



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 39^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 18 April 2011

Lundi 18 avril 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 18 April 2011

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 18 avril 2011

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's my privilege to introduce in the west gallery members of the Ontario duty-free association, here for their reception today, I'd like to remind all members, in room 228 from 11:30 to 1:30. We have with us Gerry Lee, Jim Pearce and Glenn Mills from the Ontario duty-free association.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very happy to introduce Frank Markel, CEO of Trillium Gift of Life, joining us today in the Legislature.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'd like to ask the Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming the Hardeman family to Queen's Park: my two grandsons, Jeremy and Christopher, and their sister Juliana. They also brought their parents, my son Scott and his wife Angela, and their grandmother, my wife Reta. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I would like to request unanimous consent from this Legislature—my colleague the whip is doing other duties—in reference to registering your consent to wear gift-of-life ribbons, if I may. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Unanimous consent to wear the ribbons: Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to extend a special invitation to Mr. Hugh Laird, from the Interior Systems Contractors Association of Ontario, and our former colleague from the same organization, Mr. Ron Johnson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I want to introduce page Emma Redfearn's family—I think they may have some difficulty getting into the gallery; it's very busy here this morning. But I want to recognize Chris and Sarah Redfearn and Emma's brother Christopher, who travelled all the way from Ailsa Craig to be here with us this morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I should note that Sarah, Emma's mother, was a page in 1987, as well.

Mr. Kim Craitor: I'm really proud to introduce Steven Badger, a good friend from the riding of Niagara Falls. Steven, would you stand? Thanks. Steven is attending the University of Toronto and is currently enrolled in politics and sociology, and he thought this would be a good place to learn some lessons.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to welcome the father of page Ciaran Thomas to Queen's Park. Mr. Thomas is joining us to, rather cautiously, watch question period today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'd like to welcome my wife and my sister-in-law, here with us today to watch the democratic process take place.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: We're joined today by three students from St. Ignatius of Loyola high school: Marta Bielak, who won my holiday greeting card challenge; and Samantha Pufek and Natalie Zezuskek, the runners-up. Their art teacher, Ms. Liz Kalec, is here with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Willowdale and page Jia Jia Ho, to welcome her mother, Ping-Chun Hsiung, and her father, Yu-Nan Ho, to the gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Also, on behalf of all members, I would like to extend a warm welcome back to the Legislature to Ron Johnson, who represented Brantford in the 36th Parliament. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery this morning, I'd like to welcome three members of the family of student legislative usher Janette Piasecki. They are Vicky Zawada, Janette's mother; Natalia Zawada, Janette's sister; and Kasia Biernacka, Janette's grandmother. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I would like to welcome the students from the Old Colony Christian School, in my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, who are visiting Queen's Park today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Minister of Finance. On page 68 of your recent budget, the McGuinty Liberals say they'll permanently cut executive costs at hospitals and government agencies by 10%. But last week, an unelected staffer from your office announced yet another McGuinty backtrack, telling the London media that you will not go through with this. In fact, he said you won't do anything about executives who fail to reduce costs.

I ask the finance minister—the print is still wet from your budget and you're already backtracking: How much

more will Ontario families now have to pay for your failure to keep your basic promises?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: As the government that has hired more nurses, as the government that has built a track record of providing better health care, as the government that, first of all, began to measure and cut wait times, and as the government that has brought down the year-over-year rate of growth in health care, I can assure you that this policy is being implemented as we speak. As we move forward, we will deal with the health care challenges we face.

What I would ask the Leader of the Opposition is if he would join with Premier McGuinty in asking the federal government for a 10-year commitment on the health care accord, moving forward. They've been silent over there, other than to say that they're going to cut—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Maybe the finance minister was not aware that his staff has announced a major backtrack on another so-called savings mechanism by the Liberals—I'll refer to the story "Pay Targets Toothless" in the London Free Press last week.

Minister, one day during your budget, you vowed to cut executive salaries at hospitals and agencies by 10%. It figured prominently in your budget speech and, days later became a talking point for the Premier himself. The Premier, when asked about ballooning hospital executive salaries, said, "We're going to cut those salaries by 10%." There was no asterisk; there was no footnote.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: It was very clear.

Mr. Tim Hudak: You were very clear. But now you're backtracking yet again.

I'll just ask you, Minister: If you're backtracking on yet another toothless saving scheme, how much are you going to raise taxes to pay for it?

1040

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Premier is right; I'm right; the budget is right.

I don't know who said that, and frankly, they didn't speak for the government. It's interesting—these things happen all the time. For instance, the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, the other week, said that, rather than close the jails, we ought to shut down the Niagara Escarpment Commission. He'd rather protect jails than protect the environment. Is that the Leader of the Opposition's party's policy?

Unfortunately, we have nothing to compare the health care issue to. They've said nothing, other than that they're going to cut \$3 billion from health care. That means you could close every hospital on University Avenue in Toronto and not save that much.

We're standing up for Ontario. We're building a better and stronger health care system for all of our children and grandchildren.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, you're hardly standing up for anything. You're backtracking yet again on some-

thing that you highlighted in your budget, that the Premier highlighted last week. And now we see your press secretary, Andrew Chornenky, indicating that if hospital executives don't cut their budgets by 10%—well, I guess you'll give them a sharp "tsk, tsk," shake your head and then walk away and allow this bloated spending to continue.

The bottom line, Minister: You say anything to get elected, but when push comes to shove, you run away from even the basics in achieving any kind of savings for Ontario families.

Quite frankly, your financial house of cards is falling down, and all that's left is another McGuinty HST tax hike. Just tell us: Is it a one-point hike or a two-point hike? How are you going to pay for your runaway spending?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We laid out a budget, and we're going to cut executive salaries by 10%. We laid out a budget—

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We laid out a budget that moves forward on tax cuts, not tax increases.

The only thing missing from this debate is what the leader of the third party is going to do. What they've said is, they're going to cut \$3 billion from health care, possibly \$6 billion—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): This is twice now that the member from Renfrew has used unparliamentary language in response to an issue raised from the government side. I'd just remind the honourable members: It goes both ways. The honourable member takes exception to a statement that gets made. I listened very clearly, and I can't judge what's in party policy. But I also hear questions being asked of the government that imply that the government is going to do something, too. So it goes both ways.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: They had to withdraw, because they don't have a plan. They haven't said anything other than that they're going to cut \$3 billion from health care. You're going to close hospitals. You're going to fire nurses. You're likely going to have to close schools. And do you know what? Ontarians get that, because you were part of a government that closed 38 hospitals.

We've been building a stronger health care system. We're standing up for better federal transfers—

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

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the minister: Minister, all you're standing up for here is bloated hospital executive salaries. You said you'd cut them by 10%, but within

days you're backpedalling yet again, saying, "Well, that's now off the table." No wonder we're in the deepest deficit in the history of the province.

In your budget, you said you would find a way to find \$1.5 billion in savings, but you've backtracked on every scheme that you brought forward. Union leaders and arbitrators called your bluff on the so-called pay freeze; you backtracked. Your agency review pared a meagre 0.0002% off the budget; you backtracked. And now, on your so-called 10% cut to hospital executive salaries, you've backtracked yet again.

Minister, why should we believe anything in your budget? The bottom line is, you're going to increase taxes to pay for your runaway—

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Leader of the Opposition confirms he's cutting health care. That's what he wants us to do. He's confirming that he's going to fire teachers.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Nepean. The member from Oxford.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Just today they said that he wants us to cut, but his own members are saying, "Keep the jails open." Then another member says, "Keep the jails open but shut down the Niagara Escarpment Commission." Another member says, "We're not going to touch the health premium," and then the Leader of the Opposition says that everything is on the table.

The only thing not on the table is a plan. The people of Ontario see through you. You're about closing hospitals, closing schools. You did it before; you'll do it again. We're going to stand up for the vital public services—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, honest to goodness, if you can't find a 10% reduction in the bloated executive and admin costs in this province, you have no business being finance minister in the province of Ontario. I can't believe you've already backtracked on something so straightforward, but I guess it's no surprise when you've seen, under Premier McGuinty, that while the economy grew by 9%, government program spending has gone up 77%—wasteful spending, bloated bureaucracies, LHINs, the eHealth boondoggle, and you won't even make good on a 10% cut in executive office costs. You've backtracked yet again.

I just want to ask you, Minister: Why won't you be honest? Is it a—

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We've laid out a plan that has a detailed tax plan that goes out three years and then goes out seven years. We haven't seen their plan. We have to rely on the word of the leader that they are going to cut \$3 billion from health care.

But let's talk about health care. We've cut the use of consultants in health care by 50% from what that govern-

ment did. Yes, expenditures have gone up in health care, as they've gone up around the western world, because we chose to protect those vital services; we chose to reduce wait times; we chose to hire nurses and build 18 new hospitals. That leader and his party will close hospitals, just like they did before, they will fire nurses, and they have no plan. That's why they don't have a plan: They don't—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Rise up, Dwight.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, you say your budget is out three years. It didn't last three weeks. You've already backtracked on your cuts to executive pay; you've totally gone off the rails on your so-called wage freeze; and your agency, board and commission review is a joke—0.0002% savings. No wonder people want to see a change in the province of Ontario, a change that will cut the bloated bureaucracy, a change that will increase front-line health care spending.

Here's where our party stands: We will increase the health care budget and put the money into the front lines to reduce the bureaucracy, close the LHINs and pare down the bloated administrative costs. All we see from the McGuinty Liberals is yet another greedy tax grab.

Minister, if you can't do the job, why don't you just step aside?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: If they're so opposed to a 10% cut in executive salaries, why did they vote against it? Why did you vote against the risk management program that your own critic has called for?

That leader doesn't have a plan. Now he's going to increase health spending—42% of the budget—at the same time he's going to eliminate a deficit with no plan. We heard that once before. I remember, "I will not close a single hospital." I remember that. That was the former leader of that party, a government in which he served.

Ontarians want this government to protect their vital public services: health care and education. We will do that. We've laid out a plan to do it, a responsible, effective plan that's eliminating the deficit. Where is the third party's plan? They're hiding their plans to close—

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

1050

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. In this government's latest budget, it pledged to cut executive office costs in the broader public sector by 10%. If hospitals, universities and other public sector bodies fail to cut their executive office budgets by 10%, what penalties will this government levy?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Number one: We have talked about not funding any increases associated with that. That's number one.

There are important decisions and choices to be made here. The leader of the third party, on the one hand, gets up day after day, wants more money for this and more money for that and doesn't say how she's going to balance the budget. We've laid out a responsible plan to get back to balance as we protect the vital public services that Ontarians come to expect. It's about better health care, better education and a better future for our children.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, talk is cheap. It's really a very simple question, and I'm asking it because the storm clouds are gathering on the horizon. The Ontario Hospital Association is already on record as having real concerns with this government's proposal, so I'm going to ask the question again.

If hospitals and other broader public sector organizations refuse to reduce their executive office costs by 10%, will this government impose penalties, or will it simply stand by while public sector executives continue to cash in?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I remind the leader of the third party that they have to sign attestations—this is not an option to them—and that there are accountability agreements that we put into place.

This is about building a better health care system. There are difficult challenges. It is about making sure that more money goes to front-line services for nurses and for other vital health care services that all Ontarians have come to rely on. We've laid out a very careful plan. We've been able to increase funding for health care as we reduce wait times and hire more nurses, and do it in a more responsible fashion.

We're going to continue along that path, a path that will get us back to balance, because at the end of the day, a strong health care system depends on a strong economy and a strong government. We're committed to all of that.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The sad reality is that this government's 10% edict is not worth the paper it's written on. They have no intent of putting anything into law requiring hospitals and other broader public sector organizations to actually cut executive office costs by 10%. They have no intent of imposing any kind of penalties whatsoever, nor are they prepared to actually get serious by imposing real, hard caps on top executive salaries in the broader public sector. There's nothing at all serious here.

Will the minister now admit that this scheme is all just for show and not much else?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Just last week we passed the budget bill, and that party voted against it. We came forward with legislation to actually do something, and that member and her party voted against it.

We have laid out a very careful plan that builds on our achievements in health care while getting us back to a balanced budget. We think laying out a plan is important. We think a balanced plan is important, one that shows how you're going to make those investments in health care while, at the same time, getting back to balance.

That's our challenge. We've risen to it. We have yet to hear a plan from that leader or her party.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier.

It's never easy for a parent to drop their child off at a child care centre, so it's imperative that parents have the best information to ensure that child care facilities are safe. Today's Toronto Star indicates that parents lack this information because the McGuinty government has broken its promise made in 2007 to post information about serious incidents and violations at child care centres across Ontario.

Why is this government failing to provide parents the information that they need to protect their children?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I do appreciate the honourable member's question this morning. The wait is unacceptable, and I've made it very clear to staff today that I want, within weeks, within a month, to ensure that the licences and inspections are posted online.

I think it's important to point out, though, that those inspections are available at the daycare site. They are available to the public, but they are not available online, and that is very important. I can say to the honourable member that staff at the ministry are very happy to have received this responsibility at the beginning of this year. That is why we are working diligently to ensure that families get this important information in a very timely way. I appreciate that the honourable member has brought that to the floor today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In 2007, after the Toronto Star revealed that children at some Ontario child care centres were being hit, kicked and abused, the McGuinty government promised to publicly post serious-incident and inspection reports.

There were more than 5,000 such incidents at child care centres last year alone. Full information is already posted by the city of Toronto for Toronto child care centres, but parents elsewhere can't access the same kind of information.

When will the government finally fulfill its promise that was made four years ago and make serious-incident reports public across the province?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy that I have the opportunity to address the distinction between the incident report as opposed to the inspection of child care. Incident reports are very serious documents, and we have been working with the privacy commissioner—

Interjection.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I say to the member from Welland: This is about privacy. This is about the privacy of individuals who may have been involved in a particular incident in a child care facility.

We want to make sure that families and the public have the information they should and can legally have.

That is why we continue to work on this very important issue around access to information. We are committed to making sure that families have it, but we want to make sure that when we do, it is provided in a way that is also sensitive—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: That answer makes me much more nervous than what I was expecting. Those were weasel words, if I ever heard them, around the issue.

Interjections.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Today's Toronto Star story is another indication of just how low a priority child care has become for this government, with tens of thousands of parents waiting for a space, fees rising and centres closing across this province, home-based child care operating without any licence or inspection, before- and after-school child care programs being farmed out to for-profit corporations and lack of real information about serious incidents that are happening in child care centres in Ontario.

I'd like to know when the McGuinty government decided that Ontario parents no longer deserve safe, affordable, accessible child care for their children.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think it is unfortunate that the honourable member does not know or understand that we have invested significantly in child care, and we have extended access to families by providing more than 70,000 new child care spaces. In addition to that, we have required that child care facilities post their inspections on the premises so that families are able to access that information when they go to the premises. In addition to providing that, we also require child care providers to ensure that families who have their children going there know that that is there.

By the way, we have created the early childhood educators college. Now there is a professional college so that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The member from Hamilton East should be in his seat.

New question.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Minister of Finance. The news of this major backtrack on your vow to claw back \$1.5 billion in spending through a 10% cut to executive salaries was delivered by an unelected staffer from your office. You're the one who's accountable to Ontario families, not some faceless political staffer in your office.

Why didn't you announce this major backtrack on yet another restraint scheme yourself?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The policy, I'm proud, passed second reading last week here in the House. I think it's before a committee. We will work to enforce that policy.

I think it's important to note that they voted against it, and they're relying on just taking out of context a number of comments that were made in a newspaper article.

The only other thing missing in this debate is any plan from that party other than to cut at least \$3 billion from health care. We're waiting to see their plan. They've been missing in action on health care for the last seven years.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Minister, maybe it took all your energy to admit that your wage freeze failed because union leaders and arbitrators ignored it, or that, for all the fanfare, your streamlining effort failed to pare anything more than 0.0002% off your massive deficit. You spent the last year twisting yourself into a pretzel to sell a greedy HST tax grab after the Premier promised not to raise taxes. It must be tiring being the one to shill for all the backtracking all the time. Minister, is that why you took a break and put out your staffer to admit that you're letting executives at public agencies ignore your toothless scheme to control spending?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We laid out a plan for deficit reduction and we're overachieving that plan. I expect there will be more good news in that capacity in the very near future.

We have laid out a range of cuts—some modest, some more than modest. I'm proud of the fact that we've reduced the average rate of public sector settlements in Ontario to below the federal government, below municipal governments and below the private sector. We will work with our partners. We will continue to build on those successes.

We reject their approach, which is to beat up public servants and to downgrade nurses and teachers. They called nurses hula-hoop workers; we think they're important contributors to society and to health care.

We reject your approach. No one wants to go back to those days. We'll continue to work with the entire broader public sector to build better-quality public services for all Ontarians.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Marjory and Paul Springer from Sudbury have been married for 66 beautiful years. In order to stay living together, the Springers had to move outside of Sudbury to a long-term-care home in Arthur because there was no way to get them in the same room in the same nursing home in Sudbury. But now, their request to stay together in the same room is costing them more money than they can afford.

Can the minister explain why seniors like Marjory and Paul are being told to pay up or live apart for their final years?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I read the story of Marjory, Paul and their family, and it is indeed a story that calls out for a response. I'm very, very happy today to tell you that we are going to be changing the rules so that couples

who are living their final years in a long-term-care home will be able to share a room together for as long as they live.

They should not be required to pay a premium. We are committed and have taken several steps, which I'll talk about in the supplementary, to encourage families to be reunited in long-term care.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France G linas: I'm sure the Springers will be very happy, but there are many, many other couples—throughout my riding, anyway—who are trying to have what we call couple reunification. I can talk about a couple in Val Caron who presently have lost all of their home care services because they refused the first bed available. They refused the first bed available because one would have been at one end of town and the other one would have been at the other. I have clients who have been apart for over five years in Sudbury, asking for spousal reunification, and they can't get together.

I'm happy for the Springers—really happy. But why is it that spousal reunification is at the bottom of the list when it comes to who gets what long-term-care bed?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I do want to say that the member opposite actually has it wrong. Spousal reunification goes to the top of the list. It is our highest priority.

When we took office in 2003, we heard horror stories about couples who had spent their whole lives together and all they wanted to do was spend what was left of their lives together. We've taken significant steps to get couples living together. This is an important next step forward, where we will remove the financial penalty that would come with spouses living together.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question this morning is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. "Small businesses in Ontario"—job creators and innovators—are looking "for relief from the burden of regulation and taxation." Well, Minister, I agree.

The McGuinty government has initiated many measures in this area, and I know for a fact that the Minister of Economic Development and Trade has been doing something in this area. The minister and her staff have been tackling this issue head-on by tirelessly working to create a dialogue between the government and various business sectors in order to find out what their needs are and how they can be met.

We need Ontario's businesses and corporations at their very best in order to stay competitive provincially, nationally and internationally, so I'd like to ask the minister to inform the House how her ministry is working to create a healthy and prosperous working environment for Ontario's small businesses.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I very much appreciate the question. There is a huge contrast between how we interact with business in our communities and how the opposition interacts with business and representatives from their communities.

In our government, we've reached out, in particular to small business, to various sectors like BILD, like the hotel and motel association; we've reached out to labour. We've listened to what groups have had to say so that we can do our job better.

Let me say how this contrasts: Opposition members want to throw people out of their dinners; they want to throw people out of their meetings. It hearkens back to the Harper days, the Harris days, and now, of course, the Hudak opposition party—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just remind the honourable member: I've talked previously about making reference to individual names and, particularly, who has been leading the parties.

Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Leal: The minister brought up some very interesting points. I, too, wonder what the members opposite have to hide and why they haven't revealed any of their platform issues—other than their usual mantra of having "respect for Ontario's hard-working families." How can they respect Ontario's families if they constantly condemn and shut out the voices of people representing hard-working Ontario families? But I digress.

Minister, perhaps you can expand on the other facets of how the McGuinty government is supporting businesses through the Open Ontario plan.

The people in this province hear a lot of promises about job creation and investments, but can the minister offer them some solid proof of how the government is serving all Ontarians, regardless of their political stripes?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I can see why opposition members are so antsy. We've got a great track record in helping businesses create jobs in every community across Ontario—those that have been hard hit during the recession; those that have flourished—and we're not finished. The 2011 budget, just tabled, announced operations for 10,000 new jobs, not just in Liberal ridings but in Conservative and NDP ridings as well.

Just the other day, we had a great announcement at Rich Products in Fort Erie, a great company that's busy creating new jobs.

What's more important for people to know is that these are the initiatives that the opposition members—even the member from Fort Erie—voted against. Every measure for job creation, opposition members voted against. That's something that we're going to make sure everyone—

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

CHILD CARE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is to the Minister of Education. We now know that the McGuinty Liberals are no better at keeping their promise to post daycare inspection and serious incidents reports online than they were at promising to post their expenses online.

Four years ago, the government vowed to publish regular online reports of abuses and unsafe conditions at child care centres. Now we learn that that promise has

been broken. Why did the government make the promise to protect our children if they were only going to break it?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What I will remind the honourable member is that since coming to government, we have made child care a priority, which was not the case when they were in government. We've done a range of things, including investing in 70,000 new child care spaces. We've also provided for families online information about the licensed child care facilities in their communities.

Within the next few weeks, we will be providing people with information about all the inspection reports of all the facilities that have received them.

The part about incidents reports: We continue to work with child care providers and with facility owners, as well as with families, to understand what is the best way to ensure that there is important information online made available to families, at the same time ensuring that families—

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

1110

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: This is a very serious issue, as daycare abuses continue to be kept secret. Ontario families no longer have confidence in the McGuinty government. As one child care advocate said, the McGuinty Liberals were put on the spot four years ago, so they said they would fix the problem, but they have not. The minister is no better at taking accountability for breaking that promise to post those reports online than the Minister of Finance was for backtracking on getting control over bloated executive salaries. Both allowed others to take the heat for failing to live up to the word they gave to Ontario families. Why, Minister, have you not lived up to your commitment to Ontario families?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think it's very important that the honourable member would know that we are the party that has made it very clear that families should have this information. We have posted online those facilities in Ontario that are licensed. We will be posting online the inspection reports of those facilities, and we are working with all those involved around what is the best way to ensure that information around incidents is presented in a way that certainly protects the children who may have been impacted, and at the same time ensuring that families who would be going to a facility would be aware of what has taken place.

We are absolutely committed and devoted to ensuring that this information is made available, and made available in a legal way. We are committed to our children, to our youngest learners. That is something that was not demonstrated when the honourable member was part of government. They did nothing—

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

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Labour. When New Democrats first read the Dean health

and safety report, we had high hopes that, finally, Ontario's woefully inadequate health and safety laws would be reformed. Here was a solid report, and Mr. Dean and his advisory council deserve to be commended. But on closer inspection, it's clear that Bill 160 fell far short of the Dean recommendations. Employers, labour and even the minister's own interim health and safety prevention council are all recommending a major overhaul of this legislation. Does the minister plan to just ignore these informed voices and do lasting harm to the health and safety of Ontario workers?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let me first respond in this way: We are so very grateful for the excellent work that the expert panel did in providing us with that report. It was the consensus report provided by labour, by academics, by business, who all had the same concern as we do: that we want our workers to be safe.

The bill is now before the committee. We want the committee to deliberate over these issues. We are welcoming those reactions. We've had consultations. And let me say this as well: It was this party and this ministry that appointed an interim prevention council to deal with the very issues that you speak of. We're very receptive. We've said from the beginning that this is not about being partisan; this is about working together for the benefit of those injured workers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Well, that's interesting: "non-partisan." We've put in about 500 recommendations; you've listened to one.

We supported most of the recommendations of the Dean report. The problem is that parts of Bill 160 actually contradict the Dean panel's recommendations. That's not just our opinion; that's the opinion of the minister's own interim health and safety prevention council. That's why New Democrats voted against the bill at second reading.

Will this government make major changes to Bill 160, or is it going to throw away a once-in-a-generation opportunity to significantly improve the health and safety of Ontario workers?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Our reaction to the concerns that are being brought forward are made public on our website. We have, on there, responses to our interim prevention council, dealing with the issues that we all share.

I've said from the beginning that what we want is to have an efficient and effective system. This is the largest change that we've made in over 35 years. We want to protect those workers. And we are listening. We will continue to deliberate over those issues. I've had consultations with all stakeholders, including union members, who are appearing today before the committee.

I think we should give ourselves latitude and some respect, because what we're dealing with is not between political parties. This is not about playing politics; this is about helping those people on the front lines. It's about protecting our workers and reducing our injury rates, and we will continue to support them.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Energy. There's no doubt that Ontario's electricity system is turning the corner. Eight years ago, our power system was, by all accounts, an ugly, unreliable mess from top to bottom. Our system lost generating capacity the equivalent of Niagara Falls running dry; the PC government of the day was trying to privatize Ontario's transmission grid; the use of coal had increased by 127%; and the province was on life support from temporary leased generators and imported electricity that cost Ontarians \$1 billion in less than two years.

What progress is the government making in cleaning up our electricity system to build a healthier future for our kids and grandkids?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for Oak Ridges–Markham for her question and assure her indeed that tremendous progress is being made to clean up the dirty, unreliable mess the PC Party called an electricity system.

The member, and other members who are heckling right now, may be interested to know that, compared to the first quarter of 2003, the first quarter of 2011 saw a reduction of 90% in coal use, probably for the first time ever.

We've permanently shut down eight coal-burning units so far. That's like taking 2.5 million cars off Ontario roads. We've announced the conversions of the Atikokan and Thunder Bay generating stations. Ontario will be completely coal-free by 2018—not an easy thing to do, but we have a plan and we have the leadership, unlike the opposition—

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The Conservatives' historical record of disregard and disrespect for the health and well-being of Ontarians is perhaps the most offensive memory I have of their last two terms in office. They fired water inspectors, meat inspectors and nurses, and they closed hospitals across Ontario. They increased the use of coal over their eight years by 127%, coal that emits neurotoxins, mercury, lead, arsenic and sulphur dioxide. As a physician, I can tell you the fact that their government did that goes beyond just irresponsible.

Minister, will the government take the advice of doctors and nurses and stick to an energy policy that embraces clean sources like wind and solar and has no more place for dirty coal?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Absolutely. Our government has a long-term energy plan that gets us out of coal, modernizes our electricity system and makes clean, renewable energy an important part of our supply mix.

I mentioned that the use of coal is already down 90% in 2011, compared to the same period in 2003. But the member is right: The PC Party really does make some peculiar choices when it comes to protecting the health of Ontario families. It reminds me of the vote on a smoke-free Ontario, something that keeps cigarettes out of the hands of kids. Only six members of this Legislature vot-

ed against that one. One of those six members is now the Leader of the Opposition.

We're determined to build a clean and reliable energy system in this province, with or without the support of the opposition.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, last Thursday, a delegation led by the mayor of Sarnia, from my community of Sarnia–Lambton, met with you to discuss the surprise budget announcement to close the Sarnia jail. Minister, will you apologize to the people of Sarnia–Lambton for threatening to cut the courthouse if they continue to criticize your hare-brained scheme to close the jail?

Interjection.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: The member who was Minister of Agriculture would remember the day trading at Agricorp, so I don't think he should be intervening in this particular matter.

But to answer the member: The member was at the meeting that we were at, and I was delighted to see him there. I know that member is a person of integrity, and I know that he knows that no such threat was made at that meeting. No such threat has been implied in any way. I really count on him, as a person who was sitting there, to confirm that no such threat was made. He and I know that. Other people at the meeting would know that. I don't know where that story came from, and it's most unfortunate.

1120

Mr. Robert Bailey: Back to the Minister of Community Safety: Minister, the mayor of Sarnia and other people who were at that meeting came away with that direct inference from your minister and your staff.

The delegation led by Mayor Bradley came to Queen's Park last Thursday with serious, legitimate questions. They came to meet with you. They came out of that meeting saying that they felt "insulted and bullied by your staff."

In retrospect, do you think that being a bully was the right tactic to take with the people from my community who would want answers and respect?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I ask the member, in his heart of hearts, to really reflect upon that meeting. I think he knows, and I know, that no such thing happened. A good deal of listening took place to the representations made. The member was there as well.

I know these matters are difficult. When the Conservative government closed jails in Cobourg, Haileybury, L'Orignal, Waterloo–Wellington, Parry Sound, Barrie, Peterborough, Guelph, Cornwall, the Burtch facility, Lindsay, Whitby, Brampton, Millbrook and Sault Ste. Marie, I know there were great difficulties at that time. It isn't easy for a community.

Ministry staff make available information. You're always asking that we try to save some money; we're endeavouring as a ministry to do so. But I know the member knows that no such thing occurred—

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

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Mayor Bradley and a delegation from Sarnia came to Queen's Park last week to plead the economic consequences of the Premier's decision to close the Sarnia jail. Not only were their concerns completely ignored, but they were sent packing with a veiled threat that their courthouse may be next on the chopping block. Is that how this government responds to evidence and community input—with threats?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Community Safety.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I can tell the leader of the third party that absolutely no such thing occurred. There was no indication of that in any way, and no hint of it in any way. I don't know where that really came from.

There was a very good meeting that took place between those of us who have responsibility for the correctional system across this province and a delegation that came, along with our friend Bob Bailey, who was at that meeting. There was a very good dialogue that took place. They put forward some of the information that they had. Our ministry indicated what some of our information was. I thought we listened with a good deal of respect and interest to the delegation that was there. In no way, shape or form was any such threat ever made at that meeting.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Not only will the closure of the Sarnia jail hurt the community, but the government's financial reasoning simply doesn't hold water. Mayor Bradley will ask the Sarnia city council to officially oppose the closure of Sarnia jail, and today, members from OPSEU are here to provide additional evidence against the closure.

Given that this hastily considered decision will have serious effects in southwestern Ontario, and in light of flawed number-crunching and community opposition, will the government just reverse this wrong-headed decision?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I know that the member herself was not part of a party that was in power, but the members who were in power at that time realize how difficult it is to make decisions of this kind, to try to find efficiencies and not have it reflect upon a community. I can assure her that all consideration was given to the representations which were made by members of that community. Our ministry has done an analysis and believes that they can save a considerable amount of money in this regard.

I'm actually really surprised that the New Democratic Party—where the federal leader is talking about a different story on jails and prisons in this country—that

this member is up defending the keeping open of jails. But I can say that all matters will be taken into consideration on this particular—

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

TAXATION

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. Minister, on Friday, the Toronto Star reported that a printing error by the Canada Revenue Agency on a tax form may cost some Ontario residents hundreds of dollars in missed provincial tax credits and benefits. I've heard from a lot of constituents in Willowdale, particularly seniors and those with lower incomes, who are concerned that the federal mistake may cost them money that is rightfully theirs to keep.

Minister, what steps are you taking to correct the error made by the Canada Revenue Agency so that Ontarians get to keep their own money that they should be keeping?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I thank the member from Willowdale for that very important question. In fact, we are aware of the printing error that did take place with the CRA tax form. I want to assure Ontarians who have already followed the printed instructions that they will not be denied any money to which they have been entitled. The CRA has announced that the online versions have been corrected, and their systems will recalculate the tax bill and correct the mistake.

I would also encourage all Ontarians, if they can, to go online to visit the Ministry of Revenue's website, ontario.ca/taxcredits, to find out more about the credits and benefits that they may be eligible for.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Minister, what I worry about is that seniors and low-income Ontarians may decide not even to file the tax return because they're now under the impression that they're not entitled to the provincial tax credits as a result of the federal error.

Provincial tax credits and benefits provide significant tax relief to Ontarians, especially seniors and low-income Ontarians. Minister, let's make sure that they don't lose those benefits and tax credits because of the federal mistake. Can you tell us again just what tax credits and benefits are available for low-income Ontarians and seniors?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: The member is right: Our government has been doing a lot when it comes to the real needs of low-income families and seniors in this province.

There are a few things that we have done to help, and one is the permanent sales tax credit, which gives up to \$260 to each family member each and every year, and that's a permanent tax cut. We've also doubled the senior homeowners' property tax grant to \$500; it was \$250. And last December, over six million Ontarians received their second HST transition cheque, and that's \$300 for a single person and \$1,000 for a family.

I would highly recommend that Ontarians go online to ontario.ca/taxcredits to find all the credits that they are eligible for.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Acting Premier, the Minister of Finance. His budget papers indicate that the Ministry of Transportation plans to spend over \$2.1 billion on provincial highways this year. Could the minister inform my constituents if he plans to spend any of that money on Highway 6 through Wellington–Halton Hills? Or will he be using that money as a pre-election slush fund for ridings currently held by Liberal MPPs?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Ministry of Transportation has an ordinal ranking of highway work to be done in any given year. I will have to undertake to get back to the member on his specific question.

I will point out that some of the largest roadworks in the province are now going on in ridings held by the opposition. These are done—

Interjection.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: My colleague reminds me of the road in Welland, for instance, which is a very good example.

These priorities are set carefully. One thing that we can say with some certainty is that we believe in these kinds of investments. Not only do they create jobs; they make a better economy. I look forward to their plan for roads in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Highway 6 from Guelph to Fergus was last resurfaced more than 15 years ago, and its condition is now deplorable. It needs to be repaved this year. And south of Guelph, we need a bypass around Morriston in Puslinch township, a project I've raised in this House many times over the past three and a half years.

There are other urgent transportation priorities in our riding. For example, we need full traffic signal lights at the intersection of Highway 7 and Jones Baseline in the township of Guelph-Eramosa. And I just received a whole list of project needs from the town of Halton Hills that I will share with the Minister of Transportation.

What assurance will the Acting Premier give this House that the decisions on highway projects will be based on genuine, demonstrated needs and not determined by the requirements of the Liberal seat-saver program?

1130

Hon. Dwight Duncan: That member and his party downloaded highways to municipalities. You cut funding to highways. I'll take you through these. Transit funding averaged less than \$450 million a year province-wide, and it varied annually by huge sums. You cancelled the Eglinton subway. You averaged less than \$670 million a year province-wide—about a third of what we're doing.

Just to give you another example: this year, in a Conservative-held riding, \$320 million over three years in Carleton–Mississippi Mills. Mind you, that might be a Liberal riding in the none-too-distant future.

I can say to that member and the party opposite: no plan except to close hospitals, cut health funding, cut

education, download services to municipalities. We see—

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

CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. For the last four years I've been working to amend the condo act to give greater protection to the province's almost one million condo owners. Liberal MPPs spoke in support of my Bill 79 when I introduced it last year. But when I recently asked the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills to send my bill for public consultations, my request was shut down by every single Liberal MPP in that committee.

Minister, why is the government so adamantly opposed to giving condo owners a chance to have their say and propose ways to improve the condo act?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I appreciate the question that the member is asking. First of all, of course, the ability of a bill to be discussed by a committee is up to the House leaders. I would suggest that you speak to your House leader, who could talk to the Tory House leader and to our own House leader about that particular issue.

But as the member well knows, we've just recently conducted a survey of condo owners across this province. We are currently studying the various recommendations that came out of that particular survey, and undoubtedly we will be making changes to the condo act in the future. As he is well aware, there are over half a million condo owners in the province of Ontario. We took this survey very seriously. We are currently examining the various responses that we got back, and in the near future we will be introducing something with respect to the condo act.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My office receives thousands of complaints every year from condo owners victimized by some bad developers and some bad property managers. Condo owners tell me they have no other recourse but to spend thousands of dollars in court.

Minister, when will the government acknowledge that the current legislation does not provide enough protection for condo owners and finally set up a review board that can resolve disputes quickly and cheaply?

Hon. John Gerretsen: As the member well knows, when somebody becomes a member of a condominium corporation, they have voting rights. An annual meeting is held, at which time a board of directors is elected, and that particular board of directors makes the necessary arrangements with the condo managers and with the other suppliers at that condo. So there are democratic rights in place right now for a condo owner to exhibit his or her will about a particular issue. By and large, it's working across the province of Ontario. I would suggest that the individual condo owners make themselves aware of their rights and bring those concerns to the board of directors, which is made up of other members of the condo corporation, just like they are themselves.

But right now we are studying the recommendations that came out of the survey, and we will be making recommendations in due course to improve—

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

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, in my constituency office, I sometimes hear stories about employers mistreating their employees. Recently, the Toronto Star reported that new Canadians, alongside the Workers' Action Centre, found wage theft happening in this province—obviously, a very serious issue. The article raised concerns about employment standards enforcement and said that we need to do more to make enforcing the Employment Standards Act a priority.

Minister, can you tell the House what you're doing to stop wage theft and other exploitation happening to vulnerable workers in Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let me be clear to all employers: Any form of mistreatment to your employees is unacceptable. And when it comes to moving forward on issues such as employment standards, we all know that more is accomplished by working together. That's why my ministry is working hard to ensure that employees, whether new Canadians or young workers, know their rights.

We have also made enforcing the Employment Standards Act a priority. We've committed more resources than both the previous governments combined. Here are the facts: Between 1989 and 2003—that's between the NDP and the PC governments—there were 97 prosecutions initiated under the Employment Standards Act. Since 2004, there have been over 1,800. We've also tripled the number of employment standards officers who are out there investigating every day. We've recovered over \$50 million in wages owing to vulnerable employees, and we're handling far more claims than when we first started.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Minister, that's good news that we've seen such an increase in prosecutions. That's an issue that I know has been raised by the Auditor General at public accounts, so it's good to know that we've responded.

However, Minister, the article also said that new Canadians find it difficult to even file a claim. It can be a very complicated, daunting, overwhelming process for them. Last year, 118,000 newcomers arrived in Ontario. Lots of them are arriving in Guelph these days. These newcomers work in a variety of jobs when they arrive, and it's important that they know their workplace rights. What is the government doing to help new Canadians file a claim in Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'm proud to say that more people are aware of their rights than ever before. We're reaching out to employers and employees through educa-

tion, outreach and partnership activities. We provide new Canadians with multilingual service in 23 different languages in our call centre, as well as with employment standards information. Also, we have more than 50 ethnic community magazines and publications in Ontario that we use to get the message out. We've also featured videos on YouTube and our website that talk about knowing your rights and your responsibilities, in all different languages. These materials are helping all Ontarians understand their employment rights and responsibilities and direct them to the ministry's multilingual resource portal.

The employment standards system in Ontario is more modern, more up to date and more diversified than ever before.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like all members to join me in welcoming, in the Speaker's gallery today, Mr. Hugh O'Neil, who represented Quinte in the 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th and 35th Parliaments. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nickel Belt has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning spousal reunification. This matter will be debated on Wednesday, April 20 at 6 p.m.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(c), the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has filed notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 179, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance. The order for second reading of Bill 179 may therefore not be called today.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to remind the members of the luncheon being hosted by the Ontario duty-free association in room 230.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Brad Duguid: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In a response to a question earlier today, I think I said that we'd be out of coal by 2018. The actual time is 2014. I don't know if I said that, but I got a note that said that, so I just wanted to correct the record.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. That is a point of order. The member can correct his own record.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'd like to introduce some of my constituents from Milton who are here in support of the Milton hospital. In the west members' gallery are Samantha Attew, Matt Burger, Councillor Mike Cluett, Keith Hesse, Martin Capper, Andrew Roach, Councillor Greg Nelson, and Pablo Ricardo, who I believe is filming somewhere. They are all accompanied by my wife, Sandy Chudleigh. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We miss Sandy in Elgin–Middlesex–London. Dorchester misses you.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Could I ask permission to wear a button supporting the Milton District Hospital?

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Frank Klees: This is national Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week. I and my colleagues in the PC caucus want to encourage anyone who has not yet registered their consent to be an organ donor to do so.

Yesterday, the Premier sent out a Twitter message in which he pointed out that there are some 1,500 people on a wait-list for an organ transplant. "Please sign up," he said. Sadly, his link directs people to an antiquated, cumbersome and unreliable system of registration.

It has now been more than four years since we first called for an online registry, and there are at least 26 other recommendations that the government's own Citizens Panel on Increasing Organ Donations recommended in March 2007.

While the government delays, one person dies every three days while on that wait-list here in Ontario. But it doesn't have to be that way. I call once again on the McGuinty government to make organ donation a priority. Simply sending out social media messages and press releases about the importance of organ donation falls far short of the government's responsibility on this important issue.

The 1,500 patients on that wait-list for an organ transplant, thousands more in need of tissue transplants, their families and friends want to know when this government will do more than pay lip service to the importance of organ and tissue donation.

When can we expect to see an online registry, and when will we see a commitment to implementing the recommendations of the government's own citizens panel?

HAMLET OF VANDORF

Ms. Helena Jaczek: On Sunday, April 10, 2011, I had the privilege of volunteering at the Whitchurch-Stouff-

ville Museum pancake and ham brunch. This year, it was held at the Vandorf Community Centre, as the museum is undergoing a major expansion through the Building Canada fund. When complete, there will be an additional 9,000 square feet of programming space, which will provide an enhanced setting for community functions.

Vandorf is a small hamlet founded in the 19th century by the Van Nostrand family. In fact, the name Vandorf comes from combining "Van" from Van Nostrand with "dorf," meaning "village" in Dutch, to honour the predominantly Dutch residents of the day. The founding families of Vandorf travel from far and wide to revisit the Vandorf community to support the local museum by attending this delicious event hosted by the Founding Friends of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum.

With Florence White and Krista Rauchenstein at the griddles, ably assisted by Grace Cook, Margaret Crisson, Mary-Anne Pearce, Kathy Amenta, Jeanne Preston, Nora Richardson, Amja Karppa and Roy Scott, guests enjoyed fresh-cooked pancakes and ham topped off with local maple syrup.

Museum staff Dorie Billich and Stephanie Foley ensured that all ran smoothly, while Rick Preston reminisced about the old days in Vandorf with the visitors. Student volunteers Michela Prefontaine, Sarah Zhao, Irina Sverdichenko and Shirley Hoang were also there.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize all their hard work and dedication, and congratulate the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum on another successful event.

ISABEL BASSETT

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today to recognize a former member of this Legislature, Isabel Bassett, who is being honoured next week at the sixth annual Women in Public Life luncheon as she receives the EVE Equal Voice Award.

Isabel has led a distinguished career, which began in teaching. She moved on to become a journalist for the Toronto Telegram newspaper, and then joined Toronto's first privately owned television broadcast station, CFTO-TV. Isabel was elected to serve the riding of St. Andrew–St. Patrick in 1995, and in 1997 she was appointed the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

Isabel is well known for her commitment to the cultural community. As minister, she introduced bills to reduce red tape and simplify processes for the many actors, writers and publishers in the arts community. After her political career, Isabel went on to serve as the chair and CEO of TVO.

Isabel now devotes most of her time to speaking, lobbying and campaigning on behalf of women's issues. She also is an active volunteer for many organizations, including the Dalhousie Advisory Council, the Huntsville Hospital Foundation capital campaign, the International Women's Federation, and Moving Beyond Prejudice, an anti-discrimination education initiative, just to name a few.

Isabel is a wonderful advocate for the election of more women in government, and her advice and guidance were

significant to me when I was seeking election in 2007. I look forward to celebrating with Isabel as she receives her much-deserved EVE Equal Voice award next week.

THOMAS BAITZ

Mr. Jim Brownell: I rise in the House today to congratulate and pay tribute to Dr. Thomas Baitz, from my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, who was recently recognized with the Glenn Sawyer Award from the Ontario Medical Association. This award is presented to physicians for their outstanding medical contributions to their communities. It is given to no more than 15 physicians in the province of Ontario each year.

The Cornwall Academy of Medicine nominated Dr. Baitz for his dedication, hard work and accomplishments in the Cornwall community and, indeed, throughout the counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

Some of the initiatives Dr. Baitz has launched in the Cornwall area include a diabetes clinic and dialysis centre. He has also championed the local sleep clinic, instigated weekly educational opportunities for physicians, and established nuclear medicine in the city of Cornwall.

Dr. Baitz is a strong advocate for getting more general physicians into the Cornwall area. He believes the way to attract them is to set up clinics in the region, which would take care of the administrative work and allow doctors to practise without the hassle of operational details. With our new Seaway Valley health centre in Cornwall, we see this happening.

I would like to congratulate Dr. Baitz on receiving the Glenn Sawyer Award from the Ontario Medical Association. I know that I join all constituents in congratulating him for his outstanding health care professional work and for his dedication to the community of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

MILTON DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Milton, Ontario, is currently the fastest-growing community in Canada. Identified as an urban centre in Ontario's Places to Grow strategy, Milton is expected to grow to 133,000 people by 2016.

Today, with a population of over 100,000, Milton residents are being forced to use a hospital with inadequate bed capacity, emergency room capacity, ICU capacity and obstetrics capacity, and with serious surgical challenges.

Above and beyond these growing capacity concerns is the hospital's aging infrastructure. In a letter encouraging the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to move the Milton hospital capital planning process forward, Mississauga Halton LHIN chair John Magill noted in 2009: "It is critical that the redevelopment of the Milton hospital be considered a high priority of the ministry capital planning process. The current facilities are exhausted, outdated and undersized and cannot accommodate current patient volumes or future hospital service

needs.... The current Milton hospital is incapable of supporting modern-day services...."

Yet, two years later there has been no action. While this government says they support the LHINs, they have ignored this urgent call from the Mississauga Halton LHIN and Milton residents. Yet again, the Liberal walk does not follow the Liberal talk. As a result, not only is money being diverted away from front-line health care to the LHIN, but the health of Milton residents is being put in jeopardy.

Again, I urge this government to take the concerns of my constituents more seriously and move to the next phase—

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

ONTARIO SPORT AWARDS

Mr. Rick Johnson: Last week, Ontarians had an opportunity to celebrate a year of sports achievement like no other in our province's history. This past Thursday, the Ontario Sport Awards brought together athletes, coaches, business partners and sport organizations under one roof. The event recognized those who made serious achievements within their sport and who contributed to its development.

1310

Among them was Summer Mortimer, who brought home the female disabled athlete of the year award. Summer won gold at the IPC world championships and broke numerous world records all year long.

A packed house at the awards event helped mark an exceptional year in sport history, not only in Ontario but across Canada. The year 2010 also gave us a chance to watch our homegrown athletes bring home the greatest results in Canada's Olympic history. Awards were not only given to athletes, but to those in supporting roles like coaches and sport organizations.

The tireless efforts of individuals who dedicated up to two years of their lives to help organize local events did not go unrecognized. The event also celebrated the communities who play host to the many matches and tournaments Ontario hosts each year. Included last Thursday was recognition for Haliburton county, from my riding, which did a splendid job hosting the 2011 seniors' winter games this past February.

The sport awards were a great opportunity to showcase the remarkable sporting talent in this province, and I congratulate all those involved.

FIRE HALL IN ESTAIRE WANUP

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to make you aware of a great injustice presently taking place in my riding. It is in regard to Estaire Wanup, one of the many unorganized areas of Nickel Belt, and their volunteer fire brigade.

You see, Estaire Wanup is built on both sides of Highway 69. The fire hall is just beside the highway so that the trucks can go on and get to where they're going quickly. Now comes the new Highway 400, and they lose

their entrance. We now have a fire hall on a dead end to nowhere.

Those 200 residents realized that they needed to relocate their fire hall following the rerouting of Highway 69, so they went to work. They successfully secured property with access to the new highway. They have completed the building and the drywalling, and they will be painting shortly. All this was accomplished through their community fundraising efforts, many hours of volunteer labour and the assistance of sympathetic suppliers and contractors. Why? Because their multiple requests to the government for help have gone unanswered.

We have a community of 200 people responsible for raising \$250,000 to build a new fire hall because the government of Ontario has cut their access. This is \$1,250 for every man, woman and child. How can that be, that this community was forced into this situation, asked the government for help, and the government doesn't answer?

They've raised \$190,000; they're short \$60,000. Please help.

NATIONAL TRADE CONTRACTORS COALITION OF CANADA

Mr. Dave Levac: "We're the ones doing the work." That's the rally call. That's the catchphrase of the National Trade Contractors Coalition of Canada, the NTCCC, who work in partnership to bring together the construction trade associations from across the industry and across the country. Their members are engaged in the industrial, commercial, institutional and residential sectors of Canada's construction industry. They are the trade contractors who hire the vast majority of skilled trades workers within the construction industry itself. They are also the trade contractors who are hired by general contractors for specific parts of large construction projects.

The NTCCC is at Queen's Park today for their annual lobby day, meeting MPPs of all parties. The NTCCC is also here to bring us a little bit of fun: They will be hosting a reception today following the sitting. We all know that all members work really hard, so it's always nice at the end of the day to kick back and relax with those wonderful workers. What better way than to join me and the members of the NTCCC at the NTCCC reception that will be held in the legislative dining room downstairs between 4:30 and 7:30?

These men and women build our province. Let's show them a little support. I hope to see you there.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: The Minister of Energy announced last week that in the first months of 2011, Ontario's use of coal-fired power generation was down 90% compared to the same period in 2003.

The McGuinty government recognizes the benefits of phasing out dirty coal, and we're well on our way to shutting down all coal generation by 2014. That's like

taking seven million cars off the road. In the process, we're creating a new world-leading industry that's giving thousands of Ontarians good jobs, and most importantly, we're protecting the health of our children and grandchildren.

Compare this to the record under the previous government, where the use of coal skyrocketed more than 127%. At that time, the Ontario Medical Association estimated that coal plants were causing the deaths of 2,300 Ontarians every year.

Now the PCs want to turn back to the old days, promising to halt the growth of the new clean energy industry and fire up the coal furnaces to fill the gap. The only energy plan they've shown is their plan to shut down the agency responsible for conservation and planning, and while they are happy to help their friends in the coal industry, when it comes to helping Ontarians, they turn their backs, voting against taking 10% off the hydro bills for families, farmers and small business owners.

I'm proud to be part of a—

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 163, An Act to amend Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000 / Projet de loi 163, Loi modifiant la Loi Christopher de 2000 sur le registre des délinquants sexuels.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PRÉVENTION ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INCENDIE

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 181, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Charles Sousa: I'll make my statement during ministerial statements.

RADON AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

Mr. Moridi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 182, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces / Projet de loi 182, Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: The bill enacts the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2011, and amends the Building Code Act, 1992, with respect to radon. The act provides for the establishment of the Ontario radon registry and requires radon measurement specialists and laboratories to provide the registry with specific information.

The minister is required to educate the public about radon and to encourage homeowners to measure the radon levels in their homes and take remedial action, if necessary. The minister is also required to ensure that the radon level in every provincially owned dwelling is measured, and that remedial action is taken, if necessary. Similarly, owners of enclosed workplaces are required to ensure that the radon level in an enclosed workplace is measured and that remedial action is taken, if necessary. The Building Code Act, 1992, is amended to provide authority for regulations that require buildings to be constructed in a way that minimizes radon entry and facilitates post-construction radon removal.

The minister is required to review those requirements within five years after the day the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2011, comes into force.

1320

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

FIREFIGHTERS

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'm happy to rise today to introduce a bill to enact labour and employment amendments

to part IX of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

I believe all members of this House will join me in expressing our deepest gratitude to the firefighters of this province. We're joined today by Mark McKinnon and Fred LeBlanc of the OPFFA. Welcome. And to all the firefighters who are watching, we want to say thank you for the important work that you do. When others rush out, they rush in. Our firefighters safeguard our families, our homes and our businesses. They do it bravely and professionally, with leadership and courage.

Speaker, you will recall that on March 10, 2011, a motion brought forward by our colleague the member of Algoma-Manitoulin was passed in this House unanimously. That motion read as follows: "That, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, in recognition of the role Ontario's firefighters play every day in keeping our communities safe, and in recognition of the evidence of health and safety risks to firefighters over the age of 60, and in keeping with the recent Human Rights Tribunal decisions, calls on the government to introduce legislation allowing for the mandatory retirement of firefighters who are involved in fire suppression activities in the province of Ontario."

In response to this motion, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and I asked our ministries to begin discussions with the fire sector. As a result, staff sat down with firefighter stakeholders to discuss two ongoing issues concerning our salaried firefighters. The first issue is mandatory retirement, and the second deals with the duty of fair representation.

When we looked at the question of mandatory retirement for firefighters, we learned a great deal about our current practices across Ontario. First, we learned that the average retirement age for salaried firefighters in Ontario is 57. We also found that approximately two thirds of the collective agreements in the fire sector have a provision setting a retirement age of either 60 or 65.

We know that firefighters work under unique conditions. Their work is extremely physical and unpredictable, and they often perform their duties under stressful and demanding conditions. In part because of these reasons, human rights tribunals have generally found mandatory retirement policies to be a bona fide occupational requirement.

In light of these facts, we feel it important to bring greater clarity to the issue of mandatory retirement in the fire sector. Our proposed legislation, if passed, would allow a mandatory retirement age of not lower than 60 years for firefighters regularly assigned to fire suppression duties unless it is otherwise set out in a collective agreement. Should a provision not be expressed in a collective agreement outlining mandatory retirement, or if there is a provision requiring retirement earlier than age 60, then it would be deemed to contain a provision for mandatory retirement at age 60. This deeming provision would not occur immediately, but would take effect two years after royal assent if the bill is passed.

When we spoke with stakeholders, we found that this proposed legislation reflects current practice. Our bill

simply brings greater clarity and uniformity to this issue. It would reflect current practice, and acknowledge what is widely accepted: that age 60 is an appropriate age for retirement for full-time, front-line firefighters. It also acknowledges medical evidence that supports retirement from suppression duties at age 60.

The other aspect of our bill addresses the duty of fair representation. Unlike other unionized employees, firefighters cannot take complaints about their bargaining agents' representation to the Ontario Labour Relations Board. In discussing this issue with the parties involved, it became clear that unionized firefighters should have access to the board in the same way as other employees do. Quite clearly, allowing firefighters access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board is a matter of fairness.

This province's firefighters often place themselves in harm's way to protect us, and they deserve our thanks. So on behalf of Minister Bradley and my colleagues in this Legislature, I say to the firefighters of Ontario, thank you for your selflessness, thank you for your dedication and thank you for your service.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I want to address just briefly this bill. But of course, we only saw it for the first time about 15 minutes ago, and I'm going to start with that. I had, and I know many people on this side of the House had, very high expectations for the new Minister of Labour when he took over that portfolio that things wouldn't necessarily be done in the same old way as they had been done previously and that the opposition would be engaged and be provided with timely access to proposed legislation—but, once again, 15 minutes of time to review a piece of legislation. That speaks to, I would say, a dismissiveness of the House, dismissiveness of our democratic process. I really think it plays into and justifies the position that many people have that these pieces of legislation are often just put forward or being used for partisan advantage instead of for the real benefit of the people of society. With that said, I do hope, and I will continue to encourage this minister, that in future bills, he does present them to the opposition in advance and provide for some briefing so that we can have a thoughtful, full discussion on the legislation.

There are a number of pieces in this legislation, in this short, very cursory look at it. How is this going to affect people who are members of the firefighters union but who are in an investigative role or administrative or training roles? How is this legislation going to affect them? There are those who have multiple roles within the fire departments or in some fire departments.

Also, of course, this bill, it appears, applies to every municipal fire department that has a population of greater than 10,000. A population of 10,000—I know a number of fire departments with very small municipal forces are struggling. How is this legislation going to affect them?

One of the things that I've heard from our firefighters that is not in this bill, and it really disappoints me that it isn't, is the length of time for bargaining. It has been said—we've heard it often and over and over—that to get

a collective agreement in place, you're often into the next cycle before you even get the first one finalized. But it doesn't appear that the Minister of Labour has taken any steps or any actions with this piece of legislation to facilitate a more timely and more effective bargaining process so that we can not leave the firefighters hanging for three or four years wondering what they were working for, for the last three years. That's what we're getting right now.

I do know that there's a number of other elements in there. As I said, how is this going to affect people in the investigation roles and whatnot? Also, the minister referred to the motion that was passed by this House that would allow for the mandatory retirement of firefighters in the province at age 60. But again, reading this in this very short period of time, it doesn't look like we're allowing for mandatory retirement, but we're imposing a mandatory retirement.

I'm sure we'll get an opportunity to discuss some of these things when we do have a complete debate and when we've had more than just 15 minutes to review a piece of legislation before the House.

Once again I'll ask the minister to be more cognitive and be a little bit more accommodating to the members of this House, that legislation brought forward in a forthright and honest manner should be brought forward to the opposition in a fashion that we can actually have time to review and provide thoughtful comments on the legislation.

1330

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an honour and a privilege to rise and to, first and foremost, say thank you on behalf of our leader, Andrea Horwath, and the New Democratic Party to the firefighters for all that they do. And I want to say a personal thank you because when my husband had a heart attack, guess who was first on the scene? Who knows whether he would have survived or not had firefighters not been there. But we all know in this House, and we all know across this province, that it's usually firefighters who get there first. So I want to thank you for everything you do to save the lives of Ontarians and of my constituents. I also want to thank you for your political presence in this place, because you have brought about some phenomenal changes, changes that are extremely positive.

I haven't seen the entire bill either, but from what I see from the Minister of Labour today, making retirement mandatory at age 60 is something that New Democrats would wholeheartedly support. In fact, we have been asking for it as well on your behalf. The changes allowing you to go before the Ontario Labour Relations Board as well are welcome. They're welcome changes, and we support them as well.

The only concern I can see—and, again, I just had a cursory reading of this, and this is not the bill itself; I'd like to see the bill itself—is the condition that this takes two years to come into effect. Maybe at another time the Minister of Labour can address that concern because, hey, we needed this two years yesterday, not two years

from now. There's no reason that this couldn't be brought in with royal assent quicker than that, and certainly before this House rises. So I would hope that that's an amendment that this minister would see fit to make at committee so that we can get that protection in place for firefighters sooner rather than later.

But suffice it to say that, through the history of the New Democratic Party, we have been fighting for firefighters here—from our leader Andrea Horwath's Bill 111, when she originally started looking at presumed diagnosis, to my bill, which I would respectfully ask the Minister of Labour to look at again, covering presumed diagnosis for post-traumatic stress disorder for front-line workers, which would include firefighters. That's something the police have asked for; it's something paramedics have asked for; it's something firefighters are in agreement with; and it's something that we have asked this government for as well.

We're looking at maybe some broader changes; again, perhaps an amendment to this bill that could be made in committee. Suffice it to say, anything that helps firefighters and helps Ontarians, we in the New Democratic Party are in favour of.

I want to commend the government for bringing this forward. But, more to the point, I commend our firefighters for what they do day in and day out to protect all of us, because that's what they do. And again a personal thanks for protecting my family. Thank you very much.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It gives me great pleasure to rise and read a petition to the Legislative Assembly. I have over 6,000 names on this petition. It was collected in a very short period of time—four weeks—mainly through the hard work of the group that we have in the galleries with us today. I congratulate them once again.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Milton is the fastest-growing community in Canada; and

“Whereas, during the past six years, 60,000 new people have moved to Milton and another 43,000 will be arriving in the next five years; and

“Whereas, over the next two decades, Milton will become the largest community in Halton region and the second-largest in the Mississauga Halton LHIN; and

“Whereas this rapidly expanding community is still served by a hospital that is undersized and outdated in terms of its physical facility and aging infrastructure that was designed and built to serve 30,000 people; and

“Whereas no other hospital in the region, including the new Oakville hospital, has planned to provide core hospital services to Milton and its growing population; and

“Whereas the Milton District Hospital has not received approval for any added service capacity in the past 25 years; and

“Whereas Halton Healthcare Services has developed a responsive plan to address expansion of Milton District Hospital which it shared with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

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

“That the Milton District Hospital expansion project be identified as an urgent and top priority of the province of Ontario's multi-year infrastructure plan and that Milton District Hospital be authorized to move to the functional programming stage of the capital approval process.”

I'm very much in favour of this. I'm pleased to sign it and pass it to my page Sydney O'Brien, also from Halton region, and I'm sure she'll be looking forward to taking it to the desk.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Rick Johnson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, I affix my signature to it and I present it to page Jia Jia.

PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is 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, affix my name to it and give it to page Madelaine to take to the table.

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas often when homeowners seek restitution and repairs from the builder and the Tarion Warranty Corp., they encounter an unwieldy bureaucratic system that often fails to compensate them for the high cost of repairing these construction defects, while the builder often escapes with impunity;

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

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

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

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

I absolutely agree with this. I’m going to give it to Jimmy to be delivered to the clerks.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Kim Craitor: I’m pleased to introduce this 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” my colleague “MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery.”

I’m pleased to sign this in support of the bill.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Since nothing’s happened in the last few minutes, I think I’ll present this petition again.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Milton is the fastest-growing community in Canada; and

“Whereas, during the past six years, 60,000 new people have moved into Milton, and another 43,000 will be arriving in the next five years; and

“Whereas, over the next two decades, Milton will become the largest community in Halton region and the second-largest in the Mississauga Halton LHIN; and

“Whereas this rapidly expanding community is still served by a hospital that is undersized and outdated in terms of its physical facility and aging infrastructure that was designed and built to service less than 30,000 people; and

1340
“Whereas no other hospital in the region, including the new Oakville hospital, has planned to provide core hospital services to Milton and its growing population; and

“Whereas the Milton District Hospital has not received approval for any added service capacity in the past 25 years; and

“Whereas Halton Healthcare Services has developed a responsive plan to address the expansion of Milton District Hospital, which it shared with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

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

“That the Milton District Hospital expansion project be identified as an urgent and top priority in the province of Ontario’s multi-year infrastructure plan, and that Milton District Hospital be authorized to move to the functional programming stage of the capital approval process.”

I agree with this petition. I’m glad to affix my signature and pass it to my page, Travis.

PARAMEDICS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As I agree with this petition, I’ll affix my signature to it and send it to the table with page Rafeh.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by a number of people, mostly from Strathroy but also from Sarnia, London and Parkhill. 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 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’m pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Grace to carry it for me.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it to the table via page Devon.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Jeff Leal: I want to thank Josh Dyer from Mount Brydges, Ontario, for forwarding this petition to me.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree wholeheartedly with this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to our friendly page.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario regarding the Milton District Hospital.

“The Time is Now!

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Milton is the fastest-growing community in Canada; and

“Whereas, during the past six years, 60,000 new people have moved to Milton and another 43,000 will be arriving in the next five years; and

“Whereas, over the next two decades, Milton will become the largest community in Halton region and the second-largest in the Mississauga Halton LHIN; and

“Whereas this rapidly expanding community is still served by a hospital that is undersized and outdated in terms of its physical facility and aging infrastructure that was designed and built to serve 30,000 people; and

“Whereas no other hospital in the region, including the new Oakville hospital, has planned to provide core hospital services to Milton and its growing population; and

“Whereas the Milton District Hospital has not received approval for any added service capacity in the past 25 years; and

“Whereas Halton Healthcare Services has developed a responsive plan to address expansion of Milton District Hospital which it shared with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

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

“That the Milton District Hospital expansion project be identified as an urgent and top priority of the province of Ontario’s multi-year infrastructure plan and that Milton District Hospital be authorized to move to the functional programming stage of the capital approval process.”

I’m in favour of this petition, and I’m glad to affix my signature and give it to my page Emma.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Reza Moridi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in 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 petition, put my signature on it and pass it on to page Cherechi.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SECURITIES INDUSTRY

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 13, 2011, on the amendment to the motion by Ms. Broten to locate the new common securities regulator in Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate? The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I remember those heady days about seven and a half years ago, following the election

of the first Dalton McGuinty government, when Liberals were—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’d remind the honourable member about the use of names.

Mr. Michael Prue: The McGuinty government, then. I can’t use his first name. I’m sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The McGuinty government—those heady days when they all gathered around the table and thought of wonderful things they were going to do for the province. One of the things was, they called the finance committee to order and everyone sat around the table and talked about how they were going to change the Toronto Stock Exchange, how they were going to make it into Canada’s truly unique stock exchange, how they were going to get support from the federal government, how it was going to bring jobs and know-how and technology into Toronto. Seven and a half years have gone by, and another election has gone by, and here we are, debating a motion that’s now nine months old and has been resurrected. It’s motion number 3. This has been a long time, and absolutely nothing has been done.

I don’t know why this has been brought forward today, except that it’s probably so much filler, because the government has run out of things they want or need to say, and because, I guess, of some procedural manoeuvrings by the official opposition. The bill they wanted to bring in today hasn’t been allowed, so now we have this filler, and they’re going to talk again about the same things they said seven and a half years ago, with probably as equal the conviction they had then. It all sounds very nice: Let’s have a stock exchange in Toronto, let’s do the right thing, let’s rah-rah that this is the financial capital of Ontario—and do very little, because in the seven and a half years, virtually nothing has been accomplished by this government in bringing the stock exchange, Canada’s stock exchange, home to Toronto. There’s been very little in the way of negotiations with the federal government. There’s been very little negotiations with the other provinces. Some of the provinces still stand opposed, and in fact nothing at all has happened.

1350

Quebec and British Columbia are still opposed. There is absolutely no movement on their part. I do hear the federal finance minister from time to time stand up and talk about the need for this exchange. But today, wonder of wonders, after all this time, after seven and a half years of dithering, we now have the motion brought back. Isn’t it instructive that, in the last couple of weeks, there have been ongoing meetings in this place, people talking not about the national securities regulator, not about making the Toronto Stock Exchange the pre-eminent stock exchange in Canada, but in fact all the talk is about the merger of the Toronto Stock Exchange with the larger London Stock Exchange, the TSX and the LSE merger.

That’s the real issue here today. The real issue isn’t about having Toronto as Canada’s national stock exchange. The real issue that is confronting the people of this province and this country is what the government is going to do in the face of a merger. We know what other

countries have done. We know that when Australia was faced with the same circumstance—to be taken over by the Singapore stock exchange—the government of that country and the Premiers of those provinces in Australia stood in unison and said, “Over our dead body.” They were not going to let that happen.

But I don't think that's what's happening here. I think in this province and in this country, there are people who are willing to sell out our national securities regulator. They're willing to sell out the sovereignty of Canadians. They're willing to sell out a stock exchange that is world-renowned for its mining stocks and its resource base. That would be a very sad day for Canadians. It would be a very sad day for Ontario because of the loss of expertise that would flow from both of them.

I don't know why this government has brought this forward today, but I do think it's passing strange. I did read an article in the Toronto Star this morning, when I woke up and opened it up. On the Insight page there's a very good article by a well-known Liberal, who's talking about this very event that is taking place, about the very event that this government is a part of within this Legislature, and that is, to suggest that the merger is the right thing. This very good Liberal said that it was a mistake, that this government ought not to be going down that road with a sell-off or a merger with the larger London Stock Exchange.

I don't know what's happened in the committees, because things are pretty tight-lipped, and all I know is what I read in the newspapers, because obviously a government member or members leaked to the Toronto Star what the reports are likely to say. We know that there is a fairly broad consensus between government members and those in the official opposition to recommend, with conditions—and I have no idea what they are—that Ontario approve of the merger and to send that to the national government and say that Ontario has no objections, provided that certain conditions are met in the long term. Again, I know from the same newspaper—because my own colleague the member from Timmins—James Bay, who served on that committee as the lone NDP representative, has stated that he will be writing a dissenting report.

Therefore, I don't know why this is being debated. I had to stand up because perhaps a government member, after I sit down, can tell me why this has been brought forward again, after nine months, to be debated here today, why it has been brought forward when government members seem to be on board with the merger with the London Stock Exchange, which would virtually destroy the autonomy of Canada's largest stock exchange and a single regulator, which was a dream that was bright and bushy all those seven and a half years ago when we sat around the table.

What is this motion doing here? I haven't the slightest clue. But I do know that this motion that is coming before us today, even should it pass, is too late, because once this report is released—and I do believe it's going to be released this week—then all of this is for naught,

because we will no longer be looking at one securities regulator in Toronto for all of Canada; we will be looking at a securities regulator based in London, England, that will, from this point on, tell Canadians—the stock market, the resource sector and everything else—exactly how high they have to jump.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Seeing none, on March 24, 2010, Ms. Broten moved “that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario endorses the need for a strong national securities regulator and endorses the Open Ontario plan to grow our financial services industry by calling on the federal government to recognize Toronto's role as the third-largest financial centre in North America and therefore locate the new common securities regulator in Toronto, where it belongs.”

Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka, then moved that the motion be amended by deleting the words “endorses the Open Ontario plan to grow our financial services industry by calling” and substituting therefor the word “calls.”

We will deal first with Mr. Miller's amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment carry?

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

I believe the nays have it.

We will call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The government House leader has requested that, pursuant to standing order 28(h), the vote on government order 3 be deferred until deferred votes on April 19, 2011.

Vote deferred.

STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT DES COLLECTIVITÉS FORTES GRÂCE AU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 14, 2011, on the motion for third reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2011, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 140, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement, abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la réforme du logement social et apportant des modifications corrélatives et autres à d'autres lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): The member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a privilege and honour, again, to speak on behalf of Ontarians, and particularly to speak on behalf of all of the affordable housing activists across this province that came and deputed—I think some thousand hours' worth before this government—about the unbelievable growing need for affordable housing in this province.

We now have, just to put these frightening numbers out there, about 142,000 families who are waiting aver-

ages of 10 to 12 or more years for affordable housing; 70,000 families in the greater Toronto area alone.

This was at one point called a national disaster; it's now very much an Ontario disaster. Certainly in Ontario about 50% of all renters pay more than 50% of their income on rent. We all know how unaffordable most housing is now in our municipalities, particularly, of course, in Toronto, where it's exceptionally high and where it's almost impossible for a young couple to think of going into the real estate market and buying a house, unless they have exceptionally good jobs and two of them.

1400

I remark that this has changed dramatically since the days in which I grew up in this province. There was a time when, on one salary, you could afford a house, a car in the driveway and—those lucky ones—a cottage as well. Those times have gone; they've gone. Now we're in a situation, unforeseen in those days, of homelessness—thousands of people living on our streets—and quite frankly there's no excuse for it.

The excuse for it is the inaction of this government. This government likes to say it has a good record on housing. I beg to differ. In fact, we have the worst record on investment in housing of all the provinces across Canada. We spend less than half per capita on housing than any other province. In fact, Saskatchewan, as an example, spends four times as much as we do per capita on housing for their citizens.

Most of the money that we have spent comes from the federal government. We in the New Democratic Party fought for it there. Prime Minister Stephen Harper acknowledged that, and money kept flowing, amazingly. But that's going to dry up. The situation is not going to get any better; it's going to get worse with the lack of government action.

I wanted to make two points, in my hour lead, that you will not and cannot forget: Number one, this government, the government of Ontario, the McGuinty government, is now in official breach of United Nations human rights conventions, and there is a letter to that effect which I will include and read into the record; and number two, this so-called housing bill doesn't have one new dollar, one new rent supplement, one new unit or any provisional changes, like inclusionary zoning or changes to the Planning Act, that would allow municipalities to fill in. There's no housing in this so-called housing bill, and this government is now in official breach because of it.

This is a letter that was sent by a representative of the special rapporteur from the United Nations to this government. He wrote directly to Minister Bartolucci and said, "I am writing to you as the former UN special rapporteur on adequate housing." I'm going to skip along:

"I am writing with respect to Bill 140"—it's not every day that the United Nations takes an interest in a provincial housing bill, but they have here—"which I understand is currently being reviewed by the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, with a number of important amendments under consideration. I am particularly interested in amendments that incorporate some key recom-

mendations from my report," and, I would add, not only from the United Nations report but from every single housing advocate that came before us, representing some 450 organizations across Ontario and thousands of individuals.

He continues, "I gather these" amendments "have been supported by a wide range of civil society organizations and experts," as I've just said, "and have been tabled by MPP DiNovo for the consideration of the standing committee.

"As you are aware, Minister Bartolucci, a central focus of my concerns and recommendations addressed the need for ... provincial housing strategies, based on legislative recognition of the right to adequate housing."

He goes on to recommend:

"—prioritize the needs of groups most vulnerable to homelessness and discrimination, including women, aboriginal people and people with disabilities;

"—include firm goals and timetables for the elimination of homelessness and the realization of the right to adequate housing;

"—provide for independent monitoring and review of progress and provide for consideration of complaints of violations of the right to adequate housing; and

"—ensure meaningful follow-up to concerns and recommendations from UN human rights bodies...."

"I trust that your government will give due consideration to these critical amendments and that they can be incorporated into the final version Bill 140. They are, in my view, critical to ensuring compliance with Ontario's obligations under international human rights law to fully ensure the right to adequate housing."

He concludes, "I also intend to keep my colleague Raquel Rolnik, the current special rapporteur on adequate housing, informed of these developments...."

These are strong words from an international body. These are strong words directed at the McGuinty government, directed at the committee. But sadly, the words of 450 organizations representing housing advocates across the province of Ontario and the words of the United Nations special rapporteur have been ignored, and all 49 of our amendments were voted down, with the exception of one, which was a wording change.

Sometimes one has to marvel that all of that time spent giving submissions to this government, telling this government what the province needs, all of them remarkably similar—I'll go over the five strategic necessities that not only would put this government back in compliance with human rights legislation universally but also would satisfy every submitter as well; five tests, and I'll go through them.

But first of all, suffice to say that this is not just myself and the United Nations here. These are some of the responses from some of our housing advocates. Here's what the Housing Network of Ontario says: "The Ontario government has proposed some new legislation and administrative procedures that are useful ... but the essential items for a long-term affordable housing plan—targets, timeline, and, most of all, funding over a multi-

year period—are” all “missing. It’s like they’ve put up the scaffolding, but then forgot to give the workers the tools that they need to get the job done.”

Here’s another one: “By the end of this fiscal year, capital funding for new affordable housing is set to shrink to zero. Investment in building new homes and repairing existing rundown housing not only helps the people living in that housing, but also provides a solid boost to the economy, including jobs and even additional tax revenue for the government.”

This is how short-sighted it is. Investment in housing, unlike corporate tax giveaways, actually produces jobs. Investment in infrastructure produces jobs, not giveaways to already profitable banks.

This government promised in 2003, when they were elected, that they would build 20,000 units, new builds, of affordable housing. Here we are, eight years later, two elections later, and we’re barely at 14,000 or 15,000, and, depending on the way you classify affordable housing, it could be argued that many even of those units are not truly affordable to the people who need them most.

I talked about my own circumstance: a teenager living on student welfare, who was homeless for a period, and how, back in the day, when that was my situation, I could actually afford to rent a basement apartment and put myself through school on student welfare. Those days are long, long gone. Now imagine if you are on Ontario disabilities and earning around \$1,000 a month: Good luck. Remember, you’re on Ontario disabilities for a reason: You can’t work; you have a disability. You also cannot afford to pay rent and live in the city of Toronto. Is that really what we want to say to those who are disabled—that you should live in dire poverty because of a disability? That’s essentially what this government is saying to them with their lack of action. That’s why it has garnered the attention of the United Nations.

If you’re living on welfare, it’s even worse. A single person gets just over \$500 a month. Try to live on just over \$500 a month—impossible, in the city of Toronto. We all know that. That’s where our homelessness comes from.

What’s really quite frightening and staggering is that it actually costs more to the taxpayer to keep somebody homeless than to house them. I remember when Mr. Gerretsen was the Minister of Housing, when I was newly elected. I was before him on government agencies, asking questions, and he admitted into Hansard that it’s true, that it costs more to keep somebody on the streets, in shelters, in emergency wards, in prisons, than it does to actually provide them with shelter. In fact, he said that you could probably put them in a motel or a hotel per night. It costs about \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year to keep somebody homeless in the city.

So it’s not about the money. It’s about the political will, and there is clearly no political will to provide housing for the homeless on behalf of the McGuinty government. That’s what this bill says. It has a nice title, of course, and it moves an inch forward. As that wonderful quote says, it puts the scaffolding up, but no home. It

makes a step. It had all of the submissions but no action in really providing one new unit, one new rent supplement, one new dollar—not even a hint. That’s what we have here.

Every organization—from the nurses’ organization, Doris Grinspun, ACORN and others—all came before the McGuinty government and all asked for five key actions. They all asked for what the UN rapporteur asked for, which were targets, timelines and, most of all, funding. They asked for provisions, too. One of their asks—all of them—was that the move to privatize existing affordable housing be stopped, and we know it’s going on. There are some 47 properties right now before the city of Toronto that are being considered for privatization by the city’s new administration, and yet this government seems quite happy to walk in lockstep with that move.

1410

Certainly some of the protections that were asked for by the co-op federation are not in this bill, some that would keep co-op housing within the co-op sector. In fact, we should make it easier to start a co-op; easier to start non-profit housing of any sort. Again, these were asked for. Again, special consideration was asked for by the advocate for youth in the province of Ontario, for crown wards who, by law, at the age of 18 are kicked out of whatever home they’re living in—kicked out onto the street. How do you expect an 18-year-old, probably with post-traumatic stress disorder, which many of our crown wards suffer from, kicked out of the homes that they’ve known, to survive? Certainly they don’t have the luxury I had back in the day when you could live on what they called “student welfare,” when you could live on welfare in the city of Toronto. That’s not the case anymore.

They asked—because they were here before the committee with moving stories about the problems of waiting for them. They can’t wait. They should be in school. They shouldn’t be on affordable housing wait-lists. Neither, of course, should victims of domestic violence. Neither, of course, as we heard from one of the submissions, should seniors. Imagine if you’re a senior and you’re in need of affordable housing. You don’t have 10 or 12 years to wait for that unit to come up.

So these groups ask for some priority, but the sad reality is, even with priority—and we all have these cases in our constituency offices. I know we do. They come to see us and they say, “I’ve been waiting for five, seven years. Can’t you do something?” We do everything we can. We write letters. We make sure that all the i’s are dotted and the t’s crossed on their application. Of course, we make sure that they’ve applied far and wide for every available unit, but we know there’s simply not enough housing.

I also talked about how other jurisdictions do it better, and just about everybody does right now, by the way. As I said, we have the worst record in Canada as it stands. Even jurisdictions in the States, where states are going bankrupt, they have brought in changes to their planning code so that inclusionary zoning can be part of the mix, so that, without spending one tax dollar, one can require

of developers who develop large sites that they set aside some of those units for affordable housing. In a down market it's actually good for developers to do that. None of that is in this bill.

Inclusionary zoning amendments to the Planning Act were asked for by just about every single submitter to the committee. So one wonders: Why listen? Why hear from housing activists if you then reject every amendment they put forward? Why listen to them at all? That's what they're asking my office. That's what they're asking me. They're saying, "We just went through this incredible exercise, taking months and months of spending our time and our money," which they need for other purposes, i.e. providing housing. "There we were, committee after committee, meeting after meeting, and at the end of the day"—again, I say it: not one new dollar, not one new rent supplement, not one new unit, and the government is now in official breach of the United Nations human rights laws, as said by the special rapporteur, who took an interest in Bill 140 and made that comment.

Then the government has the audacity, truly, to say to us in opposition, "Well, just don't vote for it." They know, of course, that just by putting "we believe in affordable housing" in the title, one is almost forced to vote for it. Yes, we do believe in affordable housing here in the opposition. Yes, we do think that secondary suites are a good idea. But, my goodness, we're drowning in Ontario; poverty rates are through the roof. We've never seen poverty rates like this in Ontario since the Great Depression. One in six children lives in poverty.

Talk to food bank organizers; talk to those who run them. They'll tell you that it's not only people on social assistance who now are lining up at the food banks; it's people who are working full-time. Why? The single biggest motivation for them to be in that line is because they cannot get affordable housing.

We know—the nurses know; they came and made a submission—that good, affordable housing is the single greatest determinant of health. We know this, and yet, in the face of all this, this government is breaking United Nations human rights law, and we're one of the wealthiest jurisdictions. Let's face it: No matter what serious debt we're in, we're one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the world, globally speaking, and yet we have attracted the attention of the United Nations to a housing bill in the province of Ontario because of this breach.

Not only should we be ashamed; I stand here in Holy Week, of all weeks, to talk about poverty and housing. We stand here saying that we're all elected to do the right thing, that we're elected to protect those who are marginalized, and yet this government does virtually nothing—virtually nothing. That's what Bill 140 is.

Will we vote for it? Of course we will. Why not? Secondary suites are a good thing. But what we would like to have seen is a housing unit, a rent supplement, a dollar—in fact, they've slashed the housing budget another 10%. We would like to have seen actual, real movement toward providing housing for all those people who need it in the province of Ontario, because it's simply the right thing to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'm more than pleased to be able to respond, and I'm delighted that the member from Parkdale–High Park has acknowledged the extensive consultation that, in fact, has gone on, both previous to the introduction of the bill and since.

There have been many comments made about the investment we have or have not made, and let me assure you that the \$2.5-billion investment we have made is extraordinarily significant in comparison to Saskatchewan, which is just over \$200 million; Alberta, which is \$1.5 billion; Quebec, which is \$2 billion; BC, which is \$1 billion; and New Brunswick, which is \$210 million. We have, in fact, invested a very significant amount of money into long-term housing over the last number of years, and we continue to invest some \$400 million every year into both the homelessness and housing programs.

Much has been said about the comments that people are saying, and I'd like to share a few with you as well. This is from the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, Keith Ward: "The government has recognized the strength and contributions that community-based non-profit housing providers make in helping Ontarians meet their housing needs."

We go on to Paul Johnson, director, Neighbourhood Development Strategies, city of Hamilton: "This new funding flexibility will assist communities to deliver high-impact investments that maximize the resources available."

The president of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, David Rennie: "This strategy articulates the province's recognition of the importance of strong partnership and collaboration with municipalities in the area of housing."

From the Metcalf Foundation, John Stapleton: "The reform on rent-gear-to-income brings Ontario and its municipalities to the 21st century...."

"We applaud the clear" thinking and the "link the strategy makes between housing and the needs of the people who live in it, which is an important step in addressing poverty and homelessness...." That's from Roger Maloney, Social Housing Services Corporation.

There is no question that our consultation has worked, and we've included this in—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Thank you. The member for Whitby–Oshawa.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I did listen very carefully to the comments that were made by my colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park. I have to say that I agree with her: When it comes to the end of the day with respect to Bill 140, there's just really not much there. It doesn't really do anything to advance the cause of providing affordable housing here in the province of Ontario.

1420

We're going to support it because there are a couple of things there that we can be in support of. We do believe, with respect to the secondary suites, that that is a good

move that's been taken with this. But other than that, there's really no new money, other than to continue to rely on the feds to bail them out. This government always looks to the feds to do the work for them.

When you look at some of the issues that we're faced with in our ridings, in our community offices each and every day, and when we have constituents come in and tell us that they need affordable housing, particularly those people who are trying to live on ODSP, and to have to look them in the eye and tell them that they're on the list and it will probably be six to 10 years before they get reached—I'm embarrassed to say that to people. It's ridiculous. We should not have that in the province of Ontario—to have people who need a place to live, people who are trying to live on less than \$1,000 a month. I can't imagine how that happens in Toronto, because in my own riding of Whitby–Oshawa, it's barely affordable when people are paying something like \$750 a month on rent. They have to pay market rent because they can't get subsidized or supported housing, and that means that they end up having to go to a food bank at the end of the month. It's simple math, dollars and cents. There's no money left to be able to provide a family with the other essentials that they need. They're struggling with increasing energy bills and other costs that have been passed on to them by the McGuinty Liberals.

So we need to really get on with this and not just pass a piece of legislation that has no teeth and especially no money behind it. We need to do a lot better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I stand to salute the member from Parkdale–High Park. She always stands up here and speaks intelligently, but mostly, passionately, about the things in which she believes.

She talked about the lack of targets. There are no targets for building housing in this bill. That is perhaps because the government, which set targets many years ago—again, back to those heady days seven and a half years ago when they promised that 20,000 units of housing would be built each and every year under a McGuinty government. They still haven't built 20,000 units in eight years.

She spoke about the lack of money and the fact that there isn't one new dollar being put into this housing bill that would actually see the provision of affordable housing come to the fore and something actually be built.

She talked about the violation that Ontario now finds itself in under the UN charter. I think we should be ashamed in Ontario, where we have been named by a rapporteur from the United Nations for failing to meet the basic necessities of the people of this province. No government could possibly be proud of that, and I would trust that the members opposite aren't proud of this at all.

She spoke about the social housing sell-offs and what is happening here in the city of Toronto and how disastrous that's going to be not only for the people on the waiting list but immediately for those 47 families who will find themselves on the streets.

She talked about the 49 amendments that were made by the NDP in opposition to the bill, only to see them all shot down—and what kind of consultation was that all about?

She concluded by talking about the plight of the poor in this province and how difficult it is for all of them to make ends meet, especially when it comes to housing.

This is a bill that could have been so much more than it was, and I commend her for bringing those facts out.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Questions and comments?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'm delighted to have an opportunity to speak ever so briefly on the long-term affordable housing strategy, Bill 140.

I would like to remind the member for Whitby–Oshawa that she may want to speak to her predecessor from Whitby–Oshawa about their record during the previous eight years, when they did not build one housing unit in my riding. Since we've been in office, we've built 170, and I can tell you exactly where each one of them is, and I can tell you that they're all full and that our people in Nipissing are very happy that we're back in the business of providing affordable housing.

I would also note that the federal government used to have responsibility for housing and has ceded that territory. Now you're saying somehow that the federal government is responsible for the \$2.5-billion investment we've made.

We've invested in affordable housing in Corbeil, in Astorville, in Mattawa, and in North Bay at a variety of locations, including Trout Lake Road, Commercial Street and at Castle Arms III. All of these homes are providing affordable housing—mostly to our seniors—which was very, very needed in our community.

In Mattawa, they're co-located on the same site as the Algonquin Nursing Home. I'd just like to give a little shout-out to Mrs. Isabelle Rainville, who turned 93 last week at the Algonquin Nursing Home. We call her the queen. She's a lovely, lovely woman. I didn't have a chance to talk to her last week, so I'm saying happy birthday to her in case she's watching today.

Mr. Jeff Leal: How's her bridge game?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I think it's in good shape, actually, her bridge game.

I know that all of our senior housing is much appreciated. I know that we've made substantial investments. I've talked to our poverty activists at home who feel that we've really moved the bar on our poverty reduction strategy as a government. I know that Lana Mitchell at LIPI in North Bay is doing some fantastic work on the ground with those living at the poverty level and is doing a great deal of work with the rent supplement and the other programs that we have put in place and that we are supporting as we assist those living in difficult circumstances.

Certainly, we all agree that housing is important in our communities. I'm delighted to be part of a government that has seen fit to invest and to come up with a strategy for the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): The member for Parkdale–High Park has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thanks to all who took part in this debate. To my friend across the way from Etobicoke, the parliamentary assistant, I have to say that you have to compare apples with apples. To say the total dollar amount is absolutely not fair, especially for small communities. The fact is, per capita, we spend less than half as much as any other province—less than half. Saskatchewan spends four times as much per capita; it's the only reasonable way of comparing.

Also, yes, government members, you listened to housing activists across the province, but you didn't hear them. You didn't act. That's from my friend from Beaches–East York, who commented on that. The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association said specifically that this bill “does not address the critical need for increased investment in new development.” That's a quote from ONPHA, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, and I could give you hundreds just like it. All five asks from all of the housing groups were denied. That's the simple reality of this government's consultation and reaction to the bill.

In terms of actually providing housing and the comment from the government House leader, wasn't it Jean Chrétien who killed housing in this country? If memory serves, he was a Liberal. That's how that played out. We have to remember history, or we're doomed to repeat it. Clearly, there's a lot of very revisionist history going on at Queen's Park today.

Let's just keep our history straight. Let's keep our facts straight. Let's at least walk into this bill with our eyes wide open. It is what it is, and it ain't very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on Bill 140, the long-term affordable housing strategy.

I am very pleased to speak about this particular bill. This is the first government in Ontario's history to have a long-term affordable housing strategy. I've been following the evolution and the creation of this bill, from the consultation process to the whole policy development work and then the debate in this House, very closely for a very important reason. That is that affordable housing is an important issue for all the communities. In particular, it's a very important issue in my riding of Ottawa Centre.

This is an issue that, when I ran for the first time in 2007, I spoke a lot about, wanting to ensure that we have more affordable housing in the riding of Ottawa Centre. I will speak a little bit as to the kind of progress we have made in Ottawa Centre when it comes to provision of new affordable housing and also in terms of repairing existing affordable housing and the kind of unique things we are doing in Ottawa Centre as a result of investment that has been made by this government in affordable housing and providing care for those who need the most help, like the chronically homeless and those with addic-

tion challenges, ensuring that, for the first time, they have a permanent roof over their heads. It's an issue that is extremely important, I am sure, to all of us in our communities, but particularly an issue that I have been working very closely on since I was first elected almost four years ago to this Legislature.

1430

As I said, I've been following this debate very closely. I've been following the debate today. I do want to put some key statistics, some key numbers, some key facts on the table, because I think it's only fair that we have that information with us. In Ontario in the last seven years, from 2003 through 2009, we have seen significant investment in affordable housing. We are talking about an investment of over \$2.5 billion. When you compare that to investments made in other provinces, that investment in Ontario is not crumbs. It is a significant investment.

New Brunswick has invested, in the same period, just over \$210 million towards housing. In British Columbia, their investment has been just over \$1 billion towards affordable housing, in Quebec, a little under \$2 billion; in Alberta, \$1.5 billion, approximately; in Saskatchewan, just over \$200 million. But in Ontario, we have seen an investment of \$2.5 billion. In fact, in the last two years, due to the recession, we saw an even more enhanced, concerted devotion to affordable housing and an investment of \$1.2 billion. Surely that is not crumbs, especially if you ask those who are looking for housing, especially those who advocate for affordable housing; like many organizations in my community in Ottawa Centre. An investment of \$1.2 billion across the province was surely not crumbs but a significant investment.

If you look at the previous government and the kind of investments, or lack thereof, they were making in affordable housing, their minister at that time said that the provincial government should not be in the business of affordable housing; that they were going to get out of that particular business. They were actually responsible for downloading that responsibility to the municipalities. It's interesting, because we have heard the same catchphrase from the same folks now who occupy the government on Parliament Hill, saying that the federal government is no longer in the business of affordable housing; that somehow it's only the responsibility of the province and the municipalities to look after affordable housing, as opposed to all of us, all three levels of government, working collectively to ensure that we have more affordable housing available to those who are deserving.

Then the previous government, the Harris-Hudak government, went on and started cutting investments from affordable housing. As we've heard again and again and again, in their eight years of government, no new affordable housing was built in this province: a shameful episode in our history. We need to ensure that we continue to work and reverse that.

What have we done in the last seven or eight years in terms of investing \$2.5 billion in the housing sector? The result is 22,000 new affordable housing builds in the

province of Ontario and well over 240,000 repairs to existing stock. We have to remember: A lot of the affordable housing was built 20 or 25 or 30 years ago. Like any infrastructure, this build is starting to show age, and we have to make sure that we continue to repair those particular buildings—more in terms of making these buildings energy-efficient. I'm going to come back to my riding and the kind of investments we are making to make those buildings more energy-efficient so that housing providers like Ottawa Community Housing, like the Centretown coalition, the CCOC, and like the Cornerstone building, which run and operate these buildings, are able to save money by having energy-efficient buildings and to reinvest that amount of dollars into providing more quality, affordable housing for deserving members in our community.

In the last eight years, we have seen the provision of more than 35,000 rent supplements. The McGuinty government's rent bank program has prevented more than 23,800 evictions—and that's up to January 2011; that number may have gone up—and rate increases have been limited to inflation—a very significant point. This year, the rate increase, according to the rate guideline, was one of the lowest ever in the history of Ontario, at 0.7%. If one looks at the averages between the three parties who have been in government, because I think we have that opportunity to do so in Ontario, the average rent increase under the Liberal government has been 2.05%, the average rate increase under the Tory government was 2.9% and the average rent increase under the NDP was 4.82%. These are some significant variants we're looking at, and the kind of scheme we have in place in terms of pegging rent to inflation under this government has been one of the lowest.

But let me talk about some of the key investments that we have made in Ottawa Centre. I stand here quite proud in terms of the investments we have made just in the last four years since I have been elected and have had the great privilege of serving the good people of Ottawa Centre.

We have actually now built over 250 brand new units in Ottawa Centre, and there are more under construction—over 250 where people are actually living or are about to move in in terms of having that opportunity available to them.

Let me talk about three really important projects in my riding of Ottawa Centre. Shepherds of Good Hope recently bought an old hotel—the building wasn't that old, but it was a great example of how you can leverage existing resources out there—and converted this hotel into 55 units of affordable housing for chronically homeless men. These are men who never had a roof over their head. These are men who had serious addiction problems. They actually became part of a program, run by Shepherds of Good Hope, helping them to manage their addictions. They graduated from that program and for the very first time they were able to have their own home.

This project is called the Oaks. The government invested \$6 million in this project, and here is the amazing

thing about this project: We're breaking down the silos, finally. In this project, we were able to bring the health dollars, the housing dollars, and the community and social services dollars together under one roof to provide services to those 55 men who are starting a new lease on life.

I have now visited that particular project quite a few times in my riding. You can just see the healthy lifestyle, the smiles on people who are living in that project at the Oaks and the difference it is making in turning around their lives because they have this new facility available to them, their own home, and because they have got the health care and the social community services available to them right then and there.

Another very important project is the Beaver Barracks project. It's interesting: Minister Chiarelli, the Minister of Infrastructure, actually kick-started that particular project when he was the regional chair for the Ottawa-Carleton region. Now we're looking at the completion of that project in terms of the building of, in total, 248 units, a mix of bachelor apartments, apartments for people with disabilities and townhouses for larger families.

It's a great project located in the riding of Ottawa Centre. There are two phases. Phase 1 is complete; people have moved in. On phase 2, the construction has just begun. I was there along with Minister Chiarelli two weeks ago, getting a tour of that new residential complex. It's amazing: An investment of \$18.3 million by this government, a significant investment which is resulting in one of the most significant boosts of affordable housing in my riding of Ottawa Centre and roughly about 88 or 90 more units to come in the second phase of that project.

The last project I want to speak about is another project that I worked on from day one, which is provided by Cornerstone Housing for Women. Cornerstone is one of the most unique and incredible organizations, under the leadership of Sue Garvey, which provides affordable housing and shelter for women who are trying to escape situations of sexual violence and domestic violence. We were able to work with Cornerstone and get them \$6.3 million to build 42 units of affordable housing.

1440

Here's another very unique thing about this particular project: It's going to have a combination of 20 senior women—20 units for senior women—and 22 younger women who have special needs, who have been chronically homeless or who may need special access to special support services, so building that great combination between senior women who need affordable housing and younger women who have other challenges to work through. Once again, this is a great combination of bringing housing dollars, bringing health dollars through the Champlain LHIN—and I want to thank them for partaking in both the Cornerstone project in Ottawa Centre and the Oaks by the Shepherds of Good Hope project—and also bringing community and social services.

On the Cornerstone project, I want to give a big thank you to Minister Madeleine Meilleur for her steadfast

support in terms of making sure that we get the operating dollars necessary to provide the community and social services in this particular project. Thank you, Minister Meilleur, for your recognition of the Cornerstone project and your support for it.

All of these projects in my riding are bringing a whole new renaissance to the need for affordable housing and the importance of it. But that's not where it ends. We've got, on top of this, millions of dollars being invested to upgrade existing housing stock. Every single large apartment complex, mostly owned and operated by Ottawa Community Housing, has scaffolding on top of it right now. We are changing balconies. We are changing windows, putting in more energy-efficient windows. We are changing doors. We are changing carpeting in the hallways.

I have a habit of going door to door through all of the community housing buildings in my riding. I was doing this before I was elected, to meet members of the community, and have never stopped since I was elected. I see the difference. It's absolutely remarkable to see, not only in the physical health of the buildings as a result of the investment that is made in terms of rehabilitation and renovation of these particular buildings, but also in the attitude of people. These are people's homes. You can imagine the kind of positive difference it makes in their lives when they see their home being cleaned up, being spruced up, being renovated.

Just towards the end of the summer, I was in Gladstone Terrace, which is on the corner of Gladstone and Preston Street in my riding. It's seniors affordable housing by Ottawa Community Housing, and it's gone through all kinds of refurbishment in terms of change in quality of life. I remember knocking on doors through that particular building, and you heard issues and you heard complaints about the living conditions. This time, when I went knocking through those complexes, the biggest complaint I heard was that each floor has a garbage chute and the new lids for the garbage chutes were too stiff because they were brand new. They needed a little bit more WD-40 to make it easier to hold for senior citizens who live in the building.

I took a delight in finding out that that was the biggest concern the residents had, because they really appreciate the investments made. I got in touch with Ottawa Community Housing, and I want to give a big salute to Jo-Anne Poirier, who is the CEO of Ottawa Community Housing, a woman with a heart, a woman with incredible passion for affordable housing. She's great to work with, in helping the needs around affordable housing in our community. I called Jo-Anne and obviously she got her supervisor in to make it easier to open those chutes—an example of the kind of result of the investment.

We're talking, under the social housing repair and retrofit investment, about \$47 million being invested, as we speak, in upgrading affordable housing in Ottawa, and my riding of Ottawa Centre is a very significant recipient of that.

The new mayor, Jim Watson—who was the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in our gov-

ernment—has also made commitments towards investing in affordable housing. In his platform, he committed \$14 million in new funds for homelessness and poverty reduction, and in this budget which the city presented, those 14 million dollars are there and allocated. I want to thank Mayor Watson for making that commitment and following through with the commitment, because there is a lot of excitement in the community, and that's going to make a difference.

One of the big reasons that commitment was able to be made is because of the uploading the provincial government has been continuously doing of the social services that were downloaded by the previous Harris-Hudak government—in terms of downloading ODSP, the Ontario disability support program; downloading the ODB, the Ontario drug benefit; Ontario Works, OW; and other social services that were downloaded on the municipalities, draining their resources from doing anything else. The McGuinty government has steadfastly been uploading those services. ODB has been fully uploaded, ODSP uploading will be complete by the end of 2011, and we are now on the way to uploading Ontario Works.

As a result of these uploads—not to mention uploading around transportation, land ambulances, public health—the city of Ottawa has \$140 million more this year. As a result of uploading just around ODSP and ODB, they have about \$25 million more, and I was happy to see that Mayor Watson was able to take a big chunk of that \$25 million and reinvest it in affordable housing. I look forward to continuing to work with him and his council to find more money in the future. That pool of money available to the city of Ottawa because of uploading that is being done by the McGuinty government, which in this budget we have recommitted to—we will continue to invest in affordable housing.

This long-term affordable housing strategy is important because it sets out the framework to continue moving, to keep building on the successes that we have accomplished in the last eight years.

We need to make sure that the federal government also speaks of having a national housing strategy. We need to make sure that we ask those running for office this time around, in this election, to make a commitment to have a national housing strategy, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I think the member from Ottawa Centre, for the most part, was very genuine in his comments. But when he started to stray off to the uploading/downloading discussion, this is a clear example of the McGuinty government's approach: It's sort of a stealthy way of shifting responsibility and any concern.

They started off, as the people of Ontario might recall, by having what they call a poverty reduction task force. We've said, on this side—our leader, Tim Hudak, says it frequently—that shelter is the single most important element of building the infrastructure for those persons. But what they've done here is they've downloaded housing to the municipal level.

I'm going to say right here on the record, with your indulgence, Madam Speaker—and this is actually from a report that's quite important. It's called *Where's Home?* It's a significant report by the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association. So this isn't some document that I have conjured up here. Here's one of the comments: "It proposes greater flexibility for service managers to make decisions about housing. It does not give us more money...." That's from Malcolm Hunt, the Peterborough city planning director.

So we know clearly that it's downloading by stealth, when you have a clear and overt way of avoiding the single most important thing. The member from Ottawa Centre was taking credit, but in fact they didn't upload—hardly. They've downloaded more than they've uploaded. Health care is a good example. Optometry, audiology, ophthalmology, chiropractic—all of it downloaded. So don't get into that discussion. The only way you've increased—you've reduced funding to health care by downloading a lot of costs to the consumer, including the health tax. This is another example of the stealthful way of shifting their responsibilities down to the taxpayer. It's just unacceptable.

1450

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: The member from Ottawa Centre is oh, so faithful to his party. He is such a true believer in what they are doing, even when all of the facts show that it's not correct. The UN rapporteur named Ontario for its lousy housing policy—not because they were doing a good job, but because they were doing a bad job.

When the member speaks, he talks about the money that Ontario is spending—the most in Confederation. But what he doesn't say is that we have by far and away the largest population of any province in the country. When New Brunswick spends \$200 million, they are, in fact, spending much more per capita than we are spending in Ontario. When Alberta spends the \$1.8 billion that he quoted, it's because they're spending three times as much per capita as we're spending in Ontario. When BC spends \$2 billion, they're spending twice as much as we're spending in Ontario. And the case goes on and on. We're not spending the most; we're spending the least. Don't ever think that because we're the largest and because we have the largest budget means that we're doing a good job, because we're not.

He talked about rent increases and all of what has happened. The inflation rates in the 1990s and early 2000s were many times higher than they are today. We are almost in a deflationary period. When you factor in the inflation versus the rent increase, will you find that they are virtually no different at all and that his party, which he is a true believer in, has not done anything that is unique and outside of what he says.

He talks about the 250 units in eight years. That's 30 units a year in his own riding. That is welcome, but disgraceful.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: The member from Ottawa Centre, I think, did a very good job of articulating the kind of investments that we've made: 270,000 new or refurbished units over the last number of years.

It's interesting: My friend from Durham quotes my good friend Malcolm Hunt, who I worked with for 18 years. But he should have also said that Malcolm Hunt reviewed the Tory years from 1995 to 2003, when the only provision they provided for affordable housing in Ontario was that they waived the provincial sales tax. He used to go to great lengths when we set up our local affordable housing committee. That was a shameful participation of the provincial government. So I always like to give Malcolm Hunt his due, and we should quote what he has had to say over the last 20 years about provincial support when it comes to affordable housing.

It's interesting, when you dig into the *Hamilton Spectator*, what you might find. I'd like to give a little quote here from Joyce Savoline when she was the regional chair, back in 1997, with regard to the who-got-done-in committee of Al Leach. She said, "When the province began this process, it said it would result in 'simpler, smaller, more accountable and less costly government ... and savings for taxpayers.' What they are doing does not achieve any of those goals. This is not what Premier Harris promised; it is not simpler, smaller, more accountable or less costly for government. And it certainly doesn't result in savings for Halton property taxpayers"—interesting quote.

And Chairman Savoline had this to say later that month in September 1997: "The province ought to be able to back up its stated belief that this swap of services will not increase property taxes for our residents.... Without this confirmation, it is questionable whether the province's promise has any more value than the phrase 'the Titanic is unsinkable'"—very interesting.

I could go on and on and on with more quotes from then-chair Joyce Savoline.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm pleased to join the debate with my colleague from Ottawa Centre, my colleague from Durham and, of course, my colleague from Peterborough.

Having said that, the member from Peterborough, if he wants to start going back and talking about quotes and trying to attack my colleague from Burlington, may also benefit from a history lesson. Of course, it was his previous leader—or his current leader, who will soon be previous leader—who once said he wouldn't raise taxes in 2003. Then presto, whammo, boom—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Whoa. What happened to that promise?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Well, he broke that, because he brought in the health tax.

Then he also said in 2007 that he wasn't going to raise taxes, and you know what he did? He took out his magic wand and there it was: another tax increase.

This government wants to play the blame game and the game where we can actually go back and review people's quotes. I'll just refer them to those two quotes—and we can go on about the HST, too, but we're not here for that; we're here for Bill 140.

The member from Peterborough rightly pointed out that our critic, Ms. Savoline, is the former regional chair of Halton. She decided she would run for the Ontario Progressive Conservatives, and has for two terms now, because she believes that this other group of people is on the wrong track. She has been very firm about this piece of legislation. She says that this government has stonewalled even important industry stakeholders from seeing what is really in this bill. However, and we'll see this today because this will likely collapse, they are trying to ram it through for debate after it's released. So this is a serious concern we have on this side of the House, but we expect nothing better from our colleagues opposite.

Although this was disappointing, it's obviously a clear indication from this government that they have no confidence in their affordable housing strategy. In fact, it was interesting that the former Minister of Municipal Affairs was disappointed and said so in the *Ottawa Citizen*.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Ottawa Centre has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thanks to all the members who spoke after my comments.

I'm only faithful to my constituents in Ottawa Centre. During the whole 20 minutes that I spoke, all the investments I was talking about and every single dollar I was outlining, I was talking about the investments in only the last four years since I was elected in 2007. I ask other members to reconsider their math accordingly.

I just want to highlight very quickly a report that came from the Alliance to End Homelessness, an organization in Ottawa which looked at homelessness in Ottawa from January to December 2010. The report is good to read. It calls for action; it asks that we do more. It also says, "At last—a solid increase in new affordable housing!" and it tracks affordable housing for the last several years. It asks all governments to invest more in terms of "appropriate investment in affordable housing, like the federal/provincial stimulus dollars," which "helps our community reach annual targets"—the kind of invest-

ment I was speaking of in my earlier comments. It also states that "The 2010 numbers are daunting, but hope is in the air. Our community can become inclusive and ensure everyone has an appropriate home by 2020." It goes through various statistics that they highlight as positive in 2010: 302 new units created in 2010 in Ottawa; 2,136 households moved from emergency shelter to permanent housing; 21,557 helped with housing services; 179 additional people who have received supports to be successfully housed; \$47 million in social housing repair and retrofit.

Nobody's arguing that this is it. We need to do more but we are on the right track and this long-term affordable housing strategy, which I will be wholeheartedly voting for, is going to ensure that we have a solid map, a blueprint for the future, so that we don't get into the kind of lapses we felt under the previous two governments.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Seeing none, on April 13, Mr. Bartolucci moved third reading of Bill 140. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

From the chief government whip: "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2010, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts, Minister Bartolucci, be deferred until Tuesday, April 19, 2011."

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further business?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): All those in favour, please say "aye."

I move that the House be adjourned.

Interjection: Until when?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1500.

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Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
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Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
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Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
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Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldeep (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
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Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉ PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Kim Craitor, Bob Delaney
Garfield Dunlop, Phil McNeely
John O'Toole, Maria Van Bommel
Clerks / Greffiers: Valerie Quioc Lim, Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Helena Jaczek
Norm Miller, Leeanna Pendergast
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell
Jim Brownell, Steve Clark
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, Aileen Carroll
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Steve Clark
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
Wayne Arthurs, Aileen Carroll
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craitor
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Select Committee on the proposed transaction of the TMX Group and the London Stock Exchange Group / Comité spécial sur la transaction proposée entre le Groupe TMX et le London Stock Exchange Group

Chair / Président: Gerry Phillips
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Frank Klees
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Continued from back cover

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Thomas Baitz	
Mr. Jim Brownell	5445
Milton District Hospital	
Mr. Ted Chudleigh	5445
Ontario Sport Awards	
Mr. Rick Johnson	5445
Fire hall in Estaire Wanup	
Mme France Gélinas	5445
National Trade Contractors Coalition of Canada	
Mr. Dave Levac	5446
Energy policies	
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel	5446

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

Standing Committee on Justice Policy	
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	5446
Report adopted	5446

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 181, Mr. Sousa / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie, projet de loi 181, M. Sousa	
First reading agreed to	5447
Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2011, Bill 182, Mr. Moridi / Loi de 2011 sur la sensibilisation au radon et la protection contre l'infiltration de ce gaz, projet de loi 182, M. Moridi	
First reading agreed to	5447
Mr. Reza Moridi	5447

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Firefighters	
Hon. Charles Sousa	5447
Mr. Randy Hillier	5448
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	5448

Hospital services	
Mr. Ted Chudleigh	5449
Paramedics	
Mr. Rick Johnson	5449
Protection for people with disabilities	
Ms. Sylvia Jones	5449
Home warranty program	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	5450
Paramedics	
Mr. Kim Craitor	5450
Hospital services	
Mr. Ted Chudleigh	5450
Paramedics	
Ms. Helena Jaczek	5450
Paramedics	
Mr. Bob Delaney	5451
Domestic violence	
Mr. Yasir Naqvi	5451
Paramedics	
Mr. Jeff Leal	5451
Hospital services	
Mr. Ted Chudleigh	5451
Paramedics	
Mr. Reza Moridi	5452

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Securities industry	
Mr. Michael Prue	5452
Vote deferred	5453
Strong Communities through Affordable Housing Act, 2011, Bill 140, Mr. Bartolucci / Loi de 2011 favorisant des collectivités fortes grâce au logement abordable, projet de loi 140, M. Bartolucci	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	5453
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield	5456
Mrs. Christine Elliott	5456
Mr. Michael Prue	5457
Hon. Monique M. Smith	5457
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	5458
Mr. Yasir Naqvi	5458
Mr. John O'Toole	5460
Mr. Michael Prue	5461
Mr. Jeff Leal	5461
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	5461
Mr. Yasir Naqvi	5462
Third reading vote deferred	5462

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 18 April 2011 / Lundi 18 avril 2011

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Robert Bailey	5433
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5433
Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5433
Mr. Joe Dickson	5433
Mr. Frank Klees	5433
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel	5433
Mr. Kim Craitor	5433
Hon. Eric Hoskins	5433
Mr. Khalil Ramal	5433
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	5433
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5433

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Executive compensation

Mr. Tim Hudak	5433
Hon. Dwight Duncan	5434

Executive compensation

Mr. Tim Hudak	5434
Hon. Dwight Duncan	5435

Executive compensation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5435
Hon. Dwight Duncan	5435

Child care

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5436
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky	5436

Executive compensation

Mr. Norm Miller	5437
Hon. Dwight Duncan	5437

Long-term care

Mme France Gélinas	5437
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5437

Ontario economy

Mr. Jeff Leal.....	5438
Hon. Sandra Pupatello.....	5438

Child care

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer	5438
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky	5439

Workplace safety

Mr. Paul Miller.....	5439
Hon. Charles Sousa	5439

Energy policies

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5440
Hon. Brad Duguid	5440

Correctional facilities

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	5440
Hon. James J. Bradley	5440

Correctional facilities

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5441
Hon. James J. Bradley	5441

Taxation

Mr. David Zimmer	5441
Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis	5441

Highway improvement

Mr. Ted Arnott	5442
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	5442

Condominium legislation

Mr. Rosario Marchese	5442
Hon. John Gerretsen.....	5442

Employment standards

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	5443
Hon. Charles Sousa	5443

Visitor

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5443
--------------------------------------	------

Notice of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5443
--------------------------------------	------

Notice of reasoned amendment

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	5443
--------------------------------------	------

Correction of record

Hon. Brad Duguid	5443
------------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh	5444
-------------------------	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week

Mr. Frank Klees	5444
-----------------------	------

Hamlet of Vandorf

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5444
------------------------	------

Isabel Bassett

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	5444
-----------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover