have an outstanding record of service in their communities, and we are supporting them through this very challenging time.

I can tell the member from York South–Weston that the Community Action Resource Centre, in her riding, whose funding was totally cut by Ottawa, is receiving stabilization funding.

Ontario remains absolutely committed to getting the best immigration agreement from the federal government. We will continue to fight for fairness for Ontario and for Ontario's newcomers.

### GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I just want to say that we're having a little trouble getting answers to the question, Minister, so I'm going to make it very simple.

I have a multiple-choice question for you. I'm going to give you some examples of ridiculous red tape that would restrict people and hurt business. Can you tell me which one of these apply to your ministry: limit who a business can sell their product to or which door they may sell it through, tell a business what colour they can paint the interior of their facility, or tell a business person what colour they can paint the inside of their vehicle?

Minister, which one of these red tape rules are you going to force onto Ontario farmers?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I do sincerely want to thank you for the question. One of the things that I wanted to share with the members from across the way is that we have been working very hard with our businesses within the agricultural community. We recognize the challenges that have been facing our local abattoirs, so we provided \$1.5 million to assist. I can tell you that we have seen many success stories, and the investments we have made in red tape are turning things around.

But I say to the members from across the way: We're talking about red tape. We're quite proud of our record at OMAFRA of reduction of red tape. But I think that farmers and rural communities want to know: Why won't you pick up the phone and call Harper about risk management? That—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order. I just remind the honourable members once again that, notwithstanding the fact that there is a federal election going on, we have issues that we need to deal with here in the province of Ontario.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Minister, they all apply to your ministry, and I thought you might have known that. When you are restricting the colour that a farmer can paint the inside of their vehicle, you have a red tape problem.

A month ago, I asked the Premier about an internal memo that your ministry produced which made it clear that you are hiding red tape, not cutting it. From what we've seen, the only action taken in response was to remind your staff to keep documents confidential.

**1120**

Minister, your problem isn't the brown envelopes; your problem is your red tape. Will you finally apologize to farmers and tell us how many of your regulations you claim to have cut are actually a sham?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I've got to say that supporting risk management—

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I want to say that the work of our local abattoirs—do they understand, from across the way, the local product, where that comes from? That comes from down on the farm. By supporting risk management, it's strengthening the value chain. On this side, we get that.

But I'll tell you this: Farmers want to know how they're going to vote on the budget—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order. It never ceases to amaze me, when certain members ask questions and certain members respond to questions, how it just gets the juices flowing in this chamber.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Agriculture, I might have been referring to you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members will please come to order. We want to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to ask their questions.

New question.

### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, as a result of your new busing policy, 80% of the bus contracts for this fall on Highway 11 east is going to be going to two large multinationals—one from London, England and the other one from Sudbury. As a result of that, a company like Schumacher Bus Lines, which has been around for 96 years, is at a risk of closing their doors; and a company like Kamiskotia Bus Lines, the former Silver's bus lines, which has been there for better than 50 years, is closing its doors.

My question to you is as simple as this: Why did you put forward a busing policy that favours large multinationals at the expense of long-serving local businesses?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I think it's important that I take this opportunity to correct what the honourable member has presented. In fact, it's not a government policy, but what we have said to school boards, because the Provincial Auditor identified for us that we needed to

be more competitive in terms of how we engage those services.

So we have been working with school bus operators from across Ontario to put in place models that meet the needs of the school board and the students that they serve, as well as ensure that the industry is able to participate in a fair way.

We have pilots under way. We did in southern Ontario last year; we are now doing pilots in northern Ontario this year. We look forward to hearing from boards their results—

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, don't try to pass the buck on to the school board. It just happens to be that Colleen Landers from one of our boards is here now, and she knows well that this is not a school board policy; this is an Ontario Ministry of Education policy. For you to try to pass this on to the school board, I think, just flies in the face of reality.

I'll ask you again. There are business owners across my riding and Mr. Ramsay's riding who have been in business for 50 and 100 years. Their bus companies are about to close—some of them will close—because of this policy. I ask you one more time: Why do you favour a policy that puts long-standing businesses in our community at risk of closing down in favour of larger multi-nationals?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I again remind the honourable member that it is not the Ministry of Education that engages school bus operators in local boards; it is local boards that do that.

What the Ministry of Education has asked of our school boards, because the Provincial Auditor—and I would just remind the honourable member: They like to talk about the Provincial Auditor and refer to the auditor's recommendations. I say to the honourable member that the Provincial Auditor has made it very clear that we need to improve the way we engage transportation services in school boards. We are working with boards and we are working with local operators to determine a process that is fair and equitable and ensures the people of Ontario that the dollars we are spending on student transportation have been determined in a manner that is open and transparent—

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

## TOURISM

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. As Ontario's economy recovers from the recession, tourists from near and far are starting to travel and visit again. Visitors are coming from national and international destinations. In 2008, visitors spent \$22 billion in Ontario. That is why it's important for the government to make strategic investments and have significant economic impact across the province. This will attract even more visitors, keeping them coming back,

creating jobs and supporting the economic growth of our regions.

Minister, effective investment is critical to making Ontario's tourism industry competitive. Can the minister please tell us what the government is doing to make Ontario's tourism industry competitive?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member from Brant for his question and also for his wonderful advocacy in promoting tourism in Ontario. Again, I want to, one more time, welcome some of our tourism partners to the House today.

In 2010, more than 104 million Canadians travelled to Ontario, more than any other province or territory. Our government has made significant investments to develop a competitive tourism industry in Ontario. We have invested \$130 million to support the 13 newly developed tourism organizations. This year, through Celebrate Ontario, we are also investing \$20 million to support 232 festivals and events—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I'm pleased that the government is building a competitive tourism industry in Ontario. However, short-term investment is not enough for long-term competitiveness in Ontario's tourism sector. As a former principal and educator, I know that long-term planning is an extremely important commitment to make a success.

Several local events come to my mind in building premier events: the International Villages in Brantford, Telephone City Car Show, Applefest in St. George, Springtime in Paris, Hockeyfest, the Brantford International Jazz Festival, Frosty Fest and, of course, Six Nations Pow Wow. That's why we need the government to continue to invest beyond just one year. This helps strengthen Ontario's tourism industry for today and tomorrow. Supporting economic growth is important. I want to know what the minister is going to do to support long-term sustainability for the tourism industry in Ontario.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Families in Ontario stand to benefit from our investment in tourism. It is a key economic driver to job creation. This is why, in our recent budget, our government has committed an additional \$18.75 million to support the regional tourism organizations for 2012. This is in addition to the \$40 million in ongoing funding.

If passed, our budget will help tourism regions attract more visitors, strengthening, of course, our economy. The budget will also make our \$20 million in Celebrate Ontario permanent.

We are on the right track with our investment. It is helping families, attracting visitors, creating jobs and supporting economic growth.

## CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Last Tuesday, your government released a budget that included a provision to close the so-called under-utilized jails in Sarnia, Owen Sound and Walkerton.

Minister, if you had bothered to pick up the phone and call the mayor of Sarnia, you would have found out that in fact the Sarnia jail is over their maximum capacity. I understand, however, that just minutes ago your Minister of Public Safety has agreed to meet with the mayor of Sarnia on this issue. I say: too little, too late.

In fact, a report by your own government says that the Sarnia jail is at 105% capacity. If you had bothered to call the mayors of Owen Sound and Sarnia, you would have discovered that those prisoners are actually sleeping on the floor because the beds are full.

Why did you say these jails are underutilized when they're not?

1130

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** In the supplementary, I'll mention the 25 jails the Conservatives closed, but not now.

As you know, the ministry is modernizing the jail system in Ontario. The Sarnia jail was built some 50 years ago and requires more than \$1 million in capital investments. I'm surprised you didn't ask this earlier, by the way. It costs \$180 a day to house an inmate in the Sarnia jail and \$125 per day to house those inmates in the new Windsor jail.

Decommissioning the Sarnia jail is consistent with the government's commitment to modernizing the corrections system and closing some of the older, less efficient jails to ensure we have a correctional system that is safe—

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

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Minister, that's all well and good, but you're closing the jail in Sarnia and moving those prisoners to a new superjail in Windsor, which happens to be in the finance minister's riding. It must be a coincidence. You claim that this is the best choice, but it seems that you are alone in that assumption. Unlike you, I have spoken to the mayor of Sarnia, the OPP, the police chief of Sarnia, the Canadian border services, the two native police forces, and the president of OPSEU, who represents all the workers. Frankly, this is becoming a hallmark of your government, and my constituents want answers.

Minister, is it your opinion that you always know best and it's simply not worth you or your ministry's time to speak to those on the ground who have to live with your decisions?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** This is very interesting.

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** This is very interesting. The members had a chance for several days to ask this. I know why he hasn't—because the government of which he is now part closed jails in Cobourg, Haileybury, Waterloo, Wellington, Parry Sound, Barrie, Peterborough, Guelph, Cornwall, Lindsay, Whitby, Brampton and Sault Ste. Marie.

I remember the member for Wellington–Halton Hills saying the following: “I think the people of Ontario

would expect us to look at how we're operating the system of provincial jails and find ways to do it better and cheaper.” I happen to agree with my friend from Wellington–Halton Hills on that issue, as with Senator Runciman, who indicated that it's the “oldest infrastructure in Canada” we have out there.

We have to make these difficult decisions. The first half of—

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

## HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Premier. Toronto East General Hospital has a long and proud history as a caring, innovative and accountable hospital. Now it faces major challenges. A number of its buildings are no longer up to standard. There is a lack of accessible facilities, and in some wards six patients share a room. There are plumbing and electrical disruptions because the systems are out of date. The Toronto Star reported that a full ward of patients were moved due to sewage breaks.

This budget that has just been introduced said the government will invest up to \$35 billion in infrastructure over the next three years. My question to the Premier: Will the redevelopment of Toronto East General be one of these priority infrastructure projects?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I welcome the opportunity to talk about the great work that's being done at Toronto East General. I will let the Minister of Infrastructure take the supplementary, but I cannot resist the opportunity to congratulate the CEO, Rob Devitt, and the extraordinarily fine people who are working there.

I actually had the opportunity to visit Toronto East General just a couple of weeks ago, where they showed me all of the quality initiatives that they are pursuing. It is a model of health care. I am very, very proud of the work that is happening at Toronto East General Hospital.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Well, thank you very much, but it didn't answer the question. I, too, am proud of Toronto East General Hospital. It's of great value to our community. It's a great teaching hospital. They provide excellent care. The CEO, Rob Devitt, has been acknowledged by this government as a health care leader. He's given 10 years of balanced budgets. That's one of the things he's done. But despite the fact that the staff does an excellent job treating patients, the hospital facilities are so dated they lack privacy and challenge today's infection control practices. For the last six years, the hospital has been working with ministry staff on plans for the redevelopment. My question is: Will Toronto East General Hospital get approval from the province to move ahead with the redevelopment and commence construction now, or do they have to wait for the election period to hear the news?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Infrastructure.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Thank you for the question. We're very pleased to talk about building hospitals in Ontario. We know that the previous government closed them; they closed them by the dozen. What we're doing here is building 18 new hospitals, under construction or having been completed. We're also in the process of extending or expanding 100 hospitals in Ontario.

We are very proud of our infrastructure program. We are very proud of the fact that the previous government, having averaged \$2.5 billion a year for the last three years in infrastructure, has to be compared to our record of \$10 billion per year investing in infrastructure in the province of Ontario.

We are rebuilding Ontario. We're rebuilding our health care system and every other piece of infrastructure in this province. We're very proud of our record and we have done three times more infrastructure than the opposite government did—

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

## DEFERRED VOTES

### 2011 ONTARIO BUDGET

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have a deferred vote on the amendment by Mr. Miller to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1136 to 1137.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members please take their seats.

Mr. Miller has moved the amendment to the budgetary policy of the government. All those in favour of the amendment will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Savoline, Joyce
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Christine	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

#### Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duguid, Brad	Miller, Paul
Albanese, Laura	Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John
Arthurs, Wayne	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mitchell, Carol
Balkissoon, Bas	Gerretsen, John	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Gélinas, France	Murray, Glen R.
Bentley, Christopher	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hampton, Howard	Pendergast, Leeanna
Best, Margaret	Hoskins, Eric	Phillips, Gerry
Bisson, Gilles	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Broten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Johnson, Rick	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Kormos, Peter	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario

Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smith, Monique
Carroll, Aileen	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Chan, Michael	Levac, Dave	Tabuns, Peter
Chiarelli, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 20; the nays are 68.

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

On March 29, Mr. Duncan moved, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Same vote? I heard a no.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1141 to 1142.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members please take their seats.

Mr. Duncan has moved, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Dombrowsky, Leona	Milloy, John
Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	Mitchell, Carol
Arthurs, Wayne	Duncan, Dwight	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Murray, Glen R.
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Bentley, Christopher	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Pendergast, Leeanna
Best, Margaret	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Broten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Johnson, Rick	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Carroll, Aileen	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Chiarelli, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	McGuinty, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bisson, Gilles	Jones, Sylvia	Prue, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Savoline, Joyce
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tabuns, Peter
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John
Hampton, Howard	Munro, Julia	
Hardeman, Ernie	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 63; the nays are 28.

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

It is therefore resolved that the House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I noted with great interest that, as we know, today is Tartan Day in the province of Ontario. It's very impressive to see the number of members who are wearing either their own tartans or the provincial tartans here in the chamber today.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The Yakabuski tartan.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The Yakabuski tartan—we'll add that one to the Pidwerbeski tartan.

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

*The House recessed from 1146 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### TARTAN DAY

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I'm proud to announce to my fellow members and Ontarians that 20 years ago my Tartan Day resolution was passed with unanimous support of this House, recognizing April 6 as Tartan Day in Ontario.

April 6, 1320, is when Scotland declared independence from England. One way we like to observe this important day is by wearing something tartan. I'm wearing the official Ontarian tartan today, adopted through a bill first introduced by our former colleague Lillian Ross and then assumed by me. The Tartan Act too passed with our unanimous consent.

While it may appear to be a skirt to some, my kilt represents a proud history. A descendent of the battle garb worn by Roman soldiers, the kilt is an ancient form of dress used by Scots. It has come to represent resolve and determination, qualities Ontarians and Canadians hold dear.

One would be hard-pressed to find an aspect of our culture, laws or government that has not been positively impacted by the Scots. Scot educators and community leaders founded the U of T as King's College; a Scot by the name of Fergus founded the Ontario Agricultural College; and it was a Scot by the name of Alexander Graham Bell who invented the telephone.

This is our heritage. Tartan Day justifiably represents all Ontarians, and on its 20th anniversary it continues to embody the rich history of our province and the strong character of its citizens.

I'd also like to recognize and thank all the members who wore tartan today.

### EVA'S PHOENIX

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Today I want to take the time to honour an organization that is making a huge con-

tribution in my community. Located in Liberty Village, Eva's Phoenix provides safe shelter, training, counselling and a wide range of innovative programs to help homeless and at-risk youth lead productive, self-sufficient and healthy lives.

For the last 10 years, Eva's Phoenix has provided a model for integrated service providers that has been recognized by a number of different organizations. Among others, it has received the 2010 Charity Intelligence-recommended award, the 2010 Harlequin More Than Words award, the 2007 Vital Ideas award, the Harry Jerome award and the City Liveability award.

More importantly, this shelter has changed the lives of 1,183 youth by teaching them that there is hope for a way out of the streets for them. From encouraging them to excel in post-secondary education to showing them ways to cook a healthy, home-cooked meal, the dedicated workers and volunteers at Eva's Phoenix have made my riding and the city of Toronto a better place to live for all of us.

Unfortunately, the centre's current location is on land that is being reviewed by the city of Toronto for possible redevelopment. At a time when our youth are still feeling the effects of the worst economic crisis in 80 years, the city of Toronto cannot afford to do away with a program as socially, economically and creatively innovative as Eva's Phoenix.

### CORNWALL COLLEGIATE AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I rise in the House today to acknowledge a school in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry that is celebrating 205 years of education this year. As a 1968 graduate of the Cornwall Collegiate and Vocational School, I am proud to recognize the history and achievements of this school.

Cornwall Collegiate and Vocational School was founded in 1806 by Bishop John Strachan as the Cornwall Grammar School. Strachan is also recognized for founding the University of Toronto.

Over the years, CCVS has been through several physical changes. The 1944 earthquake that shook Cornwall destroyed the middle section of the school, which had to be rebuilt.

Apart from the physical changes, the school has gone through many academic changes. In 2002, the school's grades 9 and 10 population were moved to St. Lawrence and General Vanier intermediate schools, while grades 11 and 12 from those schools were subsequently moved to CCVS. In September of this year, CCVS will change once again to accommodate grades 7 to 12 students.

To celebrate the school's 250th anniversary this year, CCVS is holding a homecoming on July 15 to 17. I encourage CCVS graduates of all years to register for the homecoming on their website at [www.ccvshomecoming.ca](http://www.ccvshomecoming.ca).

I take great pride in recognizing Cornwall Collegiate and Vocational School today as the oldest continuously

operating school in Upper Canada—Ontario, today. I invite all members to join me in celebrating the successes of CCVS. May it have many more years of quality education to look forward to.

#### LLOYD VAN DUSEN

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's truly an honour to speak today about one gentleman in my riding whose legacy makes him one of the great horse plowmen in Ontario's history. Lloyd Van Dusen won his first International Plowing Match in 1939, at the age of 17, when he competed on home turf when the match took place in Brockville. He was a winner in his debut on the international stage. That title was the first of four IPM championships Lloyd would go on to win in a remarkable career behind the plow that spanned nearly seven decades.

Before his retirement from competition in 2007, Lloyd added many other provincial championships and Leeds county titles to his collection. More important than those titles, Lloyd kept alive the time-honoured tradition of horse-drawn plowing. He has maintained that important link to our rural past by patiently teaching his craft to younger plowmen, some of whom went on to become provincial champions.

It was a special day in 2007 when Lloyd hitched up his team to compete again on home turf, when the International Plowing Match returned to Leeds—Grenville after 68 years. Incredibly, he was there in Crosby just months after breaking his leg in a fall. As one of the people who helped bring the IPM to Leeds—Grenville in 2007, I can tell you: Lloyd's participation was something none will forget.

Next week, the Leeds county plowmen's association is hosting a special tribute evening for Lloyd Van Dusen. I regret I'll be unable to attend because of our deliberations here in the Legislative Assembly. But I didn't want to miss a chance to tell everyone in Ontario about this remarkable gentleman. So, on behalf of everyone in Leeds—Grenville, I want to offer congratulations to Lloyd Van Dusen and his wife, Eileen.

#### SEARCH COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Last Wednesday evening, Search Community Mental Health Services in Strathroy, in my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, held an art raffle and auction to raise funds and awareness for local mental health services. Some 100 attendees had a chance to bid on paintings from local artists, and they raised \$4,200.

Search Community Mental Health Services first opened their doors in October of 1979 to address the lack of mental health services available to residents in Strathroy and west Middlesex. With two full-time staff in the basement of the Salvation Army, Search reached out to provide evening support groups, social and recreational programs, and support and counselling programs.

They were there for my constituents during the farm crisis of the early 1980s, a time which was very stressful for many across rural Ontario.

Over the 30 years that Search has operated in Strathroy, they have moved multiple times and grown to 23 staff. Search has introduced various programs, including individual counselling, a women's support program, a rural resource centre, and on-call crisis workers. They have launched a website now, with resources in education for community members. In 2003, Search Community Mental Health Services was the recipient of the Canadian Mental Health Association Champion of Mental Health Award.

Search is very progressive in their approach to fundraising and they have participated in our microFIT program by installing a rooftop solar panel that will be used in order to raise monies so they can continue the important work that they do for my constituents.

#### MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would like to congratulate two members of the House. First is the member from Whitby—Oshawa and Ontario PC deputy leader. The second is the member from Dufferin—Caledon.

On March 9 of this year, the member from Whitby—Oshawa, supported by the member from Dufferin—Caledon, moved an opposition day motion. That motion was subsequently voted on and approved by this House.

#### 1510

The motion called on the McGuinty Liberals to table a mental health and addictions plan that reflects the recommendations made by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions within 60 days. Both members took part in the all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. In fact, it was the member for Whitby—Oshawa who brought the original motion to strike the committee. She subsequently served as Vice-Chair.

I truly believe it was through the work of these members on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions and their successful opposition day motion that the McGuinty Liberals were forced to add mental health and addictions to this year's budget speech. Otherwise, I think it would be another example and a continuation of the McGuinty government paying lip service and lip service alone to the problems associated with mental health and addictions in this province.

I want to congratulate the members from Whitby—Oshawa and Dufferin—Caledon for their tremendous work and their service to Ontario.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I had the pleasure of attending a budget breakfast this week with faculty and staff from York University at the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, hosted by my colleagues MPPs Greg Sorbara, Helena Jacek, Reza Moridi and the Honourable Michael Chan.

The budget was warmly received by all those in attendance. In particular, the unprecedented announcement by our government of 60,000 more post-secondary spaces was welcomed by York University. Mamdouh Shoukri, president and vice-chancellor of York University, says that the university is looking forward to continuing to work with this government, and that this support will allow York to continue in its effort to become a more comprehensive university.

My riding of York West is host to York University, the third-largest university in the country and home to over 50,000 students and 7,000 faculty members and staff. This commitment of 60,000 more spaces in post-secondary institutions will no doubt benefit York University and its prospective students. It therefore gives me great pleasure to rise today in the House and share in the elation of this dynamic community.

As for York University, I look forward to watching it evolve further into a comprehensive university to continue to meet the needs of future generations and play a crucial role in the cultural, social, educational and economic development of our local and, indeed, the international community.

#### HEALTHY LIVING

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I want to publicly thank Dr. Michael Tam, the president of the Anti-Aging Healing Arts Center, who came to Davenport to present his short guide to great health. Essentially, it says the following: "You are what you eat, you are what you drink and you are what you think."

"You are what you eat:" He's recommending consuming a diet rich in fibre and antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables. But his real contribution is the connection between the mind and the body. He says that that is a very important distinction we have to understand. He says the following: "A lie detector test is the quickest way to show that every cell in your body is affected by your thinking. For most people who are hooked up on a monitoring device ... even a simple lie will be clearly visible. Why? An uncomfortable" thought and "question will lead to sweating, increased heart rate, variable breathing rates, and other irregularities. We are able to conclude, without hesitation, that every emotive thought leaves a trace in your body. For example, habitual depressive and negative thoughts even begin to shut down the immune system and an embarrassing thought causes millions of cells to turn red-hot" in your face.

"But the effects of thoughts on the body can be positive. With things like meditation, friendship, guided imagery, prayer, biofeedback, and laughter, you can literally send healing messages to your brain, reducing stress and boosting your immune system." Many hospitals today are already integrating these approaches and these healing methods in their patient care for more effective and lasting recovery.

We say to Dr. Michael Tam, thank you very much, and we need more of this. You can find it in my calendar of 2011.

#### CANCER SCREENING

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** In 2008, this province and the entire world faced the greatest recession since the Great Depression eight decades ago. But the McGuinty government steered Ontario through the downturn, and I am happy to say that last week's budget shows our province has turned the corner. Now, our government can build on that progress with targeted investments in the services Ontario families need, and there's nothing more important than Ontarians' health and the health of their loved ones.

That's why the McGuinty government is investing an additional \$15 million over the next three years to provide 90,000 more breast screening exams. Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed type of cancer among Ontario women and the second leading cause of cancer deaths. Detecting cancer at the earliest possible moment is vital. This funding will allow young women who are at high risk for breast cancer to benefit from the high-quality services provided by the Ontario breast screening program.

Contrast this with the previous Conservative government, which closed 28 hospitals, fired 6,200 nurses, comparing them to hula hoops. The new Leader of the Opposition now plans to slash \$3 billion out of health care funding. We think that's the wrong approach. The McGuinty government understands that investment in health care saves lives, and that's the right thing to do for Ontario families.

#### MOTIONS

##### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following change be made to the ballot list dated March 9, 2011, for private members' public business: Mr. Arnott, Mr. Hardeman and Mr. Bailey exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Hardeman assumes ballot item number 64, Mr. Arnott assumes ballot item number 14 and Mr. Bailey assumes ballot item number 4; and that notice for ballot item number 4 be waived.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

##### IVAN THRASHER

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allocated to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Ivan Thrasher.

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

I'd like to welcome to the Speaker's gallery, here today for the tribute to Ivan William Thrasher, member for Windsor–Sandwich in the 27th Parliament: Orpha Thrasher, his wife; his son Jeff Thrasher; daughter Ruth Parent; daughter Shelley Thrasher; daughter Rose Barlow and her husband, Mike Barlow; grandson Matthew Parent; granddaughter Rachel Uytendogaart; grandson Ben Kelly; granddaughter Rylee Thrasher; Patricia Wright-Bodig; Rachel Bodig; and Theo Bodig. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. On behalf of the Legislature, welcome to Queen's Park today.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** It is a real honour for me to stand in my place and represent the Progressive Conservative caucus as we pay tribute to a former colleague. I want to, as well, extend a very special invitation to the family. Orpha Thrasher knows this place. She heard about it as well through her husband, who I'm sure on many occasions would come home and express his frustration with how things are done here or not done here.

It was Frank Sinatra who was fond of saying, "May you live to be 100." Our former colleague in this House, Ivan William Thrasher, almost reached that goal in his own richly fulfilled life. In fact, I understand that he is prominently featured on the website entitled *myjourney-to100.com*, and I believe that he would have us all visit that website regularly.

Born to William and Ruby Thrasher on May 21, 1914, at Amherstburg, Ontario, Ivan was a graduate of the universities of Toronto and Windsor. Ivan joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1940 and served in the first and second regiment until June 1945. He was in the army survey crew and was assigned to battlefields in Africa and Italy before he arrived in the Netherlands. He returned to Holland for the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Holland, where he befriended his hosts Karel and Ada Sipkes of Apeldoorn.

Ivan married his wife, Orpha, on March 8, 1946, and that's when his life really began—so Orpha tells me. They became the proud parents of five children: Shelley, Jeff, Ruby, Ruth and Rosemary.

#### 1520

Having settled in Ruthven, Ontario, Ivan began his working life as a turkey farmer. For those who don't know, Ruthven is situated halfway between Leamington and Kingsville. And for those of you who may know this and don't care, it is the little village where I first lived after I immigrated to this country in 1956. It's a wonderful little village and it is a place that I remember very fondly.

I also remember very fondly the first time I met Ivan Thrasher. I was the sacrificial lamb for the Progressive Conservative Party in 1975. At that point, I was convinced that I could win in the riding of Essex South. So I sought out, of course, the elder statesman, the only Progressive Conservative who'd won for decades—but that's going to change. He, of course, was Ivan Thrasher. I paid the visit, as a young man, and I asked him his advice. He said, "Frank, don't do it." I knew that this was a man of wisdom, but of course, being young and

inexperienced, I didn't listen. So I did run. I did not win, as he predicted. I ran again in 1977 and didn't win again. Anyway, that's another story. We're here to talk about Ivan.

Ivan's next career was in real estate. Through his efforts, Thrasher Real Estate became very well known throughout the Windsor and Essex county area. In 1964, Ivan was elected to the provincial Legislature as the Progressive Conservative MPP for Windsor–Sandwich. During that by-election campaign, Ivan, the consummate entrepreneur and promoter and marketer, arranged for a tugboat to tow a gigantic election sign back and forth along the Detroit River waterfront. After his electoral victory as a PC member in what, as I mentioned, is, or was, a largely Liberal territory, then-Premier John Robarts made a point of attending Ivan's swearing-in ceremony. It was that special.

As an MPP, Ivan was an ardent champion for the construction of the E.C. Row Expressway. As Ivan said, looking back, "I think I could have had it finished in a couple of years." The reality is that the expressway became a political football in ensuing years, subject to so many delays over the next three decades that it went into the Guinness Book of Records as the world's slowest highway project. The next one will be the 407.

His personal dream when he entered politics was to obtain federal and provincial co-operation on a plan to build multi-sport athletic facilities for youth in communities across the country. He dreamed of doing this because of his commitment to young people and also because he was a strong supporter of the Olympic games and he believed that Canada should develop more world-class athletes. But as Ivan admitted, in frustration, "I never got to first base with that. Getting federal and provincial governments to agree on the project was impossible." Well, Ivan, not much has changed. But we're grateful for his optimism and the fact that he did what he believed he was called to do.

Ivan always said he enjoyed making a difference in the lives of the constituents he represented at Queen's Park. He helped them navigate the red tape of government on practical issues such as pension and workers' compensation claims. As Ivan himself said, "It was unbelievable how many people I was able to do something for." That, of course, was his motivation—to help people—and that is his legacy.

Ivan was also very enthusiastic about working with the then Windsor mayor, Michael Patrick, on local civic projects such as a new charter for the Windsor Raceway.

Ivan left provincial politics in 1967 with the observation, "People are getting extremely disappointed with politicians." Well, back to the future. That, of course, is a quote that unfortunately lives on today. But as Ivan did, we all here will continue to do the best we can to serve the people who elected us.

His advice to any party was to get budget deficits down and regain control over the economy. I say that here today on behalf of Ivan Thrasher and on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party to the government in

power: Get those deficits down and get control over the economy.

With the sincerest apologies to my colleagues opposite, Speaker—and please don't call me to order on this—I have to share this with colleagues. Ivan Thrasher also said this: “I still have not figured out what the Liberals stand for.” That's a quote, and I want to thank Ivan Thrasher for that quote, because it is now in Hansard for all to hear forever. I have to say to Ivan Thrasher, I join him in that sentiment; I can't figure it out either.

Ivan Thrasher followed his passion for breeding and racing thoroughbred horses, at one time having more than 40 horses. I wish I would have known him better; I would have gotten some inside tips and maybe we could have done well. It was a passion of his and he followed it.

He was a lifelong self-learner. Ivan became an accomplished pianist. In his 80s, he taught himself how to repair violins, and I'm told he was second to none in the game of Scrabble; only Orpha could tell us the truth about that.

Ivan and Orpha moved to Guelph in 1983, but they refused to call themselves retired. Ivan continued with his daily workouts of regular calisthenics, long walks and hanging upside down from a bar for a quarter of an hour daily to stretch his muscles. I'm sure this must have been very entertaining for Orpha, especially on some occasions. He also played the piano for an hour each day as a reminder of the years in Windsor when he and his brothers played in an eight-piece band.

Ivan was also an avid golfer and a member of the Beach Grove golf club, the Windsor Yacht Club, the Windsor Club, the ad and sales club, the Essex Scottish, the Moose club and the press club.

Reflecting on his varied past, Ivan said this: “I have no regrets.” I'm sure that his family, to this day, is very proud as they consider all that Ivan Thrasher has accomplished.

Ivan William Thrasher left this world a better place on January 21. He was in his 97th year. He left with wonderful memories of his 64 years together with his wife, Orpha, and his five children. Ivan also leaves behind his grandchildren Bram, Rachel, Matt, Zack, Annie, Ben, Claire and Rylee, and his great-granddaughter, Maleah. Ivan was their hero and they were blessed to have had him in their lives. So were all of us, and all the members of this chamber who will always count him as a valued colleague and as an exemplary public servant.

God bless him. We relish the thoughts and we thank his family for sharing him with us in this Legislature. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Timmons–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** First of all, I want to say that you're a hard act to follow, because you've taken basically all my material. I will do the best that I can.

First of all, on behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats, we want to welcome the family here today. We understand, being a party in third position, that

sometimes being a minority—as he was in Windsor—is not an easy thing to do, and he did it with pride and he did it with gumption. So we say to the family, our congratulations to you and our thanks for having lent your husband, your father, your grandfather and your friend to this Legislature for the time that he was here.

He was first elected, as I was reading back, in 1964 in Windsor–Sandwich, where Ivan Thrasher became probably one of the very few people to be elected, out of Windsor politics, as a Conservative. We know that Windsor at the time, as it is now, was either normally New Democrat or Liberal, and whatever the swing was at the time, he sort of went the opposite way. And it was such a momentous occasion for him to be elected to the Legislature that Premier Robarts actually went to his swearing-in and was with him the day that he was sworn in here, as we are by the Clerk after the election. I think it signifies to what degree—I hope it's nothing I said, Speaker. Sorry; I digress.

As I was saying, the Premier decided that he wanted to be there in order to send a signal to the people of Windsor of how important it was for his government to have elected a Conservative. I think there was a lot of hope and a lot of desire, and a lot of plans were made from that by-election victory, that there were great things to come in Windsor back in the mid- to late 1960's, when it came to the Conservatives.

**1530**

He served in Parliament from the time of his by-election up until the next election, which I believe was in 1967, when he was called upon by his party to do a lot of work. Because he was the only Conservative member from the Windsor area, the whip of the day and the party leader of the day, Mr. Robarts, and others decided, “What a novel idea. We should get him running around the province and doing all these wonderful things for the Conservative Party and give him a role in government so that he can be out there in other ridings, just saying how possible it is to win in those ridings we don't hold now.” So he spent the better part of three years doing a lot of work for the party.

I know, in researching this through legislative research, that he was called upon by the Premier to work on a number of issues, but he was also called upon by the party to do a fair amount of work when it came to those ridings where there needed to be some work done to get Conservatives elected.

Along comes the election of 1967, and unfortunately for him and fortunately for somebody else, he doesn't get re-elected. He muses in the paper—I was reading in the Windsor papers—that in his view there were two reasons why he wasn't elected. The first one was that the party had him going everywhere and not spending time in his riding as a brand-new member doing the things you need to do to be better known by your voters, so you can build that connection and they'll vote you back in when it comes to re-election.

He said the second thing was that there was a down-pour. On the day of the election, there was a great big

rainstorm, to the point that people actually decided they didn't have to go vote. So he was doing what we all do on election day: He was pulling the vote and was on the phone and at the door saying, "Hey, Conservative supporters, get out there," and they'd say, "It's raining outside. But you'll be okay without my vote. Don't worry about it." And he was defeated. He said those were, in his view, the two reasons he didn't get re-elected.

But he learned a very hard lesson, and a lesson that some of us, unfortunately, have learned even harder. I think of a particular member—I don't know why I can't remember the name—who was defeated in 1995; I think his name was Mr. Daigeler. Obviously, that's not what happened in this case, but once you leave politics, sometimes it's not an easy thing to do.

He had a very successful real estate business, and because he had been a Conservative in Windsor, from what I understand and from what research has given to me—and tell me if this is not the case—he found it a little bit difficult at times to hold some of the clients he had, on the basis of his political affiliation. He found out that because of his time here, although very rewarding and very meaningful as far as what he contributed to the province, there was a certain price he had to pay when he went back to private life. Eventually, people got over that. The people of Windsor are who they are. They're openhearted and they understood, at the end of the day, that that was just what he did and everybody has the right to participate in democracy. Nonetheless, he found there was an effect.

The other thing was that he got elected at a time—and this is a conversation I've had with a number of former members who were in at that particular time in the 1960s—when the salary of the day was somewhere around \$8,000 a year. You gave up a full-time job somewhere else, where you got home every night and enjoyed the things that everybody else enjoys when it comes to family, friends and community. He was here on \$8,000 a year, having to pay his Toronto accommodation, when he stayed here, out of that \$8,000; having to pay for his office in Windsor-Sandwich out of his \$8,000; and having to run the entire constituency office out of his salary. I think it says something of the breed of politician who served at that time.

I look at—I'm having blanks—Mr. Yakabuski's father, who served here at that time. It took a pretty big amount of courage, and a fair amount of determination and will and the want to serve for people to do it at the rates we were paying back then, because it was a very tough business. You didn't get airplane rides back to your riding. You had to take the train or you had to drive, which means to say you had even less time when it came to being able to be with your family and constituents.

He understood there was a cost to being elected, and that cost was to his family life. But they survived and they were with him all the way through, and still are today, in his memory. But there was also a cost when it came to his ability to move forward with what was going on in his life financially.

As mentioned by Mr. Klees, he was an avid fan of horses. I just want to say to Mr. Klees that I haven't found a horse owner yet who can give you good advice on a bet. So you'd probably have been better off not getting any advice; you might have lost your shirt. Not that he wasn't good with horses, but such is the nature of the horse business. But he was very much one who enjoyed horses.

As well, as Mr. Klees said, he was an avid sports fan and had a vision that partly happened; I would say this did happen to an extent—what you spoke of earlier—which is joint federal-provincial projects in order to build a sort of sportsplex where youth can go to do useful things other than having idle hands and getting in trouble in our communities.

I remember, in 1967, as a young man, for one year there was the Expo program that we built across this nation and across our province—plenty of sporting facilities in our communities. In our community, just up the street from where I live, is the Centennial Arena that was built as a result of federal-provincial money. I'm not so sure that he didn't get some effect, because certainly that did happen for a short time. Unfortunately, co-operation on the capital side with federal and provincial governments is not something that has been maintained and been in place each and every year. But certainly in 1966 and 1967, at the time that he was in the Legislature, that actually did happen. I don't know for sure, but I would imagine it had something to do with the work that he had to do.

I also want to say this, which was interesting—and I'm going to take the quote a little bit to another length, and that is the point that Mr. Klees said. This was a quote out of the Windsor Star. It says, and this is Mr. Ivan Thrasher: "At times, I think (NDP leader) Bob Rae has done a pretty good job; at times, I think he's done a horrible job." Like a lot of voters, he says he hasn't figured out what Liberal leader Lyn McLeod stands for." I want to clarify: He was talking about Lyn McLeod, but probably talking about the Liberals.

But interestingly, he was a man of his word, and a man of his convictions: "PC leader Mike Harris may need a bit more seasoning, he figures. But 'when it comes right down to it, I'll vote for Harris.'" So clearly he was a Conservative through and through and understood that, at the end of the day, he was going to back his party.

I just want to say to the family who's here and those who may be watching that Mr. Thrasher served here a short time but certainly had an effect on this Legislature. There are plenty of people back home and in his family who are proud of the time that he had here. We say, on behalf of all of us who are here today, that we stand on the shoulders of people like Ivan Thrasher, and we thank you for having lent him to us for those four years.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Guelph.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased and honoured to be able to, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, join in the

tribute to Ivan Thrasher. And Thrasher family, meet the current member from Essex. The reason that I'm here speaking rather than the current member is because the current member is the Deputy Speaker and, as you see, he has just taken the chair. So this explains why me.

I would like to offer my sincere condolences to Orpha, his beloved wife of 64 years; his children Ruby, Ruth, Rose, Jeff and Shelley, four out of five who are here today; his eight grandchildren, some of whom are here today; and the newest addition to the Thrasher clan, his great-granddaughter Maleah, who isn't here today because she's just a little wee tiny bit of a thing.

I must say, though, having read about Ivan and talked to the family, that I think our tribute should really be a celebration of a life well-lived. Ivan was born May 21, 1914, near Amherstburg, Ontario. As you've heard, he joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1940 and served until June 1945. He participated in the Italian campaign and helped to liberate the Netherlands. Ivan returned to Holland with his wife, Orpha, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Holland, and he again returned for the 60th reunion.

Again, as Mr. Klees has explained, following the war, Ivan and Orpha settled in Ruthven—and for those of you who didn't figure out Kingsville, as far as I can figure out, that's near Lake Erie; they'll all know where Lake Erie is—and they built a home and got into turkey farming, Mrs. Van Bommel. She does chickens.

Soon he was starting on his next career as a real estate broker, and Thrasher Real Estate became a well-known business in Windsor. The family moved closer to Windsor, and then to Oldcastle.

His daughter Rosemary remembers that "family was very important to both mom and dad, back then, and we did a lot as a family, from going to church every Sunday, regular visits to grandma and grandpa Thrasher's, picking strawberries and cherries, and wonderful road trips to Jekyll Island. The cottage in Kearney has brought our immediate family even closer."

A recurring theme from all of his children were those Scrabble games which, reportedly, Ivan usually won, but I did note that various children took great delight in reporting that sometimes they actually managed to win. But if anybody was keeping score, it was clear that Ivan, with his outstanding vocabulary, was the usual winner.

#### 1540

In 1964, Ivan won a seat in the provincial Legislature—and I do have to remind Mr. Klees that he's the last Tory MPP for the Windsor-Essex area provincially. He still holds that record of being the most recent Tory MPP from the Windsor-Essex area. He served in the Legislature from 1964 to 1967 and sat on six different committees while he was here.

Ivan was particularly proud of his contributions, as has been mentioned, to the Windsor Raceway, to St. Clair College—and that was the era in the mid-1960s when the community colleges were just being built, and getting a community college for the Windsor area was very important—and also, as has been noted, his contribution to the E.C. Row Expressway.

His daughter Ruby recalls Ivan making the move to Toronto after becoming an MPP. She says that while he was an MPP in Toronto, she was at university and remembers going shopping with him to get all the necessities for his apartment and going out for nice dinners. So it seems to me that, as is still the case today, university-aged children still find ways to get their parents to pay for things. Any of us who have had university-aged children know this.

His son, Jeff, also joined Ivan here for a time as a page here at Queen's Park, and his granddaughter Rachel, who lives in Guelph, also served as a page here a generation later.

After relinquishing his seat in the next election, he soon found his passion in breeding and racing thoroughbred horses, at one time having 40 horses. How did that happen? Well, Orpha tells me that in 1967, Ivan, as the real estate man, sold a small horse farm on the outskirts of Windsor. In lieu of commission, he was rewarded with three thoroughbred horses, and the love affair with horse racing was on.

Ivan and Orpha moved from Windsor and bought a large horse farm north of Acton. So again, for the geography, this would put them living in Ted Arnott's current riding. Then they moved to Guelph, my riding; missed the country and moved back to Puslinch, Ted Arnott's riding; and then found that it was more convenient to be in Guelph, so they finally landed in Guelph, which was a very good decision.

Ivan was a lifelong learner and renaissance man. He was an accomplished pianist, took violin lessons in his 80s—in his 80s—and taught himself how to repair violins.

Ivan's devotion to healthy eating and physical fitness was legendary—I'm not sure all of us would want to emulate the hanging upside down part of it. His son, Jeff, says he remembers that when he was an MPP, he was trying to get the government to adopt a program that would allow all Canadians the right to free exercise by the YMCA or some other form of national free workout facility. Unhappily, in those days, they did not consider the long-term effects of a healthy population on the nation's health care costs. So maybe Ivan would approve of the fact that his current MPP, me, was actually involved in setting nutrition guidelines for food that's served to kids in school and involved in making sure that elementary kids have daily physical exercise in elementary schools. I think those are some initiatives that, even if we are Liberals, he would have approved of.

Over the last 25 years—and I've explained where they lived already.

I didn't think I had ever met Ivan, but Orpha tells me that I'm wrong. Apparently, one day during the 2003 campaign I was out door-knocking and I knocked on a door and it turns out I actually had a conversation with Ivan. And I'm sorry I don't remember. I actually had sore knuckles at the end of that experience; I had to start knocking on doors with my left hand because my right hand had worn out.

I think what Ivan, Orpha and I all share is a great commitment in the belief that it's really important to get out there, knock on doors and talk to your constituents. I'm very pleased to say that, apparently, Ivan reported to Orpha when she got home that this person called Liz Sandals had called at the door, and that he did approve, if not of my party, at least of my door-knocking and canvassing technique. So I did meet him after all, although briefly.

Ivan spoke about his values on his website, which was quoted previously. He said, "One of the most important things instilled in me by my mother was 'Love—never go to bed hating someone.'

"The other main thing is honesty. Never, ever tell lies. If you shake a man's hand on a deal, make good or die on it, if necessary."

I wish I had known Ivan longer than the few minutes at the door. Ivan was a good man who packed a lot of living into his 97 years, and he did it all with love and laughter and optimism. Thank you for sharing Ivan with us, and for Ivan's service to Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you to the members from Newmarket–Aurora, Timmins–James Bay, and Guelph.

I would like to add myself that, yes, had you still resided in the hamlet of Ruthven, you would be in the riding of Essex, you would be very close to the lake, and you would still be in the sun parlour of Canada.

The Speaker's office and the clerks will see that you receive a DVD of today's proceedings and a copy of Hansard.

I want to say on behalf of all that we are so pleased that you could be here today while we had this tribute for Ivan Thrasher.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY JOURNÉE MONDIALE DE SENSIBILISATION À L'AUTISME

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm privileged to rise today to mark United Nations World Autism Awareness Day.

J'ai l'honneur de prendre la parole aujourd'hui pour mettre à l'honneur la Journée mondiale de la sensibilisation à l'autisme, proclamée par les Nations Unies. Tous les ans, en date du 2 avril, la célébration de cette journée favorise une meilleure compréhension de cette affection relativement nouvelle et encourage l'adoption d'attitudes positives vis-à-vis des personnes remarquables qui en sont atteintes.

Every year on April 2, the recognition of this day promotes greater understanding of autism and positive perceptions about the remarkable people living with this relatively new disorder.

Ten years ago, we knew very little about autism, and we had only just begun to attempt to respond to the needs of children with autism. Today, we know that there are effective therapies for kids and valuable supports for their families.

Our government understands the challenges that kids with autism and their families face and seek to overcome every day. That is why we're determined to continue to build on the important investments and improvements made to date. We have removed the previous government's age six cut-off to receive intensive behavioural intervention, or IBI, therapy. We have more than quadrupled funding for autism and almost tripled the number of kids getting IBI.

We have made transition teams available in every publicly funded school board, and these teams help kids make the shift to school a smooth one so that they have the opportunity to succeed and learn with their peers. Overall, more than 10,000 kids are being supported in schools. We've helped almost 2,000 kids with autism spectrum disorders go to March break and summer camps. And our investments in research to examine the genetic causes of the disorder are ensuring that Ontario is a leader in autism research.

Most recently, with advice from parents, experts and service providers, our government developed a plan to significantly enhance autism supports for kids across the entire spectrum by establishing programs based on the principles of applied behavioural analysis, or ABA. ABA-based programs help kids become more independent and develop basic life skills like getting dressed, going to school, socializing with peers, eating meals with family or communicating with others.

Dernièrement, sur les conseils des parents, des experts et des fournisseurs de services, notre gouvernement a élaboré un plan visant à améliorer considérablement les soutiens proposés à tous les enfants autistes grâce à l'instauration de programmes fondés sur les principes de l'analyse comportementale appliquée, ou ACA.

#### 1550

About 8,000 more kids will be able to access these important skill-building supports each year, starting later this spring.

While we often focus our attention on young people with autism, it's also important that we recognize the strength and potential of adults with autism. Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting two remarkable young adults with ASD at an event hosted by the Geneva Centre for Autism.

Kaitrin Beechey is a celebrated artist whose work features fantasy places and characters, often with underlying themes of acceptance, equality and social responsibility. Kaitrin says her ASD positively influences her whimsical drawings, one of which hangs proudly at the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. I am very pleased that she's here today in the gallery with her parents, Tom and Karin. Welcome.

It was also wonderful recently to meet Ron Adea, who was diagnosed with autism when he was three. He started

playing piano soon after, and is now a classical pianist and a featured performer at fundraising concerts and festivals.

En hommage à la Journée mondiale de la sensibilisation à l'autisme, je souhaite réaffirmer l'engagement pris par notre gouvernement en faveur de la création d'un continuum de services, d'une collaboration approfondie avec nos partenaires dévoués et d'un soutien dispensé à toutes les personnes autistes et à leurs familles.

In recognition of World Autism Awareness Day, I want to reaffirm our government's commitment to create a continuum of service, to work with our dedicated partners and to support people across the autism spectrum and their families.

### INTERNATIONAL ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK

#### SEMAINE INTERNATIONALE DES APPRENANTS ADULTES

**Hon. John Milloy:** This year the Canadian Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has designated April 2 to April 9 as International Adult Learners' Week in Canada, and I invite all members to join in this celebration.

Dans l'économie actuelle, l'apprentissage se poursuit tout au long de la vie.

In today's economy, learning is a lifelong process. Experts tell us seven out of 10 new jobs will require some form of post-secondary education and training. Today, 63% of people in Ontario have post-secondary education and training credentials. That's higher than any Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country in the world. We intend to increase that number to 70%. New technology and new consumer demand creates change that impacts on all sectors and workers.

Il est donc essentiel que nous aidions les adultes, les travailleurs expérimentés et les travailleurs licenciés à tenir leurs compétences à jour.

The Ministry of Education works with school boards to provide continuing education courses, including high school equivalency. My ministry is responsible for education and training in our public colleges, private colleges, universities and workplaces through apprenticeship and employment services.

I've had the opportunity to meet adults who are expanding their skills in education, including laid-off workers who are turning unemployment into an opportunity to learn new skills for careers that are in demand. These are people such as Ralph Pilato, who was laid off from the forestry industry in Thunder Bay and upgraded his education to become a developmental service worker, or Michele Parry, who was laid off from the automotive industry in the London area and retrained to become a medical office assistant.

These people found a new start through Second Career, and I'm pleased to say that nearly 42,000 laid-off

workers have participated in retraining to gain new skills and knowledge. A recent survey reports that 74% of Second Career participants have found work less than a year after graduating.

Second Career is a success, and it's not the only program that helps adult learners. In 2009-10, more than 61,000 people received literacy and basic skills training, with seven out of 10 learners going on to further education and employment.

The 2011 Ontario budget announced an additional \$44 million over three years for literacy and basic skills programs.

Cet investissement veillera à ce que les services soient accessibles aux gens qui en ont le plus besoin.

In addition, this year my ministry is taking the first step to launch a curriculum framework to help adult learners quickly move from literacy and essential skills training to other post-secondary education and training, as well as employment. The curriculum will help our Employment Ontario network better serve the needs of each client.

Ontario is turning the corner, and Ontario workers are leading the way. We are committing to expanding opportunities for learning and training to help adult learners take the next step toward their future.

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

### WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize world autism day, which was marked this past Saturday.

While intensive behavioural intervention, or IBI, treatment is commonly seen as very successful for the treatment of autism, many Ontario children sit on wait-lists for funding. Some families are paying upwards of \$60,000 per year out of their own pocket for IBI therapy. Here in Ontario, there are actually more children on the wait-list for IBI therapy than there are children currently receiving provincially funded IBI.

Autism Ontario responded quickly after the McGuinty Liberals tabled their 2011 budget last week. While they were pleased that the word "autism" was mentioned in the budget for the first time in three years, they still have concerns. They are concerned that the Liberal government's full-day kindergarten plan does not include supports for children with special needs that would allow them to attend full-day classes.

I expressed the same concerns when we debated Bill 242. Like Autism Ontario, I worry that this new program will not capture the children who need early intervention.

We need to ensure that the children can be identified and assessed at an early age. Waits of up to five years or longer still persist for the Ontario IBI program despite the fact that early intervention is critical to a child achieving their full developmental potential.

I have heard from parents who have been told by the school system to return their children back to paid

daycare because at least in the child care setting they are actually getting services, and they don't in the school system. It is shameful.

I had the opportunity today to meet with the Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services, and they're concerned about the same issue.

On World Autism Awareness Day, we have to acknowledge that families in Ontario are out there fighting every day for fair access to services and supports for their children. It is time that this government stands up and supports the children and families who are fighting not to be shut out of a publicly funded education system.

#### INTERNATIONAL ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** The PC Party is happy to join with all parties in recognizing international learners' week in Canada. Our party has always supported and helped to provide tools to promote lifelong learning.

This week, across Canada and all around the world people are raising the profile of adult learners. Those celebrating this exciting occasion this week should know that our party will continue to promote lifelong learning and support adult learners. But we could be doing even more for adult learners in this province.

The McGuinty government's foreign scholarship plan will award lucrative \$40,000-per-year scholarships to 300 foreign students while Ontario students get left behind. This is just one more piece of evidence of how out of touch Premier McGuinty's government is with the people it serves. This \$30 million for a foreign scholarship giveaway is an affront to Ontario families who are struggling to afford to put family members, both young and old, through college and university.

Faced with the highest tuition of any province, we also have the largest class sizes and student unemployment rate in Canada. It is clear that this government has an easier time making new promises rather than delivering on old ones.

In 2007, Mr. McGuinty promised in the throne speech to deliver a \$300 grant to every full-time student for textbook and technology needs. When our party asked the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities why the government is offering only half of that amount to only a fraction of the students, the minister said, "Well, because of financial circumstances the government had to curb the program." Well, fast forward eight months and he miraculously finds \$30 million to give \$40,000 foreign scholarships.

**1600**

It's obvious that this McGuinty government is out of touch. That is why the Ontario PC Party is focused on getting back to the basics and reinvesting Ontario dollars in Ontario students, both young and old, who are struggling to pay their way. We will use those dollars to support programs like adult learning that help to make our students the best and the brightest in the world.

#### WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** UN World Autism Awareness Day is an opportunity to honour parents who, often on their own, at great monetary expense, at great physical expense, at great emotional and psychological expense, spend a great deal of their time supporting their children who have autism. The experience that counts the most in this discussion comes from families upon whom autism has laid its heavy hand.

Last week, New Democrats raised concerns from one of thousands of parents trapped by a system of inadequate programs and supports, long waiting lists, arbitrary service terminations and lack of information about decisions made regarding their children's autism treatment. With respect to intensive behavioural intervention therapy, the McGuinty government has said no child will be cut off from IBI at age six, but it's still happening.

Ask Viano and Maria Ciaglia, who came to this Legislature because their six-year-old son, Luca, is having his IBI cut off before he's ready for school and without the required assessment.

Ask Brian Powers, who lost his permanent employment, is struggling to make ends meet and has learned it will be three years before his young son can obtain IBI through the McGuinty government's program.

Ask Paul Ceretti, who made several public appeals for IBI after one of his twin daughters lost the therapy they both had been receiving and benefiting from.

Ask the families who are forced to leave their communities to obtain IBI for their child somewhere else in the province. Such is the nature of the regional disparities that exist where autism treatment is concerned. The anger, frustration, fatigue and anxiety that parents are experiencing right across this province tell us there are serious deficiencies in the government's handling of this program.

Parents are financially exhausted. They mortgage their homes, hold fundraising events, use their credit, borrow from families; whatever it takes to provide life-changing IBI to their children. They're caught in the McGuinty maze, the endless loop of fighting to obtain or retain therapy services. They file judicial reviews, seek redress from professional disciplinary bodies and lobby service providers and school officials. It's more than a full-time job.

In the first quarter of last year, 90 children were thrown out of IBI. In the second quarter, the number was 240 children. Now consider: While 1,404 children are receiving IBI, there are 1,517 children waiting for treatment and another 339 waiting to be assessed. These are the ministry's most recent numbers, but they are six months out of date. It's difficult to obtain timely autism information, and that's a significant problem. There is no transparency to what the ministry is doing on this file.

When we request pertinent information about policy and contract documents, we are directed to freedom of information. Rather than full disclosure, this government hides behind the freedom-of-information process, meaning parents have difficulty unearthing the policy rationale for clinical decisions that result in a family losing its essential IBI supports.

Parents know full well that school IBI programs are inadequately funded and are not what they should be. How many children are being parked in classrooms when they're clearly not ready for a school setting? How many are transitioning too soon and losing their potential to ever benefit?

The minister pledges a new complaints process for after the next election. It's needed now, just as the Ombudsman oversight for child welfare and protection is needed now.

We must acknowledge the parents who are now activists fighting the serious shortcomings in the government's program. Their dedication and commitment is nothing short of amazing.

#### INTERNATIONAL ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** In the minute that I have left, I want to again honour the workers who work in adult literacy and honour today's International Adult Learners' Week. This is a time when we have to say to the literacy workers, thanks for all the work that you have been doing and thanks for the sacrifices you make, in spite of the fact that, in the last 10 years, you've received so little funding. You do it often without government support.

Thanks to the learners, often who have limited access to higher education and training. Many are sole-support parents, most living below the poverty line. Many lack high school diplomas and some have learning disabilities—and the list goes on.

We thank the federal government, under the Canada-Ontario labour market agreement, for having passed on \$90 million over a three-year period. I congratulate the government for bringing forth at least \$45 million over a three-year period. It's better than a kick in the teeth, but what they want is stable funding so they don't have to come begging you for the little scraps you offer them every now and then.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Beaches–East York has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question earlier today given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning Toronto East General Hospital and infrastructure funds. This matter will be debated next Wednesday at 6 p.m.

#### PETITIONS

##### PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I obviously support this petition, am pleased to affix my name to it and give it to page Gemma to take to the table.

#### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:

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

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Travis to carry it for me.

#### OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition which I've been presenting fairly regularly here. It's with the Ministry of the Environment.

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

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

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

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Minister of the Environment”, who is here, “initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the Oak Ridges moraine until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to prevent contamination of the” water or soil on the “Oak Ridges moraine”—especially on Lakeridge Road and on Morgans Road, which is in my riding of Durham.

**1610**

I’m pleased to give this to Gemma, one of the pages on their last week here at Queen’s Park.

#### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And I have signed the petition.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by people from Strathroy, Watford, Kerwood and Mount Brydges.

“We, the undersigned, object to any approval of industrial wind turbines in our local municipalities until there is a full independent assessment performed by the provincial government to address the viability of industrial wind power, the impact of construction on wildlife and the environment, as well as the adverse effects on livestock, people’s health, quality of life and investment in our properties.

It is important for provincial and local governments to ensure that all concerns are addressed before construction of wind turbines permanently changes our community.

“Further, we require that the proponents notify all residents and landowners in the proposed project, and that the proponents will submit to full disclosure information about the proposed project.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my name to the same and send it with Madelaine.

#### BRITISH HOME CHILDREN

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I’m pleased to present this petition, and I see that a signatory on here is my mother. Her mother-in-law was a home child. This 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.”

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

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Signatures have come in under the title “Petition for Gas Tax Fairness.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the skyrocketing price of fuel is causing hardship to families across Ontario; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government charges a gasoline tax of 14.7 cents per litre to drivers in all parts of Ontario; and

“Whereas gasoline tax revenues now go exclusively to big cities with transit systems, while roads and bridges crumble in rural communities across Ontario; and

“Whereas residents of Haldimand–Norfolk have been shut out of provincial gasoline tax revenues to which they have contributed;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to redistribute provincial gasoline tax revenues to all communities across the province.”

I agree with this one and sign it.

## PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I do have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this, and I will sign it and send it with Gemma.

## DOG OWNERSHIP

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

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

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

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

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

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

I have affixed my signature to this and give it to page Riley.

## PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this and will sign it and send it down to the table with Grace.

## WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I am pleased to read a petition which also represents very much my riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“Petition Against Industrial Wind Turbines in Rural Ontario”—I know Maria Van Bommel is affected by this too.

“We, the undersigned, object to any approval of industrial wind turbines in our local municipalities until there is a full independent assessment performed by the provincial government to address the viability of industrial wind power, the impact of construction on wildlife and the environment, as well as the adverse effects on livestock, people’s health, quality of life and investment in their properties.

“It is important for provincial and local governments to ensure that all concerns are addressed before construction of wind turbines permanently changes our community.”

Therefore, “we require that the proponents notify all residents and landowners in the proposed project and that the proponents will submit full disclosure of info about the proposed project.”

I’m pleased to sign it and support it on behalf of Bob Bailey and others.

## PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have a petition today from a wonderful lady, Jessica Coughlin, from Nepean, Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition wholeheartedly, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Grace.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas soaring hydro costs across the province are making electricity unaffordable for many hard-working Ontario families and seniors;

“Whereas energy experts suggest that over the course of 2010, residential hydro bills in Ontario will increase 26% or more, costing a minimum of \$304 per year for the average homeowner;

“Whereas, over the last year alone, the McGuinty Liberal government has added \$150 per household in hydro generation premiums, \$50 in smart meter fees and then placed \$98 in harmonized sales taxes on the average Ontario household’s hydro bill;

**1620**

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s smart meters are forcing hard-working and busy Ontarians to pay exorbitant premiums to do regular chores, such as laundry, outside of the Premier’s ‘preferred’ time-of-use energy schedule;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the McGuinty Liberal government immediately reduce hydro rates for all Ontarians, cease with the time-of-use pricing and remove the HST tax placed upon electricity, as it is an essential service to hard-working Ontario families.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and send it down with Jimmy, our page.

#### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I have a petition certified by the clerks at the table. It is made out to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I am pleased to sign this petition.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The time provided for petitions has expired.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### BETTER TOMORROW FOR ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2011

##### LOI DE 2011 SUR DES LENDEMAINS MEILLEURS POUR L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Phillips, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 173, An Act respecting 2011 Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Projet de loi 173, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires de 2011, l’affectation anticipée de crédits et d’autres questions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Debate?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I will be sharing the vast majority of my time with the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? The member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** I want to thank the minister for sharing his time with me today. That’s just wonderful. I’m pleased to rise in the House today, on behalf of the Ministry of Finance and the Honourable Dwight Duncan, to join in the debate and lead off second reading of the Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act, 2011.

The McGuinty government’s Open Ontario plan to make the province more competitive is working and it’s getting results. Jobs are coming back, the economy is improving and, of course, there are positive signs for Ontario families and for Ontario businesses. We’ve made significant progress: We’ve made progress in the areas of education, health care, infrastructure, electricity and taxes, and that’s the foundation upon which a highly skilled and a highly educated workforce has been called upon to compete in Ontario.

Through the Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act, 2011, we’re proposing to make strategic investments that will continue to create jobs, strategic investments that will help farmers and investments that will support new spaces in our colleges and in our universities, expand breast cancer screening, improve mental health services for the children of Ontario and enhance our primary services for recipients under the Ontario drug benefit program, primarily our seniors and, of course, our social assistance recipients.

To build a better future, we must invest in each other: in our people and, of course, in our partnerships. Working together means that we ensure that Ontario businesses can continue to thrive, to be innovative and to compete in a global economy. Our government is partnering with innovative businesses, and we are creating exactly the right conditions for jobs and for growth. Over the next few weeks, Ontario and several private sector partners will be announcing new investments of over \$1.3 billion, including nearly \$175 million from the prov-

ince, creating and retaining nearly 10,000 jobs. These plans are under way; exciting business projects are already in motion.

Last week, the Ontario government announced its support for businesses that are either expanding or developing new products or new services and, as a result, are strengthening our economy.

Here are just a few examples of the public-private partnerships that are already under way:

Pratt and Whitney Canada, a world leader in the design, manufacture and service of gas turbine engines for the aerospace industry, is creating 80 new jobs in Mississauga and investing in new technology, equipment, and research and development.

Best Theratronics is a developer and manufacturer of medical equipment used to treat cancer and make blood supplies safer. They're creating 100 new jobs in Ottawa, improving existing product lines and developing new technologies.

Sungrow Canada: They are a manufacturer of equipment for the clean solar power industry and they are creating 50 new jobs, establishing Vaughan as their North American headquarters.

Kellogg Canada is creating 40 new jobs as it plans to add a new cereal production line in Belleville. This investment will make the plant among the most sophisticated in the company's worldwide operations.

Eagle Feather Aviation Inc. is a new helicopter service and they're creating up to five new jobs. The company will provide more flights in the Sault Ste. Marie region and of course the surrounding rural First Nation communities.

More than 400 of our young people will gain valuable job experience to prepare for their future careers through internships and co-op placements across northern Ontario. These projects will create and support a total of 969 new and existing jobs for families across the province.

The McGuinty government is proud to work with innovative Ontario businesses that develop new products that they can sell to the world while at the same time creating new and good jobs for families right here in Ontario.

We will continue to announce similar public-private projects throughout the year. We'll continue to turn the corner, with new growth that increases opportunities for the people of Ontario.

Ontario has long understood that in order to grow our economy and enhance the quality of life that we enjoy right here in Ontario, we need a well-educated workforce that can compete in the global economy and attract international investment. Ontarians with higher levels of knowledge and skills have better employment prospects, earn higher wages, are engaged citizens and are less dependent on government supports during their working lives. That's why our government is making investments to support additional students in Ontario's colleges and universities. The McGuinty government will ensure that a college or university space is available for every qualified Ontario student. This year we're announcing

funding to help support more than 60,000 additional students in colleges and universities by 2015-16. To achieve this objective, the government is investing more than \$64 million in 2011-12, growing to \$309 million in 2013-14, in additional operating grants to colleges and universities.

As reported in the Niagara Falls Review, Dan Patterson, who is the president of Niagara College, values the government's commitment to creating new opportunities through this initiative, and this is what Dan Patterson had to say: "This is very good news when you think of the competing priorities that the government has to deal with.... Investing in these new spots for post-secondary education is very important to us."

In the same article, Brock University president Jack Lightstone said it was "heartening" that the province has made a priority of investing in the future. Jack Lightstone had this to say: "Traditional industrial and manufacturing sectors are now thoroughly globalized, and jurisdictions like Ontario cannot let up in terms of creating an ever more educated workforce."

#### 1630

In an article featured in the Guelph Mercury, Bonnie Patterson, who is president of the Council of Ontario Universities, says about the province's cash commitment that it is "particularly appreciated in these tough fiscal times."

In a Brampton Guardian article, Meaghan Coker, who is president of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, had this to say: "The government has demonstrated once again that it understands the importance of higher education to Ontario's social and economic future."

We're proud of our plan to see more students benefit from Ontario's world-class post-secondary education system. Our government also aims to raise the province's post-secondary attainment rate to 70%, which is up from 56% in 2002. We're also announcing additional funding for two important programs that support training opportunities and provide work experience to help Ontarians improve their knowledge and skills: \$44 million over three years for literacy and basic skills programs, and \$22.5 million in 2011-12 for the summer jobs strategy, which will help more than 100,000 students access jobs and services this summer.

Of course, I'd be remiss if I did not highlight financial literacy. This program, of course, is quite dear to me. In 2010, the McGuinty government showed a resolve to better integrate financial literacy into the Ontario school curriculum for students from JK to 12. As co-chair of the working group on financial literacy, along with my co-chair Tom Hamza, president of the Investor Education Fund, we consulted with stakeholders all over the world. We heard from jurisdictions around the world; we heard from parents; we heard from students; we heard from school boards; we heard from educators; we heard from teens.

Beginning in the fall of 2011—this fall—the Ontario curriculum will further enhance student financial literacy education by, of course, integrating more relevant content

through the existing curriculum in our schools. There will be more support for teachers to connect with financial literacy education resources, with topics that are current across the province for students and, of course, to enrich student learning in this area. It's essential that we equip our students with the skills and knowledge they need to be competitive in a global economy, and that, of course, begins with financial literacy skills.

We believe that building education is definitely sound social policy, but it is essential economic policy. Of course, financial literacy will give students those skills and knowledge that they need to succeed.

The McGuinty government transformed our health care system for the better as well. We continue to put patients first, and I'll highlight some of the programs and initiatives that we continue to stand out. Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed type of cancer among Ontario women. It's the second leading cause of cancer deaths. Detecting and treating breast cancer at the earliest possible stages is essential. That is why we're announcing additional funding, over the next three years, to provide approximately 90,000 more breast screening exams in the province of Ontario. This would expand the Ontario breast cancer screening program to reach women between the ages of 30 and 49 who are at high risk for breast cancer due to genetic factors and medical and family history and, of course, support additional exams for women aged 50 to 69 currently covered under the program.

As reported in the Peterborough Examiner, Ken Tremblay, who is president and CEO of the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, is pleased with the expansion of the screening program. Of course, I want to acknowledge all the hard work of our member from Peterborough, who has worked diligently on this file and, of course, several others.

Ken Tremblay had this to say: "We have the Ontario breast screening program here. We'll always welcome additional scanning to screen and detect more cancer earlier. That was good news." In the exact same article, Survivors Abreast founder Meredith Cosburn asserts that the initiative is "absolutely wonderful." She goes on to say—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** She's a good friend.

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** A good friend of Jeff Leal, the member from Peterborough.

"We need to screen younger women," she said. "Unfortunately, younger women are getting breast cancer more so than they were years ago and that's really scary'...."

"With the new funding, that shouldn't happen anymore, she said."

Mental health problems often begin at a young age, unfortunately, and the system of supports must be more integrated and more responsive to the needs of our children and our youth. Our government will invest in a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy, starting with children and youth. By 2013-14, funding to support the strategy will grow to \$93 million per year.

In particular, I applaud the work of the select committee on mental health, which was vital in leading the way to this strategy. The select committee's August 2010 report on Ontarians living and struggling with mental health and addiction issues and other disorders was a turning point in our government's realization that a comprehensive strategy was necessary. We applaud that group—my colleague Dr. Helena Jaczek from Oak Ridges–Markham, sitting beside me, of course wouldn't want me to single her out, but she was just one of these great people who were on that committee—and the work that that committee did. They held frank discussions about the fact that it often takes a crisis to accomplish major social or political change. The McGuinty government was convinced that this crisis had arrived, and thus the crucial need for a province-wide strategy was born.

We announced the comprehensive strategy last week in the 2011 Ontario budget, and here are just a few stakeholder reactions.

As reported in the Waterloo Region Record, John Colangeli, the CEO and director of Lutherwood, had this to say—he's an incredible community advocate and a hard worker. Lutherwood is a not-for-profit health and social services organization. John says, "It's pretty rare that you see children's mental health in a provincial budget. It's wonderful news."

In an article featured in the St. Catharines Standard, Ellis Katsof, the CEO of Pathstone Mental Health, an agency providing mental health treatment for children and youth up to 18 years of age, notes that the strategy is "a significant breakthrough and a fantastic recognition of the needs of these children, youth and their families.

"This is the largest infusion of dollars we've had for children's mental health in probably 20 years'...."

The government is also enhancing pharmacy services for Ontarians who receive drug coverage through the Ontario drug benefit program, primarily seniors and social assistance recipients. This builds on the successful Meds-Check program. We will fund and support pharmacies offering a range of services, which include prescription, follow-up consultations, medication assessment for patients with chronic disease and training on how to operate home diagnostic devices, such as glucose monitors and blood pressure monitoring kits.

The McGuinty government is committed to ensuring that every health care dollar is used to provide care of the highest quality and value while of course protecting the progress that we have already made.

I'd like to talk about Ontario farmers. Now more than ever, the world, and Ontario, need a strong farming sector. Volatility in commodity markets can make it difficult for farmers to manage their business risks, and of course, I know this first-hand. I hear this first-hand from my farmers in Kitchener–Conestoga in all three of my townships: Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich.

**1640**

We're announcing the extension of the current risk management program for grain and oilseed farmers. The government will also support cattle, hog, sheep and veal

farmers by implementing a new risk management program, as well as a self-directed risk management program for the edible horticulture sector, or fruits and vegetables.

We're already hearing positive reaction from the agricultural community in Ontario. An article featured in the Sarnia Observer quotes Don McCabe, vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. He had this to say: "This is a program that allows farmers to put money into the system and then, when the price is too low for that year, the fund will kick in and cover some of that loss."

As reported in the Owen Sound Sun Times, Mark Wales, who is the chairman of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, believes the farm program is a step in the right direction. Mark Wales had this to say: This program "is a game-changer for Ontario farmers who today have good reason to be optimistic about their future."

We're proud of the government's commitment to making life just a little bit easier for the people of Ontario and the people in our agricultural communities. The cost of these programs will be shared between the Ontario government and the farmers. They're innovative and they'll provide bankability, stability and, of course, predictability for Ontario farmers.

We continue to balance to help eliminate the deficit without threatening economic growth, and we continue to find new ways of doing things. We in the public sector have been asking our friends in the private sector to increase productivity for years. Well, the pressure is on us now more than ever to increase our productivity in the public sector as well.

We will reduce the size of the Ontario public sector by an additional 1,500 positions between April 2012 and March 2014. This comes on top of the reduction of about 3,400 positions by March 2012 that was announced, of course, in the 2009 budget.

In addition, we will be closing four underperforming jails in Ontario, moving inmates to newer, more efficient jails to deliver better value to taxpayers and, of course, keeping our streets safer. Many of our jails are old and inefficient. New jails have a much more efficient ratio of prisoners to staff.

In addition, we're reducing funding for executive offices of specific transfer payment recipients and other major government agencies by 10% over two years.

We will continue to explore new ways to export and create value from Ontario's excellence in delivering public services that really are recognized as being the best in the world.

In conclusion, the people of Ontario have demonstrated incredible resolve. The people of Ontario have demonstrated resilience and determination in times of global economic downturn. Together, we fought back. We're making Ontario stronger than ever and we're securing a bright future for our children and for our grandchildren.

The McGuinty government will continue to strengthen and protect our public services that matter most to the

people of Ontario, such as our health care system and our education system. We will continue to tackle the deficit in order to return our province to balance.

I'm proud of the choices that we're making. I'm proud of the responsible plan that we've put forward. As a result of the continued commitment by the McGuinty government, Ontario is, in fact, turning the corner to a better tomorrow.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've listened as politely as possible to the three major themes, none of which are actually in the budget.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** We weren't aware of that.

The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke wants the second one.

Here's the deal: This budget is an election budget. Everyone's saying it. Now, the things she talked about—agriculture. One thing it does in agriculture—the risk management plan is not in the budget.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** It certainly is.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The Minister of Agriculture is saying—she's going to have to retract, because in the bill—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order. Minister, order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** There are 41 schedules in this bill. The first one, schedule 1, is agriculture. What it does—"The Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act ... deems a local ... committee that hosts the annual ... Plowing Match to be an agricultural society for the purposes of a tax exemption...." That's it. That's a new tax. That's the only thing they've done for agriculture in this budget here. They should be applauding Ernie Hardeman.

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I expect them, in the response, to congratulate Ernie Hardeman—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Peterborough.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Now, the other thing—the comments on breast screening. There was not a single word in this document—

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Yes, there is.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Minister, order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The former Minister of the Environment is also going to have to stand and retract. There's nothing in Bill 173 on breast screening. I cannot—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no. Speaker, I'm going to need more time here, because it's in the speech, but it's not in the budget. I have read it.

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** You know something, Speaker? It's clear to me that the Premier has pulled the wool right over their eyes. They haven't got the foggiest—

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

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'll tell you what is in the budget, and that is schedule 17, which is the legislative structure to create online computerized gambling—probably the single most dangerous venture that this government has entered into. It's a highly addictive form of gambling, one that targets younger and younger gamblers; one that preys on kids who have been nurtured on video games, tweeting and computer operation; one about which there's a great deal of research that this government should be aware of in terms of the dangers that it poses.

So why the parliamentary assistant wouldn't mention that—this budget bill of this McGuinty government ushers in computer gambling that will: lure kids, 12-year-olds and 13-year-olds, with their parents' credit cards to blow those credit cards and get these kids hooked at an earlier and earlier age; generate huge revenues for a government that is bankrupt, both fiscally and morally; and create a social ill that will compound in spades the current disastrous experiments in this province of Ontario with casino, slot machine, racetrack and lottery ticket gambling.

For the parliamentary assistant to have talked about her passion to teach kids about fiscal responsibility and then omit reference to schedule 17, which is designed to bankrupt families, I find mind-boggling. No wonder she didn't use the full 60 minutes available to her.

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

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** First, I want to take the opportunity to thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for her wonderful speech, for outlining the most important elements of the budget, because I believe that the opposition party didn't read the budget. It's very important for the members—not all the members, but some of them, especially the member from Durham—that they read the budget.

It was very important for the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance to outline the importance of the budget to all the people in this House and also the people of Ontario, because she talked about what happened and how many good comments there have been about the budget across the province of Ontario.

She mentioned many different newspapers from across the province—from London to Windsor to Peterborough to Toronto to Kitchener and across the province of Ontario—mentioning the importance of the budget, about education, about health care, about breast screening, about early childhood education. They talk about many different elements.

It's a very important budget. I think it's an important budget for the people of Ontario. It sends a great signal to all the people about our stability and our vision towards a bright, important and prosperous future.

1650

I want to congratulate the parliamentary assistant because, if she didn't explain the elements of the budget, I guess the member from Durham until now probably wouldn't know what was in the budget. I want to thank you very much for your ability to explain in a simple message, in simple language, the importance of this budget.

Member from Kitchener–Conestoga, thank you, because it's important for all of us to continue to repeat what's in the budget, especially about education, especially about health, especially about infrastructure, especially about educating kids, and physical education. It's very important also to talk about the agricultural area, because there was a lot of investment to agriculture, which was being ignored by all levels of government until we came and we invested in that area.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I cannot believe what I'm witnessing today. After that Premier accused our leader of not using his fully allotted time to respond to the budget, as is the tradition in this House—it's not very often that they use all of their time, but the member for Kitchener–Conestoga uses 22 minutes to speak to the budget bill? The Minister of Finance so lacks confidence in his own bill that he won't even come into the House to speak to it? That is unbelievable—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Sit down. Order. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke knows full well that we don't comment on the absence of members. Please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm not commenting on the absence; I'm commenting on the unwillingness to speak to his own budget, which is his choice to do—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** There is going to be lots of opportunity for debate, so we won't jump to any conclusions. Just respond to the comments that were made.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It is the tradition of this House that the finance minister would speak during the lead-off opportunity. I think it is absolutely shameful—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Renfrew.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The audacity of that Premier to accuse our leader of not using his fully allotted time and actually making a joke about it during question period, and then we see this kind of performance today? It just shows where the principles of the Liberal Party are in the province of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** It's certainly the first time that I've been personally attacked for being the PA, but do you know what? If I'm being attacked for delivering

financial literacy into our schools for students from grades JK to 12, so be it. If the opposition wants to—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: At no time was the member for Kitchener–Conestoga brought into this conversation, other than to say that she used 22 minutes of her allotted time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** That's not a point of order. Take your seat. Take your seat, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Either take your seat or leave.

The member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** I appreciate that, Speaker, because it means that I have a chance to highlight that this budget means 10,000 jobs for the people of Ontario. It means that we're helping farmers. It means more than 60,000 post-secondary spaces for our students. It means expanding breast cancer screening for the women of Ontario. It means improving children's mental health for our children and youth in the province of Ontario. This is important for the people of Ontario.

Let me tell you what Sandra Vos said. Sandra Vos is the president of the Brant County Federation of Agriculture. Sandra had this to say: "I can only thank Agriculture Minister Carol Mitchell and Brant MPP Dave Levac for their tireless efforts to bring the benefits of this program to the ears of non-rural MPPs. This will go a long way to increasing the sustainability of Brant's largest industry."

Speaker, I could go on and on. The people of Ontario have heard the budget, they've read the budget, and the budget is good for the people of Ontario, today and tomorrow.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to lead off debate on Bill 173, which is the government's budget bill, this being Tartan Day, of course, April 6 being Tartan Day in the province of Ontario. Thanks to Mr. Murdoch for that.

Bill 173 is the Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2011. Of course, the government is always good with their flowery language and interesting descriptions in their bills' names. It has some 41 schedules in the bill. It does many different things, like legislative housekeeping that cleans up some legislation; it provides legislative frameworks for a few different ministries; it transfers some responsibilities; it harmonizes some tax collection processes across several tax acts and it repeals others—although I would say, as the member from Durham was pointing out, it is far different from the actual budget speech that was delivered and the budget papers. In fact, the comments he was making about some of the things not in the budget are true. As I say, there are some 41 different schedules, but there's nothing about business risk management or mental health or breast screening. Those things are not covered in this budget bill.

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Just have a look through the 41 schedules, and I'll be pleased in a little while to go through the section on agriculture. I will point out that in schedule 1 on agriculture, that is mainly to do with doing away with a tax exemption—one good reason to vote against this bill. They are doing away with an RST exemption that used to be in place for admission to the annual plowing match, and now—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Yes. Now when you go to the plowing match, you're going to pay the HST. Before, there was an exemption so people didn't pay the 8% RST, and now they're going to have to pay 13% HST, so in fact one of the things the bill does is enable tax collection from the farmers who will be attending the plowing match.

There are two schedules, 33 and 39, that provide for additional expenditures by the government through to March 2012, so the government can continue with its spending spree. Its addiction to spending can continue.

One specific concern that has been relayed to me comes from the Canadian Convenience Stores Association, who want to see the government keep their promise to hold stakeholder discussions in relation to online gambling, and I know the government is moving forward with online gambling. There are lots of concerns out there from convenience store operators but also from lots of people across Ontario, so they're just asking that the promise the government made about consultation be fulfilled.

But, as was pointed out, some things you won't find in this budget bill, Bill 173, are the business risk management plan for agriculture or details on mental health. This bill is very much different than the budget papers, which I have here—the one that has a RIM PlayBook on the cover of it. The bill itself is very different from that. And the budget papers as a document are disappointing. Of the more than 300 pages that the budget papers cover, very few of those contain announcements of the government's intention for the coming year. Frankly, most of that information was leaked the week before making the budget. In fact, having budget security nowadays is a bit of a joke. The government could save a lot of money by not having all the OPP officers they have on budget day because, frankly, all the significant items, big-ticket items, in the budget were leaked ahead of time, over the course of the week leading up to the budget. There was a time when you did need security and on budget day there were actually a few surprises, but certainly this year absolutely everything was leaked out ahead of time.

And yes, back in the time when my father was Treasurer, not on Tartan Day but on budget day, he used to wear a jacket that looked very much like this tie. Back in those days, security was taken very seriously. In fact, I recall one time that a roving reporter, I think, managed to find a copy in the garbage at the printing company and it became a huge issue that some of the details were leaked

out. Nowadays, you just need to read the Toronto Star in the week leading up to the budget and you know pretty much everything that's going to be in it, so I don't know why we bother having a lock-up and all that expensive security nowadays.

#### 1700

In truth, the vast majority of the budget papers restate previous efforts and spending of this government while simultaneously painting the previous PC government as villains and evildoers. This is a highly political document, an election budget.

I'd like to start with a comment about the deficit reduction that the government has been bragging about, from the original projection of a \$19.7-billion deficit for the year ending 2010-11 to what is actually happening; they say, at this point anyway, that it's a \$16.7-billion deficit, so an improvement of \$3 billion. Well, as usual, it's all smoke and mirrors. It's attributable to a reserve. This is a tactic employed before by the McGuinty government. There was also a benefit from lower interest rates on borrowing in the past year.

But \$2.6 billion of the savings was achieved through cost avoidances, unused contingency funds, lower demand for automatic stabilizers like job retraining and a key one: extended stimulus funding and delayed infrastructure investments. On a lot of infrastructure programs that were supposed to be happening in two years, the deadline has been extended an extra year, so there's not really any savings at all. The timeline has just been pushed out and most of it was this contingency, which they put in and then don't use.

I'm not the only person who thinks the budget document lacks credibility. Niels Veldhuis and Charles Lamman are economists with the Fraser Institute and co-authors of *Measuring the Fiscal Performance of Canada's Premiers*. They are emphatic in their position that Ontario's 2011 budget just isn't believable. They were troubled by Mr. Duncan's rhetoric when he said, "Our government has a strong track record of fiscal prudence and discipline," or when he described his plan to tackle Ontario's deficit as a "prudent, proven and responsible approach ... to the challenge of the deficit." We just can't buy into that kind of fiction, at least most people won't buy it, and the facts just don't support this position.

Since being elected in 2003, Premier McGuinty has proven that he is grossly inadequate at managing Ontario's finances. In the recent report by the Fraser Institute, *Measuring the Fiscal Performance of Canada's Premiers*, Premier McGuinty was found to have performed the worst among 10 provincial Premiers at managing the government's spending, tax policy, deficits and debt.

In keeping with this reputation as a spendaholic, the Premier's deficit reduction plan allows deficits to continue until 2017-18, and he plans to add another \$67.5 billion in debt due to deficits from the current fiscal year through to 2017-18. That's just the current fiscal year through until then; they've already added \$20 billion last year and billions the year before, and they're on track to

double the debt of the province in the not-too-distant future.

That deficit number doesn't include the greatly increased capital spending as well. They're spending about \$12 billion a year on capital spending, whereas in past governments it was around \$2.5 billion on average over many years. So they've greatly ramped up spending of all kinds so that they're putting us into a deep hole. The government is putting us into a deep hole. As Fraser Institute economists point out, Mr. McGuinty's plan means that the provincial debt will swell to 40.6% of gross domestic product in 2014-15 from 29% in 2008-09. That's a huge increase.

Rather than cut spending, the McGuinty government is counting on restraining spending growth at an annual rate of 2%, and on higher revenues. As much as I'd like to believe that, there's no foundation in fact for this assumption. Mr. McGuinty has never, ever held spending down. During his first term, Premier McGuinty ramped up spending from \$79.8 billion in 2003-04 to \$103 billion in 2007-08, an increase of nearly 30%. During the recession, spending increased by \$19.5 billion from 2008-09 to 2010-11. If they stick to their plan, spending will hit \$141.1 billion in 2017-18. That's 15% higher than where we are today.

The notion that the McGuinty government will hold spending down borders on the ridiculous. Nothing could be further from the truth. It's simply not in their DNA, and they know it. That's why they decided to get someone else to show them how to do it. That's why the Premier has announced the CROPS commission. This is a very late decision. I think he decided just before the budget came out. That's the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Service, headed by Don Drummond. It's as though Mr. McGuinty woke up one morning this winter and realized what a hole he's dug for Ontario and decided he'd better get someone with smarts to come in and fix it. But there seems to be some confusion about the PlayBook. The chair, Mr. Drummond, says health care and education are such huge components of the Ontario budget that he absolutely has to consider them. I've heard the finance minister say the same thing. But the McGuinty government says that's not true. It's worth remembering that this is the same economist who recommended the harmonized sales tax to the Premier.

The problem here is that the new commission isn't due to report, conveniently, until after the next election, so we won't know what new tax is being suggested until after we head to the polls in October for the October 6 election. To be clear, whatever comes out of this commission, Mr. McGuinty will try to pin the decision to raise taxes on them. By default, he'll get someone else to make the hard decisions that he doesn't want to make. But make no mistake: There will be some new tax or fee.

I note—just a little aside here—that in an article commenting on the budget, they say more or less the same thing. This is written by Niels Veldhuis and Charles Lamman in the *Financial Post*. They say, "In other words, the McGuinty government is delaying the tough

decisions into the future in hopes that revenues will grow robustly over the next seven years. Specifically, the 2011 budget plan assumes revenues will grow at an average rate of 4.3% from 2011-2012 to 2017-2018, while the government holds spending increases to an average rate of 2%.

“This plan would, of course, be more believable if the current government had a track record of prudent spending. But as the graph above shows, that’s simply not the case.”

So their track record is they greatly ramped up spending. The other part of their track record is that after every election, they bring in a new tax increase. In 2003 we had the health tax after the Premier said in the election that he wouldn’t raise taxes. Of course, after the 2007 election we had the HST brought in even despite the fact that it wasn’t mentioned in the election.

We see from the comments of these economists that spending is ramping up. They’re predicting that they are going to restrain spending, but the track record is they have never been able to restrain spending.

What else will they do to make an attempt at balancing the budget? Raise taxes. The question is, what new tax? The most likely one, the easiest one, is probably an increase of 1% or 2% in the HST. You know, we’ve heard the finance minister talking about how a 1% increase in the HST brings in about \$3 billion additional money. I suspect that’s what we have to look at: a 14% or 15% HST in the future after the next election.

#### 1710

No household could operate the way the McGuinty government has been running its government the past eight years, and more and more of the burden for Mr. McGuinty’s experiments is being passed on to Ontarians.

The reality is, the government is spending \$2.2 million an hour more than it’s taking in. Ontario families can’t afford to live that way, spending more than they bring in, nor can the government. Ontario families won’t find any relief on any pages in the budget papers. That is just more proof that Mr. McGuinty has lost touch with real Ontario families.

In contrast, the PC caucus has undertaken the “Have Your Say, Ontario” survey to mark the one-year countdown to the next election—the largest survey of its kind in Ontario history. Our caucus also visited more than 80 communities across the province to listen and to get first-hand advice. To date, the Ontario PC caucus has received well over 20,000 completed surveys.

I’m overwhelmed at the response from my own riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, where I’ve had more than 1,200 responses. That’s over and above the dozens of emails, letters and phone calls I get each week about the cost of just about everything. Nearly half of those who responded to our survey said that job security and their family budget mattered most to them. Taxes were number one on their list of concerns, above even health care.

Hydro rates figured prominently. When asked about the family budget and the one expense they worry about most, 28% said it was their hydro bill. In my own riding,

the number was much higher—60%—and I suspect that is true with many rural areas. I don’t go a day these days without getting someone opening their hydro bill and writing or emailing me with concerns about it. Two thirds of Ontarians blame the McGuinty government’s HST tax and the expensive energy experiments, as well as smart meters, for their skyrocketing hydro bills.

When asked if they believe that the McGuinty government’s mandatory smart meter tax machines will reduce their home hydro bills, as Premier McGuinty said they would, a whopping 85% of respondents gave a firm “No.” That number proves that Ontario families simply can’t be fooled by the spin that the McGuinty government has tried on smart meters. These are not a cost-saver for consumers.

The emails I get from seniors and others are really gut-wrenching, and I want to get some of them on the record. These are from my riding. Liz from MacTier writes:

“Mr. Miller, I can understand that your work in this area must keep you very busy.

“But I have thought about writing to you over a number of months.

“We are both retired seniors on pensions, which gives us the same amount of income per month. As you are aware, the cost of living is rising in Canada.

“There must be some way or manner that can be worked out for middle-class Canadians. Try as one can, your money just does not go as far as it once did. And then to have the ‘smart meters’ introduced.

“This may be a way of saving on your hydro, but if you are home with a ... disabled husband and have to be cleaning almost every day, just how great is this new smart meter”—in capital letters—“going to be a saving on hydro and helping your expenses? Am I to do my cleaning only on weekends or after midnight?

“When I worked, I worked different shifts. With very limited time off, I would clean in the afternoon or maybe in the morning. Just how are people working the many different shifts there are today to look after their homes and families when being home may cost a lot more when using hydro?

“I do understand that a person has to make choices in this new world in which we are living. I would not have thought that I may be living, again, as I did when I was younger: having a wood stove to cook on and heat our home; having to use a hand pump for water in the kitchen; clothes were washed by hand. Your clothes were reused and sewn. Once we called these ‘the good old days.’

“I had hoped to never live as I once did as a child, but if the cost of living does keep going up, that is what may happen. There may be people living as we were in the ‘good old days.’ Is this what we have to look forward to: going back to wells and hand pumps in the kitchen, wood stoves for cooking and heat? I sure hope not to see these ‘good old days.’

“Thank you for your time.”

Another constituent, Marlene, writes:

“We are very concerned about the cost of hydro. We live in a 1,200-square-foot bungalow, two bedrooms, one bathroom.

"The cost of hydro is beyond what the average Ontario citizen can now afford. We are not referring to the people working in major centres where income is much higher.

"We are concerned about those in the Parry Sound area.

"Why is the delivery charge so high for rural? We can't go to a store to buy it. The electricity is going through the lines to everyone.

"Delivery charges change from area to area. We do not have a choice of ways to heat our home as natural gas is not available in the country. We do our best to heat with wood. But with the extreme cold temperatures we have run out! You cannot leave your home for even a day without feeling the effects of the cost of electric base-board heating.

"Our home is an R-2000-plus.

"We are prisoners. We cannot sell our home. People are not moving to the Parry Sound area. They are moving away. Industries have left. It was such a beautiful part of the province, but who can afford to come here. Every time the hydro goes up it scares people away.

"Fed up!!! Please help us!"

I received this email:

"I have a complaint I would like to make known. I work two jobs to try and keep my family going. I am about to lose my house anyway if I don't come up with \$1,500 by Dec. 1st. I get hydro bills every month just like everyone else, but my hydro bill pisses me off every time I look at it. Why is it that if the government is to be for the people, they allow Hydro to make their service charges so much that they are more than the actual hydro you use. Have you ever looked closely at your hydro bill? The service charges on [the] bill are more than the cost of the hydro I use.... It is becoming so a family either pays their mortgage and has no food or services, or they pay their utilities and have no home over their head.... We pay tax on our paycheques, we pay tax on stuff we buy, we pay tax on utilities, we pay tax on inheritances. Taxes, taxes, taxes. That is breaking the people of our country and something needs to be done."

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, I just want to remind you and all members that you can't say indirectly what you cannot say directly in here. There's some language that we would normally say is unparliamentary, so I'd just like you keep that in mind.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I know the word in that last email. If I see that in another email, I will avoid it as best I can.

This email, another one, has to do with hydro again; that seems to be the number one issue.

"Dear Sir:

"We join the chorus of dissatisfied Ontario residents who totally oppose the introduction of smart meters and the new hydro rates, including the addition of the HST.

"We are both retired and have lived in Bracebridge for the last 20 years. Our house, located on Denniss Drive, was four years old when we purchased it, and it was built to be run totally on hydro, because there was no alternate

source of fuel available in this area (there still are no alternatives). Since there is no ducting built into the house, using natural gas, oil or propane is not an option for heat, cooking etc., therefore we will be facing substantial increases in our electricity bill in the future, without getting any extra income or tax relief to pay for the same." They go on. I'll skip a part.

"Bribing us with our own money, i.e. a 10% rebate but a 48% rise of prices over the next few years, will not ensure the re-election of the current government when one also considers the great number of promises already broken.

"Please keep on pressuring the government to take the proper and prudent action in regard to the hydro rates to alleviate the hardships placed on all citizens of Ontario."

Gary from South River writes:

"I have been waiting in anticipation for my first hydro bill with the 10% savings. I managed to reduce my consumption by 12.5% over the same period last year. My bill is 9% higher than the same period last year!! Wait a minute, I thought I was supposed to be saving. Dalton you are so full of it ... bring on the election."

It's clear that many Ontarians question the logic used both by the Premier and his ministers when it comes to green energy. That extends to some people who have a lot more knowledge and experience in this field. For instance, Dr. McTaggart-Cowan, a resident in my riding, has an impressive academic background that includes a Ph.D. from the University of California, a doctor of science degree from the universities of British Columbia and Victoria, doctor of law degrees from the University of Alberta and Simon Fraser University and a doctorate in environmental studies from Waterloo.

He has devoted a lifetime to studying, teaching and conserving the natural resources of British Columbia. He has been an internationally recognized conservationist and worldwide environmental emissary for British Columbia and Canada. I'm glad to see the environment minister is here today because he was compelled to write after hearing an interview on CBC, when the Minister of the Environment announced a moratorium on offshore wind turbines.

**1720**

I want to read some of the comments as they relate to energy. This is his email to me:

"Norm,

"I don't normally do this, but the interview today on CBC with the provincial Minister of the Environment on the subject of the moratorium being imposed on wind generators over Lake Ontario was so stupid that I have to voice strong objections!

"How a minister representing the environment can be so 'stupid'—I hope that's parliamentary; borderline—"as to mix NIMBY with serious environmental issues is beyond me. He was trumpeting the government stance on wind power over land while somehow declaring that wind power over fresh water somehow caused problems for the aquatic environment! He even had the audacity to state that wind power over salt water was different from wind power over fresh water??! One would get the im-

pression that somehow a wind turbine 80 metres over the water would somehow create a drinking water problem?? I wonder if he realizes that the blades of the turbine are above the water, not in the water? If it is the structure supporting the turbines that he is worried about, then he should have the same concerns about all structures and boats in the water that have been there for decades! If it is the noise for the fish, then perhaps we should be banning all motorized craft on all lakes in Ontario!! If it is the noise from the air above, as some seem to be implying, then that shows total ignorance of air-water interface whereby the change in 'fluid' density creates a reflective layer limiting sound transmission from one layer to another. If the concern is with the vibrations being transmitted from the blades through the structure to the water, then there are mechanical ways of reducing that, but anyway, since when did sound affect drinking water quality?? Again, if sound is an issue, what about jet skis and cigar boats!! To talk about 'pilot projects' being necessary is patently ridiculous!! This is not new technology, and the setting is not special in any way.

"To also argue, in this day and age of Twitters and emails, that he received 1,400 complaints as though that was a significant number is just silly. As an aside, it would be interesting to know how many were originals, and how many were actually from different communities. But that notwithstanding, ministers are supposed to make intelligent, thoughtful, and carefully considered decisions regarding their portfolios. Given the need to reduce the use of fossil fuels, the ready availability of proven technology, the scientific fact that wind fields over water are reasonably well understood and much more consistent than that over land, and the proximity of Lake Ontario to the major user of electricity in Ontario (Toronto) and to the power grids necessary to deliver the power, it is hard to imagine that one could not find the projects not only appropriate, but indeed necessary to protect the environment!!

"I would argue that he is, in fact, further exacerbating the state of the local and global environment by the decision he has made to misuse the 'environment' argument to prevent a very necessary activity!!! That some may object to the sight of wind turbines in their current pristine view demonstrates an ignorance on these people's part, as well as that of anyone who would accept their NIMBY stance as anything rational!! Frankly, I wish we could use wind power here in Muskoka, but the winds are not steady enough. Now small-scale hydro is great, and it is wonderful to see it going ahead. There are many sites in Ontario where micro hydro can be generated, and these should be exploited as much as possible. The High Falls solution is working really well, and more like that should be developed, notwithstanding local objections ... so that we can all enjoy the modern devices powered off electricity—ever seen a cellphone operating on liquid fuels or natural gas?

"Anyway, sorry to be so long-winded, but please don't let 'ignorance' and 'environmentalism,' often together these days, be allowed to rule government!!

"Cheers, Jim."

I would simply say that I think he's probably right with a lot of that criticism, but the real reason for the moratorium, of course, as has been pointed out by the opposition, is NIMSIAR, and that's "not if my seat is at risk."

As we know, the Minister of Energy happens to be in Scarborough, and offshore there, there happened to be a bunch of these protests going on. So that, I would say, is the real reason.

Certainly the Minister of the Environment was very creative on the CBC. I did get the opportunity to hear that interview first-hand, and I have to admit that he is very creative.

The decisions being made by this government on the energy portfolio are significant. Their full impact will not be felt for years. But this is one McGuinty promise he will make good on: Your energy rates will keep going up, and that's definitely a cause for concern, but it's not the only drain on our wallets.

From our survey, one of the other big-ticket items people are concerned about is car insurance premiums. The survey results from Parry Sound–Muskoka also highlighted how much of an issue car insurance premiums are. This was the expense ranked second with families in my communities. Despite claims by the McGuinty government that insurance reforms have reduced consumer costs, real-life stories don't seem to reflect that.

I had a letter from Mr. Donald Chapman of Gravenhurst, who wrote to me pointing out that his motorcycle insurance had gone up over 30% from 2010 to 2011 without any significant justification. He pointed out that his auto insurance is going up by over 20%, and he was writing to me to complain about that.

In February, an email came to me from another Ontarian, and it says, "I'm sure this is not the first email you've received, but I need to voice that what is going on is criminal!

"My insurance has just gone up by 33%. Same car (one year older), seven-star driver, male driver for 33 years, clean record. RBC is blaming you and claims in the GTA. This is out of control—10% last year equals a 43% increase in the past two years. I'm not sure about you but my salary has shrunk in the past two years. I feel like I have a gun to my head! Help!"

Mr. Speaker, if I happen to not use the full hour, I know that the member from Durham would like to share the time with me.

In another case, a father wrote to me—and this is certainly a really valid concern in Ontario. He writes, "Could you explain why my 23-year-old daughter's insurance premiums are in the range of \$2,200 to \$3,000 per year living in Collingwood, Ontario, while her fictitious twin living in Lewiston, New York, would pay \$740 per year? My daughter is a college graduate, employed by a bank, has her G licence and a clean driving record. She has been working and saving to purchase a used car, but now finds the insurance more than the car payment.

“How do we expect today’s youth to become responsible adults? If she were at home in Mississauga, the rates would be even more unrealistic. I would like you to explain both why our kids are paying a 400% penalty in comparison to American kids and what the Liberal government is doing to rein in an out-of-control auto insurance industry.”

I know from personal experience—my two daughters got their first car, a very, very used car that may have been worth a couple of thousand dollars, and their insurance premium, for a 27-year-old and a 24-year-old, was around \$3,500 the first year. It’s come down slightly now. But the car was worth maybe \$2,000. That simply is not affordable for young people, particularly if you live in a rural area of Ontario, of which there are many people, and they rely on a job.

It’s worse if you’re a young male. If you choose to be an apprentice and you live in a rural situation, it’s very difficult for a young male to afford thousands and thousands of dollars to be able to drive to work to become an apprentice, for example, a tradesperson. This is an issue we hear about a lot in rural Ontario, where young people don’t have the option of public transportation and must have a vehicle to get to work. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve written to the previous Minister of Finance as well as the current one to raise this father’s concern.

**1730**

And it’s not just car insurance. Homeowners, particularly in rural areas, are feeling the pinch too. Bill wrote to me:

“Hi, Norm

“I’ve just reviewed the cost of my home insurance, which also covers our cottage and boat.

“My issue is not what the cost is, but rather the increase in premiums over the last five-year period. An increase of approximately 38% to 40% seems to me to be a bit high, given the inflation rate on average to be 2% a year over the same period.”

Also, I found it a little surprising that half of the respondents identified mortgages and property taxes as a concern. Property taxes have long been on the radar for property owners in Parry Sound–Muskoka, particularly for waterfront properties. It’s beyond difficult for seniors who have retired in our area to cope with these huge assessment increases. It’s a real worry for seniors who thought they would live out their retirement years in a cherished cottage, only to discover that between the rising property insurance, hydro rates and HST, they can’t afford to hang on to their home.

You know, I’ve always thought of home ownership as an attainable dream for every Ontarian, but now, as costs for everything climb, it’s becoming harder and harder for Ontario families, whatever the age. It’s no surprise that we see personal debt rising so alarmingly.

From our survey results, it’s clear that families feel they can no longer trust this government to provide them with the relief they need. Certainly, there’s no relief in this budget for Ontario families. The reality is that the

government will raise taxes again because it refuses to control spending.

In the time I have left, I’d like to go through a few of the schedules in the actual budget bill, Bill 173, particularly some we have concern with.

As was mentioned, in the budget speech there was talk of a number of different initiatives, many that we support or that our members on our side were instrumental in bringing about, like the business risk management plan for farmers. Ernie Hardeman, our agriculture critic, has been pushing for that for years. The mental health investments: There was a select committee which did great work with members from all sides of the Legislature. On our side we had Sylvia Jones and Christine Elliott. Christine Elliott, I think, was the main person behind setting up that select committee, so she does deserve some praise for being involved in that. Those things are not covered in the budget bill, Bill 173.

Specifically to do with agriculture, in fact, as I pointed out previously, in schedule 1, a provision that extended an exemption from the admission tax under the Retail Sales Tax Act to the organizing committee of the International Plowing Match is repealed. So at one point there was an exemption on RST so people going into the plowing match didn’t have to pay RST when they came in. As of July 1 of last year, the HST came in. You’re now paying the HST and, effectively, it’s an 8% increase, so where it used to be exempted from the old retail sales tax, you’ll now be paying the HST.

Schedule 10, the Education Act: There are certainly concerns. I know the member from Newmarket–Aurora raised this in a question fairly recently, about education trustees and the rules around what they can or cannot do. He raised the concern about a trustee being able to actually meet by themselves with a person with concerns about the education system. They were, in this particular board he was talking about, being told that, no, they weren’t allowed to meet with what I guess you’d call their constituents; they had to have a staff person. In this schedule 10, I certainly have some concerns. The proposed amendment would clarify that the regulatory authority of the minister includes prescribing codes of conduct or parts of codes of conduct and matters to be addressed by such codes, and that is specifically for school board trustees. Again, that is a concern.

There certainly are concerns with the way before- and after-care programs for full-day learning will be put into place. This same section notes that the proposed re-enactment of section 259 of the act would change the existing duty of school boards to operate extended day programs and would essentially allow third party programs to be run before or after school. But it also puts in an exemption: Basically, if you have a full-day learning program, you’re required to have before- or after-school programs, and now, with the changes, third party providers are allowed to run that program, but there’s an exception to allow a neighbouring school board to run the program. I guess my question is, does that mean a parent is going to be going to one school with their child before the school

day—and who knows how close that school is—then going to the school that has full-day learning and then somehow getting the child back. There are certainly some logistical questions to do with that.

I note that in schedule 30, the Northern Ontario Grow Bonds Corp. is being scrapped. That's interesting, because it was something the McGuinty government created in 2005 in the Northern Ontario Grow Bonds Corporation Act, 2004. I certainly have some questions about what happened there. There was a lot of fanfare about that program when it was brought in. It was expected to help the north. We know there have been all kinds of problems in northern Ontario. It has been one of the hardest-hit areas of the province the last number of years: thousands and thousands—I think it's 45,000 jobs lost in the forestry sector, entire towns shutting down, high energy prices taking their toll on northern Ontario. In the pre-budget consultations, we heard how last year in Timmins, the Xstrata smelter was shut down. Some 700 jobs in Timmins were lost, the principal reason being high energy prices. Those jobs have now shifted to Quebec, where the smelter is operating and they have far lower electricity prices. I certainly would wonder what happened to the northern Ontario grow bonds. I assume they were not successful or they wouldn't be repealing the corporation and shutting it down.

There is a provision of the bill, section 35, that deals with giving more flexibility to Nortel pensioners. I know members on this side of the House, both in committee and when I and others have had an opportunity to ask the finance minister questions—it's something that we've spoken up for on behalf of Nortel pensioners. So I hope this provision, the proposed section 102—which would permit pensioners of the two named Nortel pension plans to “require the administrator to pay an amount equal to the commuted value of the pension into a life income fund.”

To exercise rights under this new provision, a Nortel pensioner would be required to deliver a direction to the administrator. The direction would contain prescribed information and be a superintendent-approved form. The administrator would be discharged upon making payment, if the payment is made in compliance with the direction and the requirements of the act and regulations. “Life income fund” would be as defined in the regulations made under the act. That's something we'll certainly be looking for feedback from the Nortel pensioners on: whether that accomplishes what they're hoping for or whether they are looking for more.

One of the things that this bill does is that it enables the government to continue with its tax-and-spend ways. In fact, as I get near to wrapping up, member from Durham, section 33, the Ontario Loan Act, allows the government to finance new borrowing—this is new borrowing—apart from debt maturity, so all brand new borrowing, just in the next not even four years, in any manner up to a maximum amount of \$28.3 billion. That's on top of all the debt that the government has piled up to this point. We saw in the budget that interest payments

are now \$10.3 billion a year. That's more than all the money that's spent in training, colleges, universities—all post-secondary education. It's money that can't be spent twice. Obviously if you're paying interest on the debt, you don't have that money available for things like health care and education. The other thing all this debt means, as I've pointed out, is future taxes.

In conclusion, we will not be supporting this budget bill. The bill enables—

*Interjection.*

**1740**

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Okay. Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will also be sharing my time with the member from York-Simcoe.

In conclusion, we will not be supporting this budget bill, Bill 173. The bill enables the McGuinty government to continue with its tax-and-spend ways, and it lays the groundwork for a future tax increase. What that tax increase will be, unfortunately, Ontario citizens won't find out until after the next election. It's not in the budget, but they've laid the groundwork, and we, as the opposition, will not be supporting their spendthrift ways.

Thank you, and I'll pass it on to the member.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for York-Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** There are a couple of points that I think are worth emphasizing about this budget. The first one is the fact that it certainly wasn't what people were looking for. When I look at the constituents who have come to me in the last few months, expressing their concerns both orally and through emails and letters, their concerns are around essentially the burden of government and its effect on their personal cost of living.

It certainly started out when they began to understand the extent and the breadth of the impact of the HST, and when they looked at that—I particularly recall seniors who would say to me, “Well, I didn't get an 8% increase. I have no idea where this is going to come from and how I'm going to be able to support this kind of increase.”

Then later on in time, in the fall and so forth, the question of smart meters came up as more and more communities were put onto smart meters. Again, they had listened to the rhetoric of the government, which suggested that they would have a choice now as to when they would use electricity and this choice, then, would reflect the rate that they paid. Well, come on. People can't suddenly adopt nocturnal ways of living, which is essentially what this smart-meter choice really means.

Small businesses came to me and said, “How can I do this? I'm paying the top rate, because this is when my customers are here. This is the only time when I can make a living and do business. Suddenly I'm in the top time frame of the smart meter.”

When people looked at their hydro bills and things like that, they were looking at this budget as an opportunity that might give them some relief. They were hoping that this might happen. But as we see with things like the HST and then the smart meters, in fact it was not what people were looking for.

They also have become much more sophisticated about understanding what it means to be running a deficit, and they were shocked to learn that this Premier thinks a \$16-billion deficit is something to be proud of because it's not \$19 billion. It's still the very largest deficit in the province's history.

They also understand that the degree of government spending has far, far exceeded the ability of the province to pay. They look at the fact that the debt has increased at a rate of over 70%, whereas the increase in the GDP is down around 9%.

They look at the energy costs of the government, taking what has historically been about a five-cent-per-kilowatt-hour fee for hydro, and then paying people 80 cents or even 55 cents. It doesn't matter; it's still a huge gap. So they see that as part of the debt that is, in one way or another, accumulating on them.

This budget has not, in any way, given them comfort. When they look at what has happened to their personal spending and the manner in which it is being manipulated by HST, by changes in hydro and things like that; when they look at the debt and that historic accumulation of debt—and they understand that for every dollar that is on the debt load, it has to be serviced. That is money taken away from either their pockets or government programming. When the government has gone continually out of control in terms of spending and adding to the debt, people understand that this is their legacy for their children and their grandchildren.

They also understand that what we're looking at is a Premier who, in 2003, promised people that there would be no tax increases and then promptly turned around and introduced the so-called health tax, the largest single tax at that point.

In 2007, the Premier said, "No new taxes. I'm not kidding this time." I guess he has a different approach to the meaning of that, because along came the HST. So people now look at this budget and look at the fact that there is this whole notion of no new taxes, but they've already learned from the last two experiences not to trust that this isn't going to be an opportunity for an increase in the HST or whatever else the government might find, because it has a spending problem.

The problem for Ontarians is to look at this budget and try to understand how they are going to survive this budget. I have been asked, "Is there something in this budget that we can benefit from?" Certainly, I think that there are things. In my particular area, the \$44-million increase to spending on literacy is something that I know the members in my community who work so hard in providing literacy services in the community will certainly be most happy to see. We can look at the introduction of greater spending on breast screening because, obviously, this is something that is a prevention. So there are a few things, but the big message for people, certainly in my riding, is that it wasn't what they were looking for. They were looking for some kind of demonstration of tax relief for themselves. They're very concerned about the fact that as the debt grows, it cripples not only this

government but any future government from being able to provide the kind of programming and support in education and health care—every one of those debt dollars has to be serviced, and it will only continue to make it very, very difficult for people to be able to see their government able to make any kind of improvement while they're carrying an historic debt.

I think that there are some key things here that members of the provincial electorate understand as something that will have a long-term effect on them. So it's something that all people take very seriously.

I believe that the member for Durham is going to finish up.

**1750**

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I guess this will expunge any further time that I might have anyway. I guess it's unfortunate.

When you listened to this debate earlier today, we voted on the budget motion, which is one part of the process—a procedure, a routine. Many of the members would know that what we're actually debating today is the bill itself, Bill 173, which provides a series of schedules and implementation plans, which is quite separate from the documents that we've been reviewing.

As kind of a primary instruction on this thing, it's important to know that there were consultations held early in 2011, and those consultations came up with a series of recommendations which would be reviewed by the minister. From that, they would come up with the budget itself, which is the document, and then they would come up with the speech for the minister. The speech has things in it that are not tied to the budget, and those were the points being made today. But when you look at the budget itself and the document that we're actually debating, Bill 173, you'll find out that it's actually made up of 41 different schedules. So that's the debate, and I hope that clarifies it for some members.

If you look at the bottom line here, the real issue is that the budget itself is notice that there's going to be an election, and they're holding off any tax implications until after October 6. In the interim, in the budget speech, they have asked Don Drummond to make some profound comments. I'm sure that Don Drummond, being the person who authored the HST, is probably going to recommend that they increase the HST from 13% to 15%.

We know that each point in the HST ends up with the province getting about \$3.4 billion. With every point in the HST, Premier McGuinty takes from your pocket \$3.4 billion—for each point.

It's important to know that it doesn't come from business pockets, because the businesses claim an exemption on HST. It's called an input tax credit. So they pay for it when they're going into the product, and they get to write it off when they sell the product, and it is all dumping tax onto you, the household, the consumer, at the end of the food chain. That's who's paying all of the money; it's paid by them.

I think when you look at this budget, it is an election budget, because there's really nothing in it of any

consequence. The money that they have announced in this to do with growth, even the job growth—if you look at the total revenue, and that’s a good place to start, the total revenue from personal income tax goes up by \$2.1 billion. If you look at the bottom line of revenue, it goes up by \$2 billion. All of the revenue is coming from your pocketbook.

In terms of strategies in here, there are no strategies. There really are no strategies in this budget. They wouldn’t want to offend anyone, so they have done very, very little. I can only tell you this: When you look at the history of the Premier, elected in 2003, leaning up against the lamp post, saying, “I won’t raise your taxes, but I won’t lower them either,” he did not speak the truth. He actually put in the health tax—well, he wasn’t direct, in terms of his method of saying one thing and doing another, which is typical.

Then in the very next election, in 2007, he never said anything about the HST; it was never discussed. What did he do? He brought in the largest single tax increase ever in history. And they’ve still run out of money. They’ve still run out of money.

The budget in 2003 was \$70 billion; it’s now \$125 billion. The debt was \$136 billion; it’s now \$259 billion. They’ve doubled the debt. They’ve doubled spending, pretty well. And you ask yourself, at the end of the day, when you’re at the grocery store, paying your bills on hydro or for gasoline for your car, are you any better off?

The answer unanimously is “No.”

**Interjections:** Yes.

**Mr. John O’Toole:** The Liberal members here are saying “Yes.” I say that in their two-minute rebuttal they should get up and say what things are better. I know children with autism who aren’t getting treatment. I know children who can’t get therapy.

Look, there’s no perfect world, but don’t present it as if it is perfect—

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

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Leeds–Grenville has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Health. The member from Leeds–Grenville will have up to five minutes, and the minister or the parliamentary assistant will have up to five minutes.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I’m happy to have the opportunity to once again discuss the important issue of the surgical services at the Brockville General Hospital.

I think it’s important to look at what the CEO of the South East LHIN said in a newspaper article after I asked the question of the Minister of Health. According to the report, Paul Huras, the CEO, denied there is any plan to remove surgery from the Brockville General Hospital. He said, “Not only is it not a plan, it’s not even being considered by the LHIN or the team that’s working on them.”

That’s great, and I think that based on those comments it should be pretty easy: I can sit down, the parliamentary assistant can stand up, tell me that this report is not going to be acted on, and we’ll all be good. I hope that happens, but we’ll wait and see.

I hope what the parliamentary assistant won’t do is give a response on how wonderfully the government thinks the LHINs are operating, because that’s not the debate that we’re having today.

I think what we want to hear are some words clarifying Mr. Huras, the CEO of the South East LHIN. He said this option to remove the surgical unit at BGH is “not even being considered.” So what I’m looking for is a reassurance for my residents in the riding of Leeds–Grenville that this is going to be removed from the discussion. In fact, I’m really surprised that it still remains on the table after that same report quoted the LHIN CEO as saying that viable hospitals include surgical and support services.

Again, if the LHIN is truly committed in having, in its words, “seven hospitals today, seven hospitals tomorrow, and viable hospitals”—when I hear that, I have to ask the question: Why are we having this debate today? Well, we’re having the debate because the minister didn’t answer the question and defended the LHIN; that’s why we’re here.

So I’m very troubled that a week after I brought this up, and hearing the reassuring words from the health minister and the South East LHIN, no one—and I mean no one—has stood up on that side of the House to tell me that this supposedly ridiculous scenario is out of the picture. That’s what I’m hoping the parliamentary assistant will do; if not, I’m afraid it just feeds the fears and mistrust that I and so many others in Leeds–Grenville have about the South East LHIN and their clinical services roadmap. I think that they have reason to be concerned.

Last week, Mr. Huras was quoted as saying he was surprised that the consultant’s report I quoted from, which said that the elimination of the Brockville General Hospital surgery was part of an “ideal” system design, wasn’t posted online. I need to tell the members opposite that I checked today, and it’s still not online.

But do you know what is online? There’s a survey asking folks what the ideal scenario would be and asking for some of their thoughts on health care services. How can you get feedback from people without all of the information being available to them?

It gets worse. I checked; they’re a quarter of the way through the consultation process and yet, again, they haven’t had full disclosure. They haven’t even had a public meeting in my riding.

As you can imagine, I've had lots of feedback—a lot of it has been very positive—on the issues I spoke up about last week. The overwhelming majority keep telling me to speak up, but I have to admit I had some people who said I was a bit over the top last week and was a bit too angry in my reaction. It's true, I was angry; I was very angry. But when I have doctors coming to me saying that they're worried, then I get worried too. That's exactly what happened prior to me coming here last week.

**1800**

That's not the only person that has talked to me about this. I got an email from a lady almost minutes after question period named Sue Salzer, a resident of Fort Erie. She began her email this way: "I sit here with tears in my eyes. My sorrow is for you and the uphill battle you are entering to preserve your hospital services for Brockville." She and the residents of Fort Erie were very concerned and they fought the fight. In fact, their member opposite has supported them. But still, even with that fight, they've lost their hospital emergency department, two operating rooms and 40 medical beds.

So I'm not yelling today; I'm asking: If I was so wrong and this scenario is so ridiculous, all you have to do is stand up and say it's off the table. Say that closing the surgical department at the Brockville General Hospital is not going to happen and I'll be happy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the member for Ottawa-Orléans.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to respond to the member. The McGuinty government is dedicated to ensuring high-quality health care for all Ontarians. We have increased funding for Ontario hospitals every year since 2003, even in this tough economy. I think that says a lot about this government's commitment to health care. Hospital funding in Ontario has increased from \$10.9 billion in 2003-04 to \$16.3 billion in 2010-11, nearly a 50% increase. In 2011-12, the hospital sector will see an approximate 4.5% increase in overall funding.

The elimination of the surgical department at Brockville General was proposed within the mentioned consultant's report as an option for clinical services realignment within the South East. This option was presented to provide contrast to additional options being considered for clinical services realignment. The South East LHIN is undergoing extensive stakeholder and community engagement to evaluate all proposed options for clinical service realignment. Community engagement is currently under way for an eight-week period to inform this project. Any members of the public or stakeholders within the South East can provide input to proposed options, such as any changes that would impact Brockville General, by visiting the South East LHIN's website.

The clinical services roadmap is a partnership between the South East Local Health Integration Network, the seven hospitals across the southeast of Ontario—Brockville General Hospital; Hotel Dieu Hospital; Kingston General Hospital; Lennox and Addington County Gen-

eral Hospital, Napanee; Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital; Providence Healthcare; Quinte Health Care, Belleville, Bancroft, Picton and Trenton—and the South East Community Care Access Centre. The existing hospital system was built on a model that is decades old and that doesn't reflect the economic realities the area faces today. With hospital operating costs growing at twice the rate of inflation, the days of huge hospital funding increases are gone; governments simply don't have enough money.

The goal of this process is to create a regional hospital clinical service plan that spans the entire range of health care experiences, including emergency care, in-patient care and rehabilitation. The result will be a high-quality, accessible and financially responsible health care system in the region.

Our investments at the Brockville General Hospital include a more than \$7.4-million increase in base funding from 2003-04 to 2010-11, nearly a 19% increase.

Wait time strategies: Since 2004, Brockville General Hospital received \$5,789,788 to provide 4,368 additional procedures, reducing wait times in the community. As a result, wait times for orthopaedic surgery at BGH have decreased by 105 days, or 61%. Wait times for hip replacement surgery at BGH have decreased by 538 days, or 87%. BGH has the fifth-shortest wait times in the province for this procedure. Wait times for knee replacement surgery at BGH have decreased by 300 days, or 82%. BGH has the sixth-shortest wait times in the province for this procedure. Wait times for CT scans have decreased by 37 days, or 76%. BGH is currently tied with South Bruce Grey Health Centre for the shortest wait times in the province for this procedure, at 12 days.

In January 2006, the hospital received a \$4.5-million planning and design grant to support planning for capital development on the Brockville General Hospital site to accommodate complex continuing care, rehabilitation and acute mental care beds and services being transferred from the Garden Street site—the former St. Vincent de Paul site of the Providence centre—and from the Brockville Psychiatric Hospital—BPH—site to the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group—ROHCG.

The project obtained the government's approval to plan to functional program stage in the 2009-10 health infrastructure plan.

The ministry continues to work with BGH to support its redevelopment project.

The government is investing over \$27 million in the South East LHIN through the aging-at-home strategy to support seniors at home.

The South East LHIN received \$1,135,105 for initiatives that will improve ER performance and reduce the number of ALC patients in hospitals.

The South East LHIN received funding for three ER physician assistants to perform a range of duties which will free up ER doctors, allowing them to see more patients.

The South East LHIN received \$250,000 for a nurse-led long-term-care outreach team.

The opposition do not get it. They want to cut \$3 billion out of health care but at the same time ask for increased services. Which is it?

They don't have a plan. It's clear that Tim Hudak and the PCs want to go back to the days of cutting health care, firing nurses and closing hospitals—

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

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Beaches–East York has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given recently by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

The member for Beaches–East York will have up to five minutes, and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will have up to five minutes.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** On February 24, I asked the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to help my constituent, Michelle Fernandes. Michelle's back here again tonight looking for an answer.

Curative surgery exists for Michelle in the United States only. No physician in Ontario could be located who could skilfully perform the surgery she so badly needed. Despite these facts, OHIP has continually denied her prior approval applications for insured out-of-country health services.

I asked the minister questions on the last occasion, which was the second time I was here. The minister was unsure if she had ever met with Michelle, but after Michelle had the temerity, the unmitigated gall, to wave to the minister to make sure the minister understood and then was admonished by the Speaker, she conceded, yes, that in fact she had met with Michelle Fernandes.

The second part of my question—and this is crucial—was that the minister was instituting changes to the regulation that would make it virtually impossible to receive out-of-country funding. I went on to describe to the minister the new regulation, which the minister seemed quite unsure of, which would allow Ontario surgeons to perform any surgery within their scope of practice, even if they had never, ever done it before. The minister seemed concerned and promised to look into that.

I have to tell you that we have had some correspondence with ministerial officials, particularly Mr. James Berry, over the course of the last week. He has written to my office and he has stated that the Health Services Appeal and Review Board, HSARB, appeals that were received prior to April 1 will be under the old regulations. All well and good: We're happy to hear that because Michelle's first 12 operations out of country may be appealable. However, she's going to have to have at least another one, maybe more, and they will not be appealable, and that's the reality of what this ministry is trying to do.

Secondly, we wrote back to him and asked him to clarify, and he wrote back to us saying, "The regulatory amendment regarding the term 'identical or equivalent

service,' which becomes effective April 1, 2011, clarifies that an identical or equivalent service is performed in Ontario if there is a physician in Ontario who has provided written confirmation" that they can do it. Whether they've done it before or not is entirely irrelevant.

We've written back to him again and have not had an answer to date. We have three unanswered questions of him. "First, we are still unsure as to why Michelle's appeals have been delayed and delayed." She has been appealing now for more than five years. For five years this government has put roadblocks in her way, trying to appeal to get the money to pay the \$300,000 plus she's had to pay out of her own pocket for out-of-country services which were not available here.

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"Secondly," we asked, "will OHIP be 'retaining' a physician to provide written confirmation that he or she is available to provide the service that is the subject of an application and the service is within the physician's scope of practice?" We've not had an answer to that.

"Third, will the consulting position name the surgeons who are capable of performing these procedures and where they are located in Canada?" Because it's all well and good for the ministry to say that somebody can do this here; Michelle has more than 70 letters from physicians, acknowledged people in their field here in Ontario, who have said, "We cannot do this," and who have told her that the only person is a Dr. Dellon in Baltimore.

Why is the ministry doing this to Michelle Fernandes? That's what we want to know, and we still don't have the answers. Thankfully and mercifully, tonight there was a tourism event downstairs. I invited Michelle to go downstairs. I invited her to come down and have a glass of wine while we waited for 6 o'clock. The Premier walked in. Michelle—lots of chutzpah—walked up to the Premier and told him about the case. Even though he had signed letters saying that there was nothing he could do and referred it to the minister, he seemed to be genuinely concerned about what is happening here to an Ontario citizen in a province that should be able to look after her. He has promised personally to look into this. I'm hoping that the parliamentary assistant can give the same kind of assurance that the Premier did just 15 minutes ago.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to speak to this. The Ontario health insurance plan is a universal, publicly funded system available to all qualified Ontario residents. The McGuinty government is committed to single-tier universal comprehensive medicare for medically necessary physician, hospital and dental-surgical services under the principles of the Canada Health Act.

Through the out-of-country prior approval program, the ministry provides full funding of out-of-country health services for Ontario residents who require services to address medical conditions that arise inside Ontario when these services are not performed in Ontario or cannot be obtained in Ontario without medically significant delay.

The out-of-country prior approval program functions as a safety valve in Ontario's health system and as a strategic indicator of capacity pressures.

The out-of-country program functions not only as an overflow mechanism for Ontario's health services but also as a strategic indicator of fluctuations in capacity that take place in Ontario both in health service availability and the evolution of health care worldwide.

The out-of-country prior approval program does not provide funding for expenses related to transportation; lodging apart from the approved in-patient hospitalization; food apart from meals provided as part of the approved in-patient hospitalization; drugs apart from drugs that are a part of the approved treatment and that are administered in the out-of-country hospital or health facility; or other services that are not specifically prior-approved except emergency services directly related to the prior-approved treatment.

Applications for prior approval of funding for out-of-country health services are completed by practising Ontario physicians and submitted to the ministry's out-of-country unit for adjudication.

Ministry medical advisers and senior staff in the out-of-country unit review prior-approval applications and make decisions about funding based on the terms and conditions specified in the regulations, principally regulation 552 under the Health Insurance Act. These conditions include: the treatment is not experimental; the treatment is generally accepted in Ontario as appropriate for a person in the same medical circumstances as the insured person; the treatment is to be provided in a hospital or licensed health facility; and either the treatment or an equivalent treatment is not performed in Ontario, or the treatment or an equivalent treatment is performed in Ontario but it is necessary that the insured person travel outside of Canada to avoid a delay that would result in death or medically significant irreversible tissue damage.

In addition, the funding is conditional on written approval from the general manager before the services are obtained. The treatment must be obtained within the period specified in the written approval from the general manager.

With the exception of services provided in urgent circumstances to address complications arising from an approved treatment, the ministry cannot pay for services that are not specified in the letter of approval that is sent to the out-of-country facility and copied to the referring Ontario physician and the patient.

As of April 1, 2009, an out-of-country preferred provider should be selected if a preferred provider arrangement has been established for the required service. If not a preferred provider, funding will not be available.

Preferred providers are listed on the out-of-country website. To date, funding agreements have been established for diagnostic imaging, residential treatment, certain types of cancer care, and bariatric surgery.

**Health Services Appeal and Review Board:** The ministry adjudicates each out-of-country application for funding in accordance with the Health Insurance Act and regulations, including section 28.4 of Ontario regulation 552. The ministry applies the HIA and the regulatory

provision to the specific facts of each case, most specifically to the information submitted by the applicant that describes the medical circumstances of the applicant.

Individuals can appeal to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board if they do not agree with the adjudication from the ministry. The ministry does not interfere with the decision-making processes of the board. The Health Services Appeal and Review Board is an independent adjudicative board. It is not part of OHIP or any other part of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The board can change OHIP's decision if it is satisfied that OHIP made a mistake in interpreting the Health Insurance Act in your case. The board cannot change or ignore the act and cannot take into account compassionate reasons or any other reasons that are not in the act.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is proposing regulatory amendments to implement evidence-based changes that will result in improvements in quality of care and patient outcomes, as well as system efficiencies. The proposed changes include: adjustment of the Ontario health insurance plan; payments for physician services; and changes to the funding of the out-of-country health services by OHIP.

These evidence- and quality-based recommendations are consistent with the ministry's Excellent Care for All strategy by using technical, expert evidence in decision making for the funding of health care services. Without affecting patient care for medically necessary services, these recommendations will ensure proper testing and services to those patients who need the services.

The proposed amendments will help the government control expenditures while at the same time protecting the delivery of health care services. In addition, these amendments will focus on the key priority of ensuring the appropriateness of care through the provision of evidence-based services.

The proposed changes would be effective April 1, 2011, with the exception of the proposal related to out-of-country drug funding, which would be effective October 1, 2011. Any applications delivered to the OHIP general manager prior to April 1, 2011, will be reviewed in accordance with the previous regulations. For any new applications delivered after April 1, the new regulations will be applied.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given recently by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The member will have up to five minutes; the parliamentary assistant will have up to five minutes to reply.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** On Thursday, March 31, I asked a question about the Eramosa karst feeder lands. I asked, "Will the Premier, right now, commit to the city of Hamilton to close those serious loopholes that leave this land open to future development?"

In his response, the Minister of Municipal Affairs said he had never heard from me on this issue. I can only guess that he doesn't listen to questions, statements or comments in this Legislature unless his name is specifically mentioned; if he did, he would have long since realized that I first raised concerns about the Eramosa karst feeder lands in this Legislature on April 16, 2008, and have raised the same issue 11 times, including my question last week on March 31.

In a blatant show of partisanship, the minister drooled platitudes for his Liberal colleague, who has been nowhere publicly on this issue until recent weeks in this election year. Such misleading commentary in this Legislature stains the reputation and degrades the integrity of our political process—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I'd like the member to withdraw that, please.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I withdraw that last statement, Speaker.

In my supplementary question, I asked to be assured that "the minister actually responsible for the lands transfer them immediately to the Hamilton Conservation Authority, no strings attached."

As I understood it, these lands are currently within the portfolio of the Minister of Infrastructure, who has responsibility for the Ontario Realty Corp., within which these lands are held, which is why I framed my question exactly as I did: to ensure the correct minister would respond to my question. Is this minister the correct

minister? And if he is, when were the lands transferred from the Ontario Realty Corp. to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, you need to clarify something. The objection that you filed was with regard to funding rebates for several services to the city of Hamilton, and you said the minister did not answer the question properly.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to you, that's incorrect.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** It's your handwriting.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Someone must have made a mistake, because it was about the Eramosa karst.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I don't know that the parliamentary assistant is prepared to answer that question this evening. I have a document signed by yourself that doesn't mention that, so I can only go by the document that's in front of me, and I'm going to have to adjourn the House.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Okay, Speaker, I'll—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We'll get it clarified somehow, yes.

There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House is adjourned until 9 of the clock Thursday morning, April 7.

*The House adjourned at 1820.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
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<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	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
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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
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<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
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<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Gélinas, France (NDP) <b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Oakville Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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
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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
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	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
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Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) <b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	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) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	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) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	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	
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Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	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	
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Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
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<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones  
Amrit Mangat, Yasir Naqvi  
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio  
Maria Van Bommel  
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Group and the London Stock Exchange Group / Comité  
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Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips  
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David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day







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