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(Hansard)**

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des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 4 May 2011**

**Mercredi 4 mai 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 4 May 2011

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 4 mai 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING FAMILIES AND SUPPORTING  
YOUTH TO BE SUCCESSFUL ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT  
LA FONDATION DE FAMILLES  
ET LA RÉUSSITE CHEZ LES JEUNES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 3, 2011, on 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 / Projet de loi 179, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille en ce qui concerne l'adoption et les soins et l'entretien.

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

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Good morning. It's a pleasure to continue where I stopped off yesterday. I know I have a couple of minutes left to speak on Bill 179, which is An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance.

Throughout the debate yesterday, all members who spoke were in favour of this particular piece of legislation. Obviously, this is something that is needed, and needed as soon as possible so we can help the most children and young people who are in care currently in our system.

I have to say to you also that many of us need to just look back at the track record of this government and the things we're doing for young people. This is just one more step in the right direction to make sure we give children and young people that good start, that early start, that worthwhile start in life so that they can be contributing members of our society, that opportunity that they have long been waiting for.

If you look at the youth-at-risk strategy that we implemented, if you look at the poverty plan that we looked at, it's all about children. If you look at the children's mental health strategy and monies that have been put in the budget for young people, it's all about giving the young people in our community and in our province that early

start to give them a chance to be successful in life. Again, I would say that we're doing the right thing.

I just want to use one quote that I know my colleague used yesterday. It's to remind us that the "OACAS applauds Minister Broten and the McGuinty government for this comprehensive and thoughtful announcement. These changes, taken collectively, are important steps in making 'family' a reality for many, many children and youth in CAS care. We look forward to working with the government on the details of the proposals and putting Ontario on the map as a leader in supporting children and families." That is from Mary Ballantyne, the executive director of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. That speaks volumes for the direction the government is taking. This is one that this particular organization has long requested. Obviously they support us, and we'll be working with them as we move forward.

I will end by saying again that I hope this House moves this particular piece of legislation quickly through and that it's implemented before we end this particular session and go to the polls.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Scarborough–Rouge River. I'm sorry I missed some of his remarks yesterday, but I did participate in this debate.

We all agree about putting children first. I think that's what is so harmonious about Bill 179. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has told us categorically that we're supportive of it, that we need to go to committee and that we need to get on with it today. I expect the House leader, who is here this morning, will probably call her peers from the NDP as well as the Conservatives and advise us that this is going to committee next week. This is what should happen. We could get this done.

Now, if that does not happen—and not to be cynical. We need to move forward right away with this. This is about vulnerable children, especially the crown wards. This bill provides an opportunity for up to 800 or 1,000 young people today who are in custody, if you will, under the control of the children's aid society or other networks, to have a family. It's in that sentiment, in that mood of reflection, that we are putting children first. We want to move forward and go to committee and make sure that we address some of the issues that have been brought up during the debates here: the issue on First Nations, about repatriation, about support for adoptive families when needed, especially in the case that was

mentioned of grandparents adopting. There could be the death of a mother or father or some other tragic event of some sort where there could be some allowances—that is, funding—that could be forwarded to help that family adopt one of their own flesh and blood.

It's the right thing to do. We are encouraging the ministry to move forward as soon as possible, have some hearings on it and get this back to the Legislature before we adjourn in the next three or four weeks. We can get it done. Put children first.

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

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I was here yesterday afternoon when the member for Scarborough–Rouge River began his comments, and I was here this morning as he wrapped them up. He's right; there is all-party support for this proposition. There are concerns, and you've heard them articulated once again by the member from Durham, who repeated some of the comments he made during his participation in the debate here yesterday, and certainly by me and certainly by our member for Kenora–Rainy River, who will be pleased to be speaking to this bill this morning.

The concern is about the adequacy of support for family and children's services, for children's aid societies. We know that presently, on an annual basis, opposition members have to stand up in the chamber and advocate for their local family and children's services, their children's aid societies, appealing to the government to please fund these people because they're midway through the year and they're on the verge of bankruptcy; they're at risk, literally, of shutting down their doors. So here we give them more responsibilities—not inappropriately—but with no suggestion of any adequate funding that they can count on.

Of course, I also raised yesterday, when I spoke to this Bill 179, the private member's bill that's being put forward on Thursday by Mr. Marchese, the member for Trinity–Spadina—Thursday afternoon, private members' public business—which will amend the Ombudsman Act to expand the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. The government House leader, I'm sure, is very enthusiastic about seeing Mr. Marin's Ombudsman jurisdiction expanded to include oversight over children's aid societies. What an effective way of monitoring adequacy of funding.

0910

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

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I was pleased to listen, yesterday afternoon and again this morning, to the comments from my colleague the member for Scarborough–Rouge River. I know, from a personal perspective, that the member from Scarborough–Rouge River was always very concerned about putting children first. I know his background: Certainly, prior to his arrival here, the member from Scarborough–Rouge River was one of the best-known soccer coaches in the Scarborough area, and he spent a considerable amount of time over the years working with our youngest citizens in the Scarborough area, teaching them skills and working with them.

His speech, both yesterday and today, I think reflects the great interest that he has in children and in bringing about amendments to this particular piece of legislation, dealing with the 9,000 crown wards we have in the province of Ontario, the ability to change this legislation to facilitate the adoption of individuals who find themselves as crown wards in the province of Ontario and the opportunity to place these individuals with strong families in the province of Ontario. We do know that, for a wide variety of reasons, there are some families that just can't have children on their own, and this is a real opportunity to address this issue, which has been sitting around for many, many years.

It is true that there is a consensus that is building in this House on this particular bill, Bill 179. We're hoping that it can get to committee rather quickly to hear presentations on areas of the bill that need to be improved—and then get this bill back to the House as quickly as possible for third reading and royal assent to improve the lives of children in Ontario.

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

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I'm pleased to comment on the remarks of the member for Scarborough–Rouge River because this is a pressing problem that we all agree upon. I think we're all agreed upon the remedy and would like to see this bill go to committee to be passed before the end of this sitting.

There were approximately 9,400 crown wards in 2008—9,400. Of those, only 822 were adopted in 2007–08. These children, in effect, do not have a home. They are made crown wards for their own protection as our society deems necessary, and unfortunately, they do not have a permanent home, which is necessary for any child who wants to be a member of our society. I think I can speak for all members: We are all concerned with the lack of action in regard to the small number of adoptions. Hopefully, this bill will help.

One of the problems, however, is that our children's services are totally underfunded. There's even talk of some children's aid societies in Ontario going bankrupt, being put in bankruptcy by their boards of directors because of the lack of funding. How this government expects, with that lack of funding, adoptions to increase is beyond me. I don't understand the logic, and I think the real concern is the lack of funding in our children's aid.

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

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I just want to thank the member from Welland—did I get it right?—the member from Durham and my colleague from Peterborough.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Just call him Jeff.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Well, he's one of my better colleagues. He's a guy that I look up to, and it's interesting that he's followed my career in politics all these years. On top of that, he knows some of my extracurricular involvements. But Mr. Speaker, I don't want to go there too much.

This is a bill that is long awaited by our agencies that work with crown wards. There are also a lot of families out there that are willing to adopt these young people into their families, give them a home; give them the support, the care and the love they deserve; and give them a new start in life. This bill makes a big difference in that particular sector.

Also, some kids that have been in care have left care for whatever reason, got out onto our streets, and then realized that the world out there is not very friendly and that it's not very easy to survive in our streets. This gives them a chance to actually go back to children's aid services and receive the help and support and all the things they need to lead what I would call a full life and a life they would be very proud of themselves. This particular bill allows us to do that.

We should move forward with it as rapidly and as quickly as we can. I know the minister is excited about getting the job done quickly. I have to say, it's a step this government is taking in the right direction, and we should do it quickly.

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

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I am so pleased to be speaking to this bill today, because what is more important in our society than trying to assist, to nurture, to mentor and to embrace children—our own children, children in our communities, but most especially the most vulnerable children? Those are the children we are talking about in this bill today, Bill 179, the Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act, 2011.

This bill, if we pass it, deals with two issues: It deals with access orders to make it easier to adopt children who are currently crown wards, and it makes it easier for children between the ages of 15 and 16 who have left the care of the CAS and are returning to CAS care.

Under this new legislation, when a child is placed for adoption, all access orders will be terminated—such an important piece in this legislation.

Like I say, what more important job do we as adults have in life than to nurture, to mentor, to care for and to advance our children to the point where they are confident, well-rounded, productive human beings? And what better way to do it than to give children who don't have a family, access to a family and everything that a family brings: the joy of belonging, and the ability to share in activities, in celebrations and in parents and families attending sports games and advising and mentoring kids through their school years? I think that what this bill will do is create the ability for that to happen that much more for kids who don't have that today.

There are some 1,500 potential adoptive families in Ontario—1,500—and I think it behooves us as a government to recognize this and move forward to create many opportunities for these families to become adoptive parents. The ministry has to deal with the wait-list for a home study before any adoption process can move forward, and this places additional burdens on the CASs. CASs have had a history, in the last little while, of having

great difficulties balancing their budgets. It's been almost impossible for CASs, without exception, to respond to the kind of lack of funding that they receive.

For an adoption process to move forward and for a CAS to have the ability to move this forward, I think that the part this bill is silent on is important and something we should have a real look at as we go through the committee process, and that is, how do we fund all CASs on an equal, level playing field in order for them to be able to move forward with the adoption process and do the home studies? Right now, what the CASs have done is abandon doing home studies because they just don't have the money. The ministry has not provided that money, and that needs to start happening.

**0920**

We support this bill, because it's about taking children who are currently crown wards and not eligible for adoption and allowing many more of them to be adopted into warm and loving families. It can't be more positive than that; there are a lot of families that are waiting to adopt these kids. But most importantly, it provides a chance for them to have this family experience. It provides a chance for them to have all the benefits that go along with that, and it brings that positive change in their lives that gives them a better foundation to move forward and create a positive life for themselves and an opportunity to succeed in life. How much better could it be than for that to happen?

Things have changed. Currently there are far too many children who don't have the ability to be adopted, who don't have access to adoption, and there are far too many families who want to be adoptive parents who are not able to go through that adoption process. I think that what this bill does is begin to open the door for that to happen.

There's one part of this bill that concerns me, though, and it is that currently—I was talking about the financial situation of CASs—the CASs provide some subsidy to families who adopt crown wards. It's at their discretion. There's nothing mandated for them to do that, but it is the right thing to do. I know that the minister has said she would like there to be a consistent adoption subsidy, but in this bill there's no mention of that happening. She says she will be seeking the advice of experts, but for me that again is a further delay in that process. It creates unpredictability for the prospective adoptive parents, but mostly for the CASs, who are actually left holding the bag, because they have to find a means to try to assist these prospective adoptive parents with some kind of subsidy.

CASs are broke. Let's face it: That's the only word we can use. They're broke, and they are providing one of the most important tasks we have in our province; that is, to take broken families and broken children and try to piece things back together again. What more important job in life is there than to create some stability for a child? But they're broke. They need some predictability. They need some assurance from this government that they will have the dollars to cover this, but this legislation makes no mention of that. I'm hoping that through the committee

process, through the hearings, we're going to be able to create the kind of awareness that will allow us to put forward amendments that the government will accept and we can make a change to that part of the legislation.

There's another part of the legislation that is of some concern to me, and that is that there is no mention of special-needs children. Special-needs children cannot be forgotten in this opportunity. This legislation cannot be an opportunity lost for special-needs children. These children have the absolute least likelihood of being adopted, because they have special needs. It takes extra care. It takes a really special family to be able to embrace a special-needs child. It takes a lot more money. So again, I think it would behoove this government to look after those social and medical needs with regard to special-needs children and mention them specifically in this piece of legislation. We can't forget them. We can't leave this opportunity behind without including special-needs children.

Currently, if a special-needs child is a crown ward, they have access to programs and medical supports. But guess what? Once the child is adopted, the family has to assume all responsibility for those needs. Is it fair that a family has to consider their financial position to the point where a special-needs child gets left behind, even though there was a chance that child could have been embraced by a family?

I really think it's important that we raise this issue at the hearings, that we have more discussion about this and that, again, the government accept some amendments with respect to special-needs children.

Let's go back to the access order. An access order is to be terminated: Currently, when an access order is to be terminated, a notification in writing is made to the holder of that access order. It's done so in a very legal, very technical, very logical way. It is now the responsibility of the children's aid society to use every means possible to contact the holder of the access order. I have no question with that; that's a good thing to happen because there need to be safeguards in everything that happens when we're looking after children. The judge, then, must determine that all reasonable steps were taken to notify the access holder. This, again, is the burden of the children's aid society.

I go back to my point: The children's aid societies are stretched to their limit. They're stretched to their limit, and they deal with some very serious, sombre issues on a daily basis. They deal with broken families, they deal with disturbed children, they deal with all kinds of issues we don't even want to think about, on a daily basis. To continue to add this extra burden, I think, is unconscionable, and I think that we have to start looking at some ways to either resource CASs more fully or to take some of that burden away by reviewing the structure of how some of these things happen.

These kids deserve it. Our society is better for it. We're creating, I think, a better community by being compassionate, by being understanding of these special issues.

Crown wards, at this point in time, who are looking for a family; families who are looking to adopt: It seems

like a match made in heaven. We ought to do everything—turn every stone, create every opportunity, cut as much red tape as possible—to make this happen. For all of the children who are looking for adoption, for all the families that are looking to be loving adoptive families, we have an opportunity here. I hope that we don't miss that opportunity, because, in some bills that I've seen come through this House in the last four years, we've missed some really big opportunities to do really good things. For whatever reason, the opportunities have been missed. This is not one that we should do that with.

I look forward to the hearings, and I look forward to being part of moving legislation forward that makes such a positive change in our province for children, for families and for the future of this province.

**0930**

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened to my colleague from the Conservative Party, and I want to thank her for raising what I think are the real issues in the context of this bill. The fact of the matter is, you can pass all kinds of high-sounding legislation, but if the children's aid societies do not have the resources and the staffing to do the work, not much is going to happen. So far we haven't seen anything that indicates that's going to change, so I want to thank her for wrestling with what I believe is the real issue: If we want to see more adoptions, then there has to be some resourcing of children's aid societies so that they can do the work which allows adoption to proceed and happen. If they don't have the resources to do that, then this government can pass six or seven pieces of legislation and not much is going to happen. I think that's what we'll need to get into in committee: to look at the nuts and bolts of what needs to happen but which so far isn't happening at all.

New Democrats want to see this legislation go to committee, we want to see this legislation dealt with at committee and we want to see the real issues wrestled with. Is this government going to provide the resources that children's aid societies need, or not? If we don't see the resources, then we can pass this legislation and six other pieces of legislation like it and not much is going to happen.

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

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Yes, it's true. We can always do more, but I think we have to deal with the reality of the situation, and it's my understanding that if you put all the budgetary items together, we spend more than \$1.5 billion per year on child welfare services in this province.

In my earlier career as a lawyer in Kingston, back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I worked quite a bit with the children's aid society and with the various children who were under their protection. I can tell you that the issue of crown wards is probably one of the saddest situations to be involved in at times, particularly when these children basically—it used to be that at age 16 or 18 they were cut loose from the system, because they were no longer part of the system.

This initiative here is an excellent initiative that deserves the support of all members in the House. It's a good initiative on a number of different counts. There are crown wards who families in the province want to adopt. This kind of legislation, the initiatives that are contained therein, will allow this to happen. Also, when a child is a crown ward and perhaps needs extra help beyond the age of 16 and 18, they will be able to get it up until they're 21 once the legislation is implemented, with these various rules and regulations.

This is a good piece of legislation. I noted that the members across the House will support it. Yes, I agree that we always need more resources, particularly to look after the most vulnerable in our society, which includes children who are crown wards, but I think we also have to deal with the reality of the situation: Right now in the province we are already spending something like \$1.5 billion per year to make sure that the children of this province get the best kind of services and the best kind of support that they could possibly have.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I thank the member from Burlington for her sensitive tone, which was very evident in her remarks: non-political, non-accusatory, positive. These are the right kinds of tones that need to be used in this particular debate. We're actually supportive of this legislation. We, along with the NDP, recognize that there are some changes required—whether it's dealing with First Nations, native peoples and others—and that there are specific challenges that need to be addressed, and I think she covered it with the right tone.

There are a couple of things I'd just put on the record that need to be said. Her response to the CAS is true. It's true in Durham; it's probably true across the province. I'm surprised that the Minister of Government Services—whichever ministry he has now. “The former Minister of the Environment” is how I like to think of him.

I got thrown off the boat, but anyway, the reason it's really important to recognize here that the cost to families—and there are transitional funds available through the CAS that need to be taken advantage of. But if you look at a family—I'm looking at the expert panel's report—adoptive families told us that the cost of private adoption ranged from \$20,000 to \$30,000, with inter-country adoptions costing up to \$60,000 and more. Yet we know that a ward in care is about \$32,000 a year. Some of that money, rather than being spent on the bureaucracy of the CASs—we should change the approach and allow these crown wards and others, under the appropriate conditions, to be adopted, and provide support for these adoptive families.

One of the other options is the in-vitro fertilization option for families that want children.

This change could allow some of this to happen, and this is what's reflected in the expert panel's report. So I commend the ministry to move forward. Stop ragging the puck on this issue. Get it to committee. Bring it back before the election is called.

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

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** As I've had a chance to say previously in this House, we are anxious to get this bill to committee. We are committed to seeing this legislative process move quickly so that this bill can be passed. On the day of introduction of the bill, I talked about the importance and the urgency of seeing this legislation passed, because so many thousands of kids are dependent upon these changes being made so that they can have a better future.

I want to thank the member for Burlington. I appreciate the tone that she took in her remarks, and I appreciate very much the support that we are receiving from all sides of the House.

But I do want to comment on the fact that we need to acknowledge that we are well under way with working hard to find a pathway to sustainability for the whole child welfare sector and to focus more on outcomes for kids. “Outcomes for kids” means permanent families, whether that family is a family of customary care, whether that is the prevention of an admission so that they stay with their own family, or whether, in the case that we're talking about on the floor of the Legislature today, it's about making the pathway to adoption more available.

We have seen increased investments, and we are putting CASs on a stable footing. In fact, 72% of CASs are receiving more funding this year than last year. We're also targeting that funding to make sure that we spend our time in a children's aid society doing the work that is best for kids, making sure that we take a look at, with the advice of our expert panel, paperwork burdens that might be in place.

All of our attention and focus, as it is on the floor of the Legislature today, always must be what is best for Ontario's kids, how we can work together to make sure that those kids who are our collective responsibility—they are Ontario's kids when they are crown wards—that we give them everything we can to make sure that they find their forever family.

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

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** As I said, the PCs will be supporting this bill. How could we not? It does move forward, and it does do some good things for children who are in need. I want to thank the member from Kenora–Rainy River, the Minister of Consumer Services, the member from Durham and the Minister of Children and Youth Services for their comments.

When I first began my political career in 1982, one of the first tasks I was assigned was to be a director on the board of the children's aid society in Halton. I know the member from Oakville has also served on that board and is very familiar with the kinds of issues that children's aid societies faced back then. I think those issues have only escalated today.

I know that more money has been put in the pot for these kinds of things, but the problem isn't fixed yet.

Children's aid societies still go through the excruciating pain of trying to determine whether they can take on more families or not.

I can remember how many times the province insisted that we go through exceptional-circumstance reviews and the kinds of human resources and money it took to do that, and took away from looking after children. So I think that the whole process needs to be reviewed and understood better so that the money that we spend at CASs is the money that goes right to the front line, to the families and to the children who need it. That's part of what I was trying to say.

**0940**

This is one of those issues where you just park your politics at the door. This has nothing to do with politics; this has to do with—

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to say a few words about this bill, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act respecting adoption and the provision of care and maintenance.

Let me indicate at the outset that New Democrats are going to support the legislation. I call this legislation feel-good legislation, and we've seen a lot of that from the McGuinty Liberals over the last few months: legislation that perhaps has a nice title or subtitle and is designed to make people feel good, but by itself probably will not accomplish much. So while we're going to support the legislation, I want to spend the time that I have here today dealing with the real issues.

One of the first real issues is this government's continuing lack of understanding—or, should I say, lack of caring—about what First Nations think, and I want to deal with that in the context of this bill. When the bill was introduced, I called a number of the child and family service organizations in my part of the province that work with First Nation communities. First Nations have a real interest, both today and historically, in the issue of adoption, because in the sad history of Ontario, what happened all too often was that child and family service organizations would go into First Nations, would take children from their families and would place them for adoption with non-native folks, with white folks, who happened to live in cities and towns elsewhere. Native kids were adopted into families in the United States or adopted far away from their community, from their culture, from their families, from their brothers and sisters, from their extended family. I think when we reflect on that now, we'd say that that kind of behaviour was verging on criminal behaviour. It was certainly quite inhumane. So First Nations have a real interest in this. They want to know that if children are going to be placed for adoption, that sorry history is not going to be repeated again.

When the government introduced the legislation, I called three or four of the First Nation child and family service organizations and I said to them, "Has the government come and actually consulted with you about this

legislation and about the issues?" And you know what? They said, "What are you talking about? We don't know anything about this. No one's come and consulted with us. No one's talked to us." I called some chiefs and some of the tribal organizations and I said, "Has anybody from the government come and talked to you about this?" And you know what the answer was? They didn't know what I was talking about either. They hadn't heard a thing about it.

Members of the government may think that this is not an important issue. Let me tell you, Speaker: This is repetitive behaviour for this government. Only a few months ago, we saw the government crowing about the Far North Act, and we had the galleries full of First Nation chiefs and elders and tribal organizations saying, "This has a direct and enduring impact on our lives, our communities, our livelihoods, our future and our lands." And do you know what? This government didn't even bother to talk to the First Nations, who are the only people who live in the Far North.

Insult was added to it, because the Minister of Natural Resources flew in to about six communities over the summer, held a 15-minute photo op, then tried to say, "Well, that's consultation with First Nations." Not only was it dishonest; it was insulting. Imagine when First Nations leadership, elders, tribal organizations and First Nation child and family service organizations see the same thing happening again.

I understand that the government's response is, "Oh, there was a conference in Thunder Bay, and the legislation was mentioned." Holding a conference in Thunder Bay and taking two sentences out of a paragraph of a speech to mention the legislation is not consultation. It's not consultation, it's not respectful and, once again, it's insulting.

This is one of the reasons this bill has to go to committee, because I think First Nations deserve to have the opportunity to look at the bill, to examine the bill, debate the bill, discuss the bill, critique the bill and, if they feel it necessary, oppose the bill. Hopefully, the public hearings will be located such that First Nations will actually be able to do this. We don't want another repetition of the Far North Act, or recently with the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, who holds a forest tenure reform that's going to affect lives all across northern Ontario and refuses to hold public hearings in northern Ontario. We don't want another repetition of that.

There need to be public hearings, and the public hearings, in my view, need to travel outside of this building. They need to go to places like Sioux Lookout; the public hearings, I think, need to go to places like Moosonee, so the people who may be very seriously affected by this legislation actually have an opportunity to think about it, talk about it, debate it and, if they feel so inclined, to oppose the bill or oppose parts of the bill or insist on amendments to the bill.

The second issue which I think, again, needs some work at committee—and the minister tries to provide some sugar-coating with this issue, but the fact of the

matter is, the majority of children's aid societies in this province are being pushed over the cliff. The demands for their time and their resources far exceed their resources. The fact of the matter is, we have probably more families in Ontario under economic pressure, financial pressure and housing pressure than ever before. We have more families in need, we have more families that are struggling, we have more families that are being challenged—all of which means a lot more work for children's aid societies. When you talk with the executive directors, when you talk with people who serve on the volunteer boards of the societies, when you talk with the social workers, they all will tell you the same reality: The demands on their time are greater than ever and the resources are simply not there.

So the natural question is: If children's aid societies are already being pushed over the cliff by services they must provide—they don't have any choice; they are legally required. The law of Ontario says to them, "Thou shalt do this. Thou shalt provide this service. Thou shalt deal with these issues as a priority"—if children's aid societies are already pushed over the edge of the cliff by the mandated services they must provide, then how do they find the time to provide the support, the counselling and the ancillary services that go with adoption?

It's amazing. I've heard government speaker after government speaker get up, and none of them want to deal with this issue. None of them want to deal with this issue. They all repeat the spin words that this legislation somehow, magically, by the stroke of a pen is going to wonderfully, completely, totally improve the situation without dealing with the real issue, and the real issue is that children's aid societies simply don't have the resources right now to support adoption services.

**0950**

I've seen this trick before. I remember the wonderful period of Ronald Reagan. The Reagan government would pass all kinds of legislation in the United States but then never provide any funding, any resources or any framework for the implementation or the enforcement of the legislation. The result was that nothing happened. The press releases went out announcing this wonderful legislation. The press releases went out announcing that this was world-class, leading-edge; it was going to be the silver bullet which was going to solve and address these pressing problems. But nothing happened because there were never any resources devoted to implementation. There were never any resources devoted to operation. There were never any resources devoted to things like enforcement.

This needs to be addressed at committee. And I say to the government: You can pass this bill, and you can pass 10 other bills like it, and you can send out the press releases saying, "This is wonderful. This is fantastic. This is unbelievable. This is incredible. This is world-class. This is leading-edge." We all know that nothing's going to happen if you do not provide the resources for implementation, for operation and for enforcement of what's in the bill.

All we've heard so far—my God, if I had a dollar for every time we've heard this from the McGuinty government—is, "We're are going to discuss," or, "We're going to hold a panel to talk about how we implement this." In other words, no commitment; just another conversation, another promise to perhaps, maybe, somehow, possibly do something in the future. That's not going to do anything. In committee, this issue needs to be raised.

I can tell you that one group of people in this province who are going to be very interested to hear if there are going to be any resources will be the First Nations. It will be the First Nations because First Nations know all too well what happens if you do not provide the financial and other resources for the implementation and the operation of the legislation. What happens is what they've experienced in the sorry history of Ontario. Kids are placed for adoption who perhaps shouldn't be placed for adoption. Kids are placed for adoption in homes that perhaps they shouldn't be placed in. And you get some very sorry results.

The third issue which I think needs to be addressed is this: There was an expert panel on adoptions. That expert panel on adoptions gave the government a report. They gave us, as legislators, a report. I have to say that it was a very good report. There were a number of recommendations in it. If you looked at the discussion that was contained in the paper and then the recommendations, they all flowed more or less reasonably and logically. You could see how one issue buttressed or depended upon another.

Regrettably, what we have in legislation here is a very, very small sliver of what was recommended. What's missing are some of the things which would make this legislation effective. I just want to talk about one of them now. I'm not going to go into the long history, but the reality in Ontario today is, if you are a family and you have a child who has special needs—let's say your child has a developmental delay of some kind which requires counselling, requires some sort of special education services, or perhaps it's a physical or physiological issue which again requires special services—and you're a family of limited means—you're like a lot of families in Ontario, a modest- or middle-income family—the only way you can get services for your child now, the CASs will tell you, is that you have to place the child as a crown wardship. Those children in some cases are then placed in foster homes.

We have a lot of children in foster homes who are special-needs children. One of the things that happened—and I give the expert panel credit for this: They actually talked to foster parents who had been caring for some of these children for three, four and five years, and the foster parents said, "We would love to adopt this child." But the law in Ontario today is this: If they were to adopt the child, all of the funding that provides special services for that child, special services that that child needs, would be lost, would be taken away. So they say, "As much as we would like to adopt, as much as we love this child and we have treated this child as our own, as

much as we have spent the last three or four years investing ourselves emotionally in this child, we cannot adopt because it would be against the interest of this boy or girl to adopt them and see them lose the special services. We don't have the financial wherewithal in our budget to provide the services." The expert panel said that if you really want to promote adoption, this issue has to be dealt with. It has to be addressed.

Do we find anything in the legislation that commits the government to doing that? Do we find a whisper, a sliver, anything that commits this government to doing that? Regrettably, the answer is no. What we've heard again are vague promises that the government will perhaps put together a group to discuss it, to investigate it, to look at it, to consider it, but no commitment to do anything.

I say again: If the government is serious about actually doing something other than passing legislation which sounds nice, uses nice words, has nice press releases and has lots of nice rhetoric, the government has got to address some of these issues. That's why this legislation has to go to committee and that's why these kinds of questions have to be answered, yes or no.

For eight years we've heard from this government—I'll give you an example: the whole issue of poverty in Ontario. We've heard over and over again that the government's studying it, that the government's got a group working on a strategy, that the government is developing tactics and position papers. What's the reality? On almost all fronts, we have more people falling into poverty in Ontario, and we have more people falling into deeper poverty in Ontario than ever before. Housing is one of the principal issues, and we just saw a housing bill that's not going to build any new housing; not one cent's worth.

I think people in Ontario have seen enough and heard enough of this. This bill needs to go to committee so the real issues can be raised and we can get some real answers, not vague promises to possibly, perhaps, maybe do something five or 10 years in the future.

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

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have just a few brief moments to comment on the comments made by the member opposite, and to talk a little bit about, if I can, specifically the issue of aboriginal child welfare.

I want to correct the member opposite: We weren't in Thunder Bay. We spent two days at Fort William First Nation, where we hosted the first-ever aboriginal child welfare summit. Myself, alongside my aboriginal adviser, John Beaucage—who, again, is a first in this province; the very first time we have someone whom we are working closely with on these very important issues.

I will be the first to say, and I've said it many times around the province, that the legacy of the residential school scoop, of children being taken from their families, is a legacy in this province that we cannot be proud of. We know that we continue to see struggles in communities across the province as a result of parents who were

parenting children when they had never been parented themselves. And that is something that we take to heart as we do work in the province with respect to customary care and finding that as the pathway to permanency for these children.

At the very introduction of this legislation I had an opportunity to talk about how, for some children in the province, adoption is the pathway to permanency. For aboriginal children, customary care—a model that recognizes the historical way they were cared for in their communities by someone who might be part of their community but not a blood relative—is a traditional form of model that is recognized within the Child and Family Services Act. And that is what we spent over two days talking about: how we can improve that model and how we can have better outcomes for aboriginal children and families. It's something that we need to continue to do work on, but I'm very proud of the steps that we've taken to date.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I do think the member from Kenora–Rainy River brings a very definite level of passion to this and consistent remarks over the last couple of days of debate on Bill 179, so I commend him for that. In fact, I think the minister recognizes, by responding in a positive way, that there were hearings in the north for the first time ever, which means you have made some impact in the overall recognition of this customary care model.

I've tried, without the same level of expertise as the member, to acknowledge that: that customary care has to deal with the cultural background and reference points in an individual child's life. Whether they're from a different country or a different culture, these things need to be important so that it's customized and the child is first.

When you look at even the most easily understood, the familial adoption—that would be a grandparent—there need to be transitional supports. The expert panel report says, "It costs at least \$32,000 a year to keep a crown ward in care. It costs significantly less to provide supports and subsidies to help adoptive families parent children." This is a key recommendation of the expert panel. This is what I think are the views held here.

Children's aid societies, for all their well-intended purposes, may not be the right model all the time, and there are provisions for these transitional support costs that are addressed in many of the reports and recommendations, such as in the First Nations customary care model as well as in the other family members that may adopt—and they may be from a cultural background. Whether the person is from a Muslim, a Hindu or other kind of non-traditional Christian background, these are important accommodations for the children to adopt. And I urge the minister to move forward with that sentiment.

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

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** The member for Kenora–Rainy River certainly touched upon one of the most serious issues that we face in Ontario and indeed throughout Canada today:

our aboriginal children. In the two years of being the PA to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, I toured about 50% of the First Nations communities throughout Ontario: Sandy Lake, Anishinabek, Sagamok, Sudbury, and in my own community of Peterborough, where I have two First Nations communities, Hiawatha and Curve Lake. We all know that our children prosper when they're put into stable, safe family relationships.

It's interesting: Back as early as 2000, the Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society and the two First Nations communities in my community, Hiawatha and Curve Lake, entered into a new service arrangement that was based on the cultural heritage of those two communities. That has been a model that other areas have looked at across the province, one that recognizes the cultural heritage of our First Nations people, and recognizing that the outcome of residential schools—that, in fact, our First Nations communities lost four generations of parenting within their social structure. If the non-aboriginal community in Ontario had lost four generations of parenting, you can only imagine what kind of social upheaval that would have brought about in our family structure. That's something that, as this bill goes to committee, we need to look at.

I want to applaud the minister, because I looked at an article from the National Post called "Suffer the Children," and they acknowledge that "Laurel Broten is to be applauded for examining the problems faced by Ontario's native communities. Not many politicians are willing even to cast a glance at this issue." She is commended for taking that step.

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

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I, too, would like to commend the member from Kenora–Rainy River for the comments he has made. He continues to make passionate comments about the plight of the First Nations people in his area, and the kinds of challenges, obstacles and barriers they face with government red tape. I commend him for continuing to present their issues passionately, logically and sensibly. I hope that this Legislature can, with this legislation, Bill 179, make some positive difference in how the adoptive parents and the children who are waiting to be adopted can be treated in these circumstances. The member makes some really good points. He has the experience, and has talked to us about them on many occasions. It would really be a step forward for us to listen to him about the experiences of his constituents.

Once again, I'm going to say that this is about parking your politics at the door. When an act goes forward, it's an opportunity to include as many things in it as possible that we can think of to make life better, to create a quality of life for people in Ontario that moves us forward. We are only as strong as the most vulnerable people in our communities. This act certainly shines light on those folks who need our help. It would behoove us to make those kinds of changes and get it right.

I look forward to the committee hearings, I look forward to making those changes, and I hope that the gov-

ernment side will accept the amendments that are so critical to make life better in this province.

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to thank my colleagues in the government and the Conservative opposition for the comments.

In response, just let me say this. The minister refers to discussions about customary care. Customary care is very important. It's especially important in First Nations communities, and some of the native child and family service organizations have done truly excellent work on this front. Some of the other First Nations child and family service organizations want to follow that lead and further develop the model. But holding discussions about customary care is not consultation on the legislation.

That's what this government seems to miss all the time. Just as we saw with the Far North Act, the government thinks that if the Minister of Natural Resources flies into six northern First Nation communities and holds a 10-minute photo op, that's consultation. That is not, and it's dishonest to even pretend that it is, and it's insulting to pretend that it is.

That is one of the issues that need to be addressed at committee: Did this government consult with First Nations on this issue or not? I think what the record is going to show is that there was no consultation; otherwise, First Nations would not be saying to me, "We've never heard of this bill and we've never heard of what's in it."

They also say—and I continue to be struck by this. When I raise the issue of special-needs children who, under the current law, lose their special-needs services when they're adopted unless the adopting parents have the financial resources to pay for them, never a response from government members on this; just silence.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there have been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Mr. Speaker, we'd like the debate to continue.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Notwithstanding that decision, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.*

#### WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear green ribbons in recognition of Children's Mental Health Week.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I would like to ask the Legislative Assembly to welcome one of my constituents in the west gallery: Jack Graves, a constituent from Tillsonburg, who is here with us here today and is becoming a regular visitor. Along with him today is his granddaughter Katie Kerckaert and her friend Alexandra Tramer. We'd like, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, to welcome our guests this morning.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I would like to introduce to the House Gloria Richards, who is in the Speaker's gallery and in fact works for yourself, Mr. Speaker. She is here today to keep an eye on her granddaughter Melanie Soltau, who is one of our pages, from the great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm pleased to welcome Lisa Katzman, the mother of page Benjamin Katzman.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I would like to introduce to the Legislature Barb Santini, who is the mother of page Rachel Santini from the great riding of York South–Weston.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would like to introduce and welcome Maria and Mara Gagliu from the riding of Don Valley West. Maria practises dentistry in Thorncliffe Park, and Mara is a student at Northlea school, and she's heading off to the TOPPS program next year, which is a great honour.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'd like to introduce Gail Yattavong. She is the mother of Jasmyn Yattavong, who is our page from the great riding of Brampton–Springdale.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'd like to introduce Stefanie Palmer from Guelph. She is here to visit with her daughter Kyla Fishburn, who is one of our wonderful pages and who will be having her 13th birthday tomorrow. Happy birthday, Kyla, and welcome, Stefanie.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to welcome to question period today a delegation from Dubreuilville in the Algoma–Manitoulin riding: Dave Jennings, the general manager for the mill there, as well as Mayor Louise Perrier and CAO Réjean Raymond.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to introduce my good friend Kevin Aitcheson, who is with the Stratford Fire Department.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I would like to take the opportunity to welcome Michael and Heather Haines from Cobourg, in the riding of Northumberland–Quinte West. Welcome.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'd like to introduce the class of All Saints Catholic school in Whitby, which is actually the riding adjacent to mine, but their teacher, Chris Moriah, is an Ajax boy and is here with them today, and they'll be here momentarily.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of page Andrew Lamb and the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, to welcome his mother, Janet Purcell, and his father, Doug Lamb, to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I too would like to welcome the keeper of the Speaker's apartment, Gloria Richards, as she is here in the Speaker's gallery. It's great to have you here, Gloria.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** With that applause, you might want to run for election and get elected Speaker. You've got support on both sides of the House.

We have with us today, seated in the Speaker's gallery, a group of interns from the National Assembly of Quebec, who are visiting the Ontario Legislature. They are Guillaume Tremblay-Boily, Alex Perreault, Loïc Blancquaert, Èvelyne Beaudin and Dominic Migneault. Welcome to Queen's Park. We hope you enjoy your visit to Ontario.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to ask the pages to assemble for introduction, please.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 39th Parliament: Amira Abdalla, York Centre; Kyla Fishburn, Guelph; Erica Geen, Simcoe North; Christian Gill, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock; Jonathan Hampton, Kenora–Rainy River; Lukian Husak, Hamilton Centre; Caleb Jones, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound; Benjamin Katzman, Windsor–Tecumseh; Andrew Lamb, Eglinton–Lawrence; Hamza Naim, Ajax–Pickering; Allison Rudback, Whitby–Oshawa; Rachel Santini, York South–Weston; Melanie Soltau, Oak Ridges–Markham; John Tasiou, Toronto–Danforth; Leena Tran, York West; Jonah Villanueva Merali, Trinity–Spadina; Chelsea Wallace, Toronto Centre; Maggy Watson, Niagara West–Glanbrook; Jasmyn Yattavong, Brampton–Springdale; and Viktor Zhou, Scarborough Centre.

Welcome to Queen's Park. Please reassume your positions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### SMART METERS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: Premier, in municipal elections last fall and the federal election on Monday, Ontario families chose leaders who respect their need for relief—relief for average hard-working families. Yet you've become so out of touch that yesterday you took the extraordinary step of inviting the media into your caucus room to witness you telling the Liberal caucus, "Don't panic." You told them that you were going to stay the course and continue to increase taxes, increase hydro rates and increase government spending.

Does your attitude, Premier, mean that you are going to continue down the path and impose your smart meter tax machines on every household in the province despite the fact that they can't afford to pay the bills?

1040

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There's just a lot of doom and gloom over there these days. I'm reminded that somebody once said, "It's hard to be angry and smart at the same time."

I would encourage my honourable colleague to use his better judgment and acknowledge that Ontario is not that bad a place in which we might choose to live and to recognize a few facts. We are turning the corner out of the global recession: 93% of our jobs are back. That contrasts with the US, where it's only 15%. We're the first in Canada and second in North America in attracting new job-creating investments, according to the FDI report. And according to the Programme for International Student Assessment, our schools are now in the top 10 globally.

Again, I think that speaks to the importance of the direction that we continue to—

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, of course Ontario is an incredible place with extraordinary potential. We just need a change in leadership to become the leader again in Canada and not a have-not province.

Premier, I think the fact that you're going headlong down this path with your smart meter tax machines shows how dramatically out of touch you have become with average, everyday families. We found out that this week, the McGuinty government flipped the switch to the expensive time-of-use setting on the two millionth smart meter. That means that some senior citizens will be living in a cold house, afraid to turn the heat on. It will mean that some young family will have all of the kids lined up by 7 a.m. to have their shower before the higher rates kick in.

Premier, are you so bound and determined to suck more money out of their pockets that you are going to do a million more?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I want to give credit to my colleague for his fanciful interpretation and his creativity. There's no shortage of innovation coming from the mind of my honourable colleague.

The fact of the matter is that we have smart meters in place because they're helping us to put in place a modern, efficient, reliable, clean, job-creating electricity system. I would encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at what they're doing in the United Kingdom, where the new Prime Minister there has decided to accelerate the program to put in smart meters throughout the country because, in fact, they have the desired and intended effect.

I also want to remind my honourable colleague that, as of the 1st of May, we have increased our discount period for electricity rates. We brought it down from 9 o'clock in the evening; it now begins at 7 o'clock in the evening. The discount period is now fully from 7 at night till 7 in the morning. That's another 10 hours every week of discounted electricity.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, you just don't get it. I'm talking about real senior citizens who come up to me with their hydro bill in their hand, their hand shaking, with sadness and anger in their eyes, saying that they

can't afford to pay the bills—real-life Ontario seniors who are living in cold houses because of your time-of-use smart meters that are nothing more than tax machines.

You've managed to raise rates on your smart meters eight times in five years alone. We understand from your meeting with caucus yesterday that you plan to continue increasing hydro rates and taxes on the backs of these same families.

Premier, if you don't understand what's happening in households, listen to the Ontario PC caucus. Will you pull the plug on your mandatory smart meter tax machines and give families a choice in this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I understand that my honourable colleague says these things with tremendous intensity and with his usual decibel level, but I don't believe him. I'm just going to be straight with you, Speaker: I don't believe him. I don't believe him, because he's wrong.

We put in place an intelligent, thoughtful, progressive plan to deal with our electricity needs. People need to remember that we came from a place where we were facing a desperate shortage of electricity in the province of Ontario. We've worked long and hard with Ontarians during the course of the past seven-plus years now.

It's not an easy thing to do, and there are costs associated with it; we've been up front with the people of Ontario about that. But we want to make sure that when they go to flick that switch, there's electricity there for them. We know there's a cost, so we've put in place a new clean energy benefit that's cutting 10% off of our electricity bills for the course of the next five years.

We're cleaning our air, keeping our bills down and creating thousands of jobs.

## SMART METERS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: Premier, I don't know what kind of bubble you're living in. We hear from families each and every day that say they can't afford the basics. They can't pay their hydro bills.

If you don't believe us, members of your own caucus should be telling you this, because we hear from families each and every day. The Ontario PCs will stand up for those families, we'll stand up for the seniors, and that's why we'll pull the plug on your mandatory smart meter tax machines.

Premier, if you don't believe me and you don't believe your own Liberal caucus, then listen to your hydro utilities. PowerStream, the second-largest hydro company in Ontario, has written to the Ontario Energy Board. They're asking for this experiment to be postponed because they say they're worried about "the impact of potential bill increases" on their customers.

Premier, if you won't listen to me, will you listen to the second-largest utility in the province that's saying no to your smart meter tax machines?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I just can't accept what my honourable colleague is introducing here as fact. I want

to remind my honourable colleague of where we found ourselves in 2002—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members, please come to order. We have a number of guests here today who want to hear both the questions and the answers.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to remind my honourable colleague where we found ourselves in 2003, and I want to remind him of something by way of a notice put up by the Independent Electricity System Operator. They said at the time: There are “significant strains on the power system. A large amount of electricity is being imported, but we still face possible shortages. Unless there is an immediate drop in consumption, we may be required to take protective actions, which could include voltage reductions, or rotating cuts to supply without any additional notice.”

I remember that. My honourable colleague chooses not to remember that, but the fact was that we were in desperate circumstances.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, families are not bringing me hydro bills from 10 years ago. They’re bringing me hydro bills from 2011, and they’re saying, “Tim, I can’t pay these bills, and I can’t afford these smart meter tax machines that are forcing families to have all the kids showered by 7 a.m.”

The Premier just blithely rejects it. He says he’s not hearing about hydro bills when he goes across the province. That might be why he regally declared that Saturdays will now be laundry days across our province, to cope with your smart meter tax machines.

Premier, will you at least listen to PowerStream? Will you at least listen to the other utilities that are saying, “This is not broken”? Will you do what we would do and pull the plug on your mandatory smart meter tax machines?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I want to remind my honourable colleague, so that he can pass on this information to Ontarians, that there are now 10 extra hours a week of lower prices. I’d also recommend to my honourable colleague that he take a look at the example bill put out by the Ontario Energy Board just recently, which speaks in detail and in fact about what’s happened to our bills in Ontario.

I’d also recommend to my honourable colleague that at some point in time he tell Ontarians by how much he intends to reduce their electricity bills. We’re reducing them by 10%. It would be interesting to know if, at some point in time, they have some kind of a plan that goes beyond burning coal, that goes beyond ripping up contracts that we’ve entered into for clean energy and getting rid of all those jobs. At some point in time, he may want to introduce his plan to the people of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, the Premier is moving from being out of touch to bordering on arrogance. He expects

us to dance in the streets now that he has decreed that we get 10 extra hours, a whole week—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The comments that I just made to the opposition about hearing the other side: I offer the same comments to the government side as well. We do have guests who want to hear both questions and answers.

Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Premier, not too long ago, regally declared that Saturdays shall henceforth be laundry days in our province, and now with the same tone he declares we get 10 extra hours, a whole week of lower rates.

Premier, the Ontario PCs believe that Ontario families deserve better, and that’s why we’ll pull the plug on your mandatory smart machines that are taking more and more money out of Ontario families’ pockets. It’s not simply PowerStream, Premier; 28 local hydro companies—over one third—have called for relief from switching on the switch to the most expensive time-of-use rates. That’s why we pulled the plug.

Premier, don’t you get it? Why won’t you do the same?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that my honourable colleague likes to pay close attention to political events beyond Ontario, and I’m sure he’s paying attention to what has happened in the United Kingdom. I just want to quote something that was put out by that government: “The rollout of smart meters will play an important role in Britain’s transition to a low-carbon economy, and help us meet some of the long-term challenges we face in ensuring an affordable, secure and sustainable energy supply.”

**1050**

Again, I’d encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at what has, in fact, happened to smart meters as they are being used today in BC, Quebec, the US, Italy, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia and Ireland. I could go on, but the fact of the matter is, we’re moving ahead to put in place a progressive, intelligent, affordable, reliable clean electricity system that is creating jobs.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. During the federal election, the Premier said that he wanted a new national health accord and that he wants to see reforms. Ontario families are already concerned about the state of health care in this province. They want some specifics from the Premier. What does he want to see reformed?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I hope that we’ll have some support from my honourable colleague when it comes to our new engagement with the federal government on putting in place a new 10-year accord. I know that the present arrangement expires in 2014. We’re absolutely convinced that we can put to bed a new arrangement by the end of 2012, and I hope I would have my honourable

colleague's support in ensuring that we come to the table with a single-minded purpose, and that is to ensure that we secure medicare for the future. We're not going to be defenders of the status quo when it comes to our medicare system, but we do insist that we maintain medicare in a way that ensures that it evolves, that we introduce reforms so that it's there for our children and our grandchildren. I hope I have my honourable colleague's support in that matter.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Given the Premier's track record, Ontarians have every right to worry. They've seen first-hand this government's approach to health care. Services have been cut, delisted, privatized. Families are not getting the health care they need and deserve. But instead of doing his job and delivering for Ontarians right here at home, he is musing about a new national health care accord. When will he turn his attention to the immediate health care needs of Ontario families?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to remind my honourable colleague just a little bit about our record. She knows that we're building 18 new hospitals. She knows that we've hired 11,000 more nurses. She knows we have 2,900 more doctors. She knows we have 200 new family health teams. She knows we're putting in place 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics. She knows that we now have the shortest wait times in the country. But what she may not know is something we announced just this morning: We are expanding pharmacy services for seniors and social assistance recipients. They now are going to have more access to free consultations with their local pharmacists.

Seniors, in particular, can have a challenge when it comes to dealing with all their medications, and sometimes they end up in the hospital because of a mix-up. We want to make sure we address that issue. We're inviting seniors to go in and visit their pharmacist. We're now providing a new free service to help them ensure they're taking the right drugs in the right way.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** We're getting a real sense of the Premier's election strategy, his re-election strategy: He's going to try to position himself as the great defender of Ontario's interests. He's going to be glossing over—

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I could shorten the member from Simcoe North's stay in this House.

In all sincerity, we do know that there's going to be an election, but to start making direct comments at other members in this House as to who's here and who's not going to be here—I can honestly say that I won't be here, but I don't need to hear shots being delivered across the floor at one another, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** With those kinds of displays, Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That's not helpful from the member from Renfrew.

Please continue.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, these guys are so out of touch, they don't even get sarcasm when they see it. The Premier is going to be glossing over his own record by diverting attention to the federal government, but the issue is, why isn't he spending his time, his focus, his attention, on the health care needs of everyday families in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** That's what we've been doing for eight years, and I think, by any objective measure, we've made significant strides forward.

What I would invite my honourable colleague to understand is that we are always at our best when we work together. We need a strong federal partner who's not only committed to ensuring that we have additional funding to accommodate the growing pressures within our health care system, but we are also looking for a partner in Ottawa who's committed to medicare, who believes in universality, who believes that every Canadian from coast to coast to coast, as they say, receives the same high-quality health care within the framework of the medicare system that we have created here inside the country.

I think my honourable colleague might want to join me in that particular regard, to ensure that as we make progress inside the province, we also put in place a new deal that will last us for the next 10 years.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Back to the Premier: Here's the problem with the Premier's position: His government has little credibility left on the health care file. They have slashed services. They have delisted others. They have closed ERs. They have reduced front-line staff. Now the Premier wants to negotiate a new health accord. How can Ontarians have faith that this Premier is up to doing that job?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I say with the greatest respect to my honourable colleague, I'm not sure how far she's going to get pursuing that line of attack.

I think, by any objective assessment, we have made real, measurable improvement. Funding alone has been increased by over 50% since 2003.

Again, I'll go through the list for my honourable colleague: 18 new hospitals; 11,000 more nurses; 2,900 more doctors. We had zero family health teams; now we're up to 200: They're looking after three million patients. We have 25 nurse practitioner-led clinics; 10,000 more long-term-care beds. We've got 176 new drugs that we've added to the public drug plan. We've increased breast cancer screening by 90,000 more through this particular—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In communities across Ontario, it's families who are coping with the consequences

of this government's health care failings. I have to state them again, clearly. Emergency rooms are closing. Nurses are being let go. Long waits for long-term-care beds do exist. Seniors are being forced to pay to stay in the hospital. Home care has been privatized.

Given the litany of the health care problems created by this government, does the Premier actually believe he's the best person to negotiate on Ontario's behalf?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I would argue that, as I said many times before, for our province leadership is not an option. I would argue that we have been commissioned by history to play a leadership role in the continuing evolution of this great country, and there's an important debate that we're about to enter upon right now, which is the future of our health care system—in fact, the very future of medicare itself.

Again, I would invite my honourable colleague to join with me and in fact, I believe, the people of Ontario, in ensuring that we secure a new arrangement with the federal government that not only accommodates our financial pressures but also ensures that we can look our children and grandchildren in the eye and say, "The benefits that we enjoyed under our medicare system: We worked hard to ensure they are there for you and for your children as well."

I think that's our shared responsibility, and I invite my honourable colleague to join me in that regard.

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

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**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In his public musings, the Premier said he wants a new 10-year health accord. Ontario has an election in five months. At that time, Ontarians will decide who they want to trust on the health care file. Since the Premier has no mandate whatsoever to start negotiations, will he at least agree to do the respectful thing and wait for the verdict of Ontarians?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague is suggesting that we should somehow put down our tools when it comes to fighting for medicare for the future. That is something we are never, ever prepared to do.

Again, I would have thought that when it comes to my honourable colleague and the New Democratic tradition, which she represents in the province of Ontario, there'd be very little daylight between us in this regard. I thought that I would have her support when it comes to making representations to the federal government to ensure that we begin work as soon as possible to cobble together a new arrangement, a new agreement that secures medicare for the future.

Again, I invite my honourable colleague to join us in this quest to protect medicare for the future.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is to the Premier. Premier McGuinty is so out of touch that he's the only one in Ontario who believes that hydro bills have gone down. He should take a look behind him and he'll see all

the startled faces in his Liberal caucus. Every time the Premier says that hydro bills have flatlined, it looks to us like it's the members of the Liberal caucus who have flatlined over there. Even they aren't buying what Premier McGuinty is selling, and they know they can't sell such an absurd proposition to Ontario families at the door.

Why should Ontario families believe what Premier McGuinty says about hydro bills when even his own Liberal family doesn't believe him?

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

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member and his leader continue to try to make things up here in this Legislature. The reason for that is the Ontario Energy Board, a couple of weeks ago, blew their cover. The fact of the matter is, according to the Ontario Energy Board, bills have stabilized over the last year. Bills are flat. Those members may not want to admit that because the facts get in the way of a story for them, but the facts are the facts.

Bills are going down. Our clean energy benefit is having the desired effect. All the while, we're building a strong, clean, reliable, modern energy system, and they've been resisting that every step of the way because they want to take us back to their dirty old days of a dirty, unreliable and outdated system. Ontarians don't want to go there.

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

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** The fact that Premier McGuinty gave his caucus an emergency pep talk yesterday shows that he knows no one is buying his absurd line that hydro bills are the same this year as last. The Premier is so out of touch, he said he's sticking to his guns and putting it on the heads of his caucus to sell his hydro increases. No wonder there are so many gloomy faces over there. My guess is, he called the media into his emergency pep talk yesterday to buffer himself from Liberal caucus members who know that Ontario families will punish them at the door if they try to make this turkey fly at the doorstep.

Premier, why won't you give Ontario families a break from your hydro rate increases and, at the same time, give your caucus a break from this incredibly embarrassing situation?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The only political parties that don't want to give families a break on their energy rates are those guys, because they don't support the clean energy—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I'd say to a number of ministers that one of your ministerial colleagues is trying to answer a question and you are shouting across the floor, drowning out your own minister. I can't hear your minister because of the interjections. I'd ask you to be respectful of your own caucus.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The only parties in this Legislature that don't support helping Ontario families out with their energy bills are the Tories and the NDP, who don't support our clean energy benefit that's stabilizing rates.

Let's go back to the old days and what that very member had to say back then about their energy system. This is what he said—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** My comments again hold true to both sides of the House. One of your colleagues just asked a question. I think he would like to hear what the minister has to say.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** As quickly as I can: "This summer when we didn't have enough electricity in this province because we hit peak high temperatures and all the air conditioners were running, we had to buy power.... I had to pay \$7 million one day to keep the air conditioners on in our hospitals." According to that member opposite—this is what he said: "That was highway robbery."

That was their system. We're building a clean, reliable, modern system that Ontario families can count on. They don't support it, but that's what—

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

#### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Can the Premier explain why his government voted down the number one recommendation from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions to move mental health services for children and youth to the Ministry of Health?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to speak about this important issue. I couldn't be prouder to be part of a government who issued a recent budget that put children's mental health back on the map. The investments that we are making in children's mental health are historic, and I am so pleased to be working with my colleagues the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care as we find a way to make sure that we use that significant historic investment to its wisest; to make sure that we get services out to the front line; to make sure we respond to the needs of children and families right across this province.

That's where our focus is. We're focused on service delivery, on getting those wait times down and on giving the kids and families the very services that they need.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If you want those dollars to pay dividends, you have to bring children's mental health under the Ministry of Health. These are not kids with bad behaviours; these are kids who are sick. They have a mental illness. We're talking about kids who are suicidal, kids who are cutting themselves, kids who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. These kids are suffering, and they are not getting the care they need because they don't have that behaviour. They are sick and they belong under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Can the minister explain today, during Children's Mental Health Week, to those kids who are dealing with mental health issues why you're turning your back on them and why the Liberal members of the select committee voted against their own recommendation?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Frankly, I thought the member opposite understood this issue more than she does, for her to say that we are turning our backs on children in this province.

I, too, have travelled across the province and had an opportunity to speak to families about what they need. They need us to deliver these services in a way that doesn't stigmatize kids, that makes sure that the services are close to home, and that makes sure that we speak to the issues that families are calling upon.

I would suggest to her that she needs to take a look at those experts that are out in the field that have given us good advice. I'll talk about Gordon Floyd, the president and CEO of Children's Mental Health Ontario: "We've heard for years promises about investments to children's mental health to close the gap and shorten the waiting lines and this government has put it forward." We are the government that is going to make historic steps when it comes to ensuring that services are available for kids. We're very proud—

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

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We know how important our publicly funded universal health care system is to the people of Ontario. We also know that as we move forward, there are always opportunities for us to strengthen our cherished and vitally important public health care system. As a matter of fact, this government has already taken a number of significant steps in improving the quality of care for Ontarians while finding efficiencies to reinvest in more and better front-line care across the province.

Minister, as you know well, there have been numerous significant investments for hospitals in my community of Ottawa, as there have been across the province. But Minister, while the McGuinty government has made remarkable progress in rebuilding and reinvesting in our health care infrastructure and capabilities, can you please tell us how we have been improving the quality of care for Ontario's patients to ensure the system is—

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thanks to the member from Ottawa Centre for this very important question. The only way we can preserve our cherished universal health care system is to make the changes that are necessary so it's there for our kids and for our grandkids. The status quo is simply not an option.

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One of the steps we've taken is the Excellent Care for All Act. This is legislation that helps refocus our health

care system, refocus our efforts on high-quality care for patients. It requires our health care partners, starting with hospitals, to create quality committees, to look at quality indicators, to make sure that patients and that staff are taken into the conversation around those quality indicators. They have to develop and post quality improvement plans. And, Speaker—

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

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** This focus on excellent quality health care is an incredibly valuable goal for Ontario's patients. We know that our citizens fundamentally want a system that is not only strong, well equipped and capable; they also want a system that is compassionate and focused on helping Ontarians, not just during their greatest times of need but also serving them throughout their life.

As the minister said, we need to have a sustainable system if we hope to continue achieving these goals. I know from speaking with my constituents that they ask us to ensure that it is efficient by achieving savings now and also by making smart investments to improve our overall health, saving future costs, not to mention improving people's quality of life.

Minister, this government has taken large steps to find efficiencies in our health care system, which have allowed us to invest in front-line care for Ontarians. Can you tell the House about some of the ways that—

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to talk about some of the ways we're getting better value for our health care dollars. We're now saving \$500 million each year because we lowered the price of generic drugs. This has helped us fund 35 new cancer drugs. We've expanded the number of bariatric surgeries being performed right here in Ontario so that we don't need to send patients out of country to receive that care. That's saving us an estimated \$45 million this year. By investing in more vaccinations for children, we're going to save significant health costs down the road.

We're also serious about preventing illness through health promotion. The causes here are straightforward: poor diet, lack of activity, and smoking. We're taking steps to keep Ontarians healthy and get them healthier.

We're finding many ways to get better value for our taxpayer dollars. This is work—

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

#### SMART METERS

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Premier. A smart meter tax revolt is under way to put a stop to Premier McGuinty increasing hydro bills before he increases them again. PowerStream, the local hydro company in my riding, has joined the smart meter tax revolt. They say that they are taking up the fight against your smart

meter tax machines to "mitigate the impact of potential business bill increases."

Will you stop driving up hydro bills with your expensive tax machines before small businesses are driven out of the province? Or are you so out of touch that you'll only stop once they are completely driven out of business?

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

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We all know the member opposite very, very well, and I would think that she would want her constituents to be very well-informed on these issues. I think it's important that all Ontarians are well-informed on these issues. I certainly invite her to my office and would be happy to brief her on the Ontario Energy Board report last week, which indicated, indeed, for those on time-of-use and those who are not yet on time-of-use—that their bills are flatlined over last year. That's because of our clean energy benefit.

She may want to mention to her constituents as well that she and her party did not support that clean energy benefit. That's why they're afraid to share their plan with Ontario families, because the first piece of their plan is to jack bills up by 10% as they cancel our clean energy benefit. That is not in the interest of her—

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

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Families have joined the smart meter tax revolt; small businesses have joined. Now even 28 of the local hydro companies themselves are joining. But you are sticking to your guns, enforcing mandatory time-of-use on millions of families and businesses anyway.

It shouldn't take a smart meter tax revolt to get a break. An Ontario PC government would take a different path and look for ways to give families relief from the skyrocketing hydro bills. Why are you continuing down the same path of hydro increases that are making families go broke and small businesses go bankrupt?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member opposite can twist it, torque it and talk about information that is not accurate all she wants, but the fact of the matter is, the Ontario Energy Board does not have that luxury. The Ontario Energy Board is a regulatory agency, and what they have said is that indeed bills are flat from last year. They have been stabilized as a result of our clean energy benefit. So rather than talk about information that's not factual, the member should be letting her constituents know about that.

The member should be explaining to her constituents why she doesn't support the 10% reduction that we put in place for Ontario families' bills. It's saving Ontario families \$150 a year, stabilizing their bills, and you don't support that.

I can understand why she's not comfortable with this issue—

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

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, you will know that Dubreuilville is a com-

munity that totally relies on the forest industry for its survival. At a reception last night, you ran across Louise Perrier, the mayor of Dubreuilville, and she asked you directly if you're prepared to intervene to make sure that the wood that your minister took away from that community will be reallocated to that community in order to continue. Will you intervene, and will you make sure that Dubreuilville gets the wood it needs so that it can continue to survive?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Certainly the Premier spoke to me earlier about the opportunity he had to meet with Mayor Perrier, and I welcome her and others from Dubreuilville.

As the member knows, the wood supply competition which we put in place has put back to work about 2.5 million cubic metres of wood that has not been harvested for some time—and we're very excited about that—and also created or retained over 1,500 jobs in a number of communities across northern Ontario. We had a chance last week to make two more announcements, and we have more to come.

Having said that, we are incredibly sensitive to the challenges facing those communities such as Dubreuilville that were not successful in terms of the wood supply competition.

I also had an opportunity to meet with Mayor Perrier yesterday. May I say that her hard-working member, the MPP for Algoma–Manitoulin, Mr. Brown, has been extremely aggressive about supporting the community. We're working together to try to find a very positive solution for the community.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Premier, can I have your attention? Thank you. The mayor of Dubreuilville asked you, the top person in the government, to intervene. She has not got satisfaction through the ministry. The ministry has taken away her wood. The question was: Are you prepared, as Premier, to intervene to make sure the community gets the wood that was taken away from them?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** We are engaged in very good discussions with Mayor Perrier. We are working together on dealing with the challenge that has faced the community related to the fact that under the wood supply competition, there were some communities that were successful and some that were not. We had a very positive meeting yesterday. The Premier did speak to me this morning. Mr. Brown, the MPP for Algoma–Manitoulin, has been very aggressively looking for a solution, and we are doing everything we can. I think if you speak to the mayor, she will indicate that indeed we had positive discussions yesterday.

There is no question that there's a real challenge. We have some extraordinarily good news related to the wood supply competition in communities all across northern Ontario, but there are challenges associated with the fact that not all communities were successful.

I will continue to work closely with the mayor and the community to do what we can to see a positive resolution of this challenge for the community.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, I thought that one thing that we all agreed on in this House was making sure that our kids had clean air to breathe. The opposition's call for a moratorium on renewable energy shows that that's not the case. We know they didn't believe it eight years ago when they increased coal emissions 124%.

My constituents in Ottawa–Orléans know that developing renewable energy is the right thing to do for cleaner air and more local jobs. But they want to know if it's true that once a company announces a new project—do the municipalities and the public have any say?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Under the law and under the Green Energy Act and the regulations, it's indeed the case that both the public and municipalities have their say. We've been very clear that we will say no unless municipalities and the public have been given their say. That's why we use that process.

Interestingly, my ministry has received some 45 applications for proposed wind projects, and 24 have been rejected. Why? Because there has not been sufficient consultation, both with the public and the municipality.

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We say to our municipal partners, "We need your feedback and we'll take it whatever way that you want to provide it, but it is important for you to let us know what are the concerns of your municipalities."

We want to be very, very clear that people have a right to clean air but they also have the right to a good night's sleep, and we need to hear people's concerns so we can address them in any approval.

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

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Minister, I know that my constituents will be pleased to hear you correct that misconception. I'm glad to hear you confirm that there are clear setbacks and a clear process for municipal consultation, and that municipal consultation is embedded right in the approvals process for any other renewable project.

Some residents are also concerned, however, that our stringent 40-decibel limit for wind turbines might be exceeded and that there is nothing they can do about it. Will the minister tell us why he is unwilling or unable to follow up on these calls from local residents?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** The reason there is a Minister of the Environment is to protect human health. That's what we do, each and every day. We want to tell people that if they have concerns about any project, concerns about a wind turbine, they can call our ministry.

There was a recent report that said that in the last couple of years, with some 800 turbines in the province of Ontario, we received some 757 complaints, but they came from 50 individuals, primarily from 20 individuals.

We take all of those calls very, very seriously. That's why we've taken action. We'll continue to take action until the calls stop, because we expect wind turbine companies to be good neighbours. The vast majority of them

want to be good neighbours, but they know that the Ministry of the Environment has ultimate say about their ability to produce renewable energy, which we want, and therefore they pay attention. When we call them, it's because their neighbours are calling us, and we take the calls of the neighbours very, very seriously.

### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Education. I have an open letter sent to you and the Premier from Gord Taylor, president of the Ontario School Bus Association. In it, Mr. Taylor expresses OSBA's increasing concern about your new school transportation procurement policy and its threat to the sustainability of the industry.

He states, "We had a clear understanding that the ministry would set the ground rules of this transition. That has not happened. Instead, the worst-case scenario is happening." And then he goes on to say that that includes a lack of transparency, accountability and full disclosure of the results to all involved.

Both busing organizations are now telling you that the new policy is a failure. Will you respond to their demand to put an immediate halt to the new policy and meet with them to get it right?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm happy to have the opportunity to say in the House that both the Premier and I have had the opportunity to meet with leadership of the school bus operators' association, so we are very aware of their issues.

The honourable member would know that the Provincial Auditor has provided us with some clear direction around how we engage services. The Provincial Auditor has some comments about sole-sourced contracts, and that is why the process that is used by school boards to engage them—we are looking to improve that.

We are definitely open to working with bus operators on this. That is why, as well, we have chosen to move forward in a piloted way, and we are going to look very carefully at the results from the pilots. We want to ensure, moving forward, that we are—

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

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Again to the Minister of Education: Both groups are telling you to immediately suspend your process. It is threatening the livelihood of the school bus operators as well as the entire industry.

You talk about the pilots. Well, the results are in: The Wellington-Dufferin pilot project resulted in 103 of the 105 routes being stripped from Ontario's small businesses and given to multinationals. I have heard from families who are concerned about the fact that you're not addressing the issue now.

I ask you again, on behalf of the independents and the school bus association, who are desperately concerned: Will you put a stop to your new flawed policy and meet with them to develop a new plan?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Again, meeting with bus operators is something that we have done and I've committed to do going forward.

I think it's important for the people of Ontario to appreciate that with the pilot the honourable member referenced, there were also small bus operators who actually gained routes in that process. So they're telling one part of the story.

That being said, I will say that with respect to the second pilot, we have made some changes to the process—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Sorry, Minister. The member from Durham, the member from Oxford and the member from Simcoe North will please come to order. The member from Halton.

Minister?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** What we want to ensure going forward is that boards are able to engage those faithful, reliable services to carry children to school in a cost-effective way. We have been working with bus operators. We are committed to continuing to do so going forward so that boards will be able to provide safe transportation to their schools for all of their students.

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. A US company wants to build the second-largest quarry in North America near Shelburne, which would destroy productive farmland and could threaten the area's water, right at the headwaters of rivers that provide drinking water for more than a million Ontarians.

The government has extended the short 45-day public comment period for this project by about 30 days, but submissions received after April 26 will not even get a response. Why is this government limiting public consultation and refusing to allow a full environmental assessment of this massive and potentially destructive project?

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

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I understand that there's been local concern expressed about the aggregate licence application from Highland Companies in Melancthon township. I can confirm that our local district office has received the licence application.

I want to make it really clear: This is only the beginning of the Aggregate Resources Act process. While legally I cannot extend the comment period, I did mention that I wanted to consider comments outside of the official objection period. As I've stated in the House, I can confirm that I have extended the EBR comment period now to 120 days in order to accommodate any of those additional comments.

As I said, it's early in the process. We want to hear from municipalities and neighbours because we understand that local citizens are concerned with the project and they want to be involved in the consultation process. We get it.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Ontarians want the government to do more to protect our watershed. They don't just want to be listened to; they want to be talked to as well. They want responses to their submissions.

Over 1,400 people are urging greater protection of waters in the Oak Ridges moraine—and I'll pass the evidence of those 1,400 people over to the Premier by way of Jonathan, the page—yet the McGuinty government is allowing this US company to dig a 2,400-acre quarry deeper than Niagara Falls without a full environmental assessment.

Why won't the government designate this project as an undertaking under the Environmental Assessment Act and require a full environmental assessment with full public participation before this project is approved?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** As I stated earlier, this is the very beginning of the process. What I have done is I've listened to the residents. I spoke with the mayor. I spoke with the member in the Conservative Party who questioned me on this issue.

I'm not sure why you can't take yes for an answer. The request was, "Can you extend the period?" I have extended the period for people to participate in the process. It's the beginning of the process. We have to talk to all of the residents, and there is an opportunity for the municipality to work with us to try to resolve as many objections as possible. We have extended the process. I've provided that evidence in the newspaper. I've provided it in an editorial to the community.

Even before the application was submitted, I knew that it was the subject of many local petitions and interest. I know the residents are—

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

#### LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** My question's for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. In recent months, there has been significant public discussion regarding the necessity of continued support for literacy skills training in Ontario. Many community groups came forward requesting additional support for their programs, and there were concerns that federal funding would be eliminated as it was scheduled to end in March of this year. At that time, I had asked you how we planned on providing the needed support for these essential services in our communities.

1130

As you know, there are approximately 300 sites across the province delivering literacy and basic skills programs. In my riding of Sault Ste. Marie, there are a number of local organizations that provide basic skills training for adult learners through organizations such as the Algoma District School Board, the Huron-Superior board, Sault College, the Indian Friendship Centre and Program Read. Minister, what steps have been taken to ensure the continued support of literacy skills training in our local communities?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I appreciate the question from the member and I appreciate the support from all members of the House who have come to me to express concern about the need for increased literacy training in the province of Ontario, particularly during the period of the recession.

Through a partnership with the federal government, we were able to invest more in terms of literacy training over the last two years. Despite my efforts in making presentations to the federal government and the support of many literacy providers in going forward to the federal government, that funding was discontinued on March 31.

I was very pleased, however, that our government, in the most recent budget, came forward with a \$44-million commitment to literacy training over the next three years, including an additional \$13 million a year in base budget increases for literacy providers across the province, including, of course—

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

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** Minister, I want to thank you for your leadership on this issue. I was pleased to see funding devoted to these much-needed literacy and basic skills programs announced in our government's 2011 budget.

Providing individuals with the tools to improve their knowledge and skills contributes in a positive way to their overall quality of life. Higher levels of literacy raise an individual's employment opportunities and provide them with the opportunity to apply for better-paying jobs. Higher levels of literacy are also associated with higher levels of involvement in various community groups and organizations and in volunteering activities. Ensuring that all Ontarians have the opportunity to upgrade their skills is one of the best investments we can make. Not only does it help people succeed in their career goals but it builds a strong foundation for our local economy.

Minister, what specifically are we doing to provide support to our literacy groups, and how will we make sure that these services are available for those who need them most?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Let me share some statistics with the House—with the honourable member and the House—about support within northern Ontario. This funding is going to help northern Ontario literacy providers.

Right now, adults can get help with literacy and basic skills for free at 83 sites in northern Ontario, including colleges, school boards and community-based organizations. In northern Ontario, these organizations that deliver literacy and basic skills training are receiving more than \$14 million to help 8,366 learners this year.

In the riding of Sault Ste. Marie, over \$1.2 million will be provided to the six organizations referenced, helping an additional 964 learners. This additional funding will support Ontarians who are looking to upgrade their skills and move on to—

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

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR  
THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY  
TO ANIMALS

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Attorney General. Once again, I rise to call into question the mismanagement and unjust actions by a McGuinty government agency.

Recently, in the case of Ralph Hunter, a resident of Iroquois, the Ontario Court of Justice dismissed the charges and admonished the actions of the OSPCA and their inspector, Bonnie Bishop. Once again, rural Ontarians are being harassed to the point where the actions of the OSPCA are violating our charter rights to be secure against unreasonable search and seizure. Minister, when will this government finally hold the OSPCA to account and show rural Ontario that the abusive actions against Mr. Hunter will not be tolerated?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** As you would know, the OSPCA is responsible for, in the province of Ontario, enforcing the laws which, I think, members of this House agreed to some time ago.

I think it would be totally inappropriate for me to comment on matters that have been before the court because, as the member knows—and if he were to consult people who have been either the Attorney General or the Solicitor General of the province of Ontario in years gone by, he would know—it is inappropriate, particularly where there may be an appeal that might take place, for a minister of the crown to comment one way or another on these situations.

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

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll put it back to the Attorney General. My honourable colleague from Newmarket–Aurora brought a motion to this House that your government voted against, a motion that would have reviewed the powers and the authority delegated to the OSPCA and would have provided much-needed oversight. It is nothing new for this government to ignore the mismanagement and the abuse by its agencies, boards and commissions. However, when the actions of OSPCA officials are admonished by the courts on the grounds of being unconstitutional, such abuses reach a new low.

We have seen this growing trend with your government that believes justice is optional—just ask Roy McMurtry. When will this government take responsibility and show rural Ontarians that their privacy and property will be—

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

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I have been reading certain publications that have had some rather startling revelations that would be perhaps embarrassing to the government caucus—sorry, to the Conservative caucus. Annoying, perhaps, to the government caucus, but embarrassing to the Conservative caucus. This is the member who persuaded his leader, as a condition of supporting him for the leadership, to—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Answer the bloody question, Jim.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Lanark: You just asked the question. You know the standing orders in the House. After you have heard the answer and you're not satisfied, you can call for a late show.

Minister?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** This is the member, I can say, that persuaded his leader, as a condition of support for leadership, to agree to abolish—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I just want to caution the minister to stick to answering the question and not—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Lanark will withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Speaker, I'll withdraw when that minister withdraws.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** An unequivocal withdrawal.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll withdraw, and I would expect the same from that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm going to give you one last opportunity—just an unequivocal withdrawal.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll withdraw.

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

CHILDREN'S MENTAL  
HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Tatiana is a single mother in my community whose son needs constant care. Her son Radu is non-verbal and high-needs. His day program at school ends in June. He's come to the end of those programs. She has no alternative. She will have to quit work and go on welfare to look after him.

Money has been pledged for children's mental health, but no program exists now to give this family the help it needs. Will you, Minister, see that this mother can continue to work and this young man can receive care by directing your staff to use the money allocated?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services, please.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to talk about—yes, again—the investments that our government will be making in children's mental health. We know that this is a significant need in many communities across the province. We're very proud of the record that we have of putting kids first when it comes to ensuring that we build a bright future in this province. Investments like the Ontario child benefit—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Hamilton East would please return to his seat and withdraw the comment that he made.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I withdraw.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Minister, I appreciate the commentary. The situation we face is, the mother is exhausted. She really is coming to the end of her rope on this. Very soon, she will have to quit her job to look after her son full-time.

Can you commit that your staff will work with the family and do all they can to ensure that the supports are in place when this young man no longer can go to the daycare programs that she has depended on?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'll take the question as one that the member opposite wants to advocate on behalf of his constituent, and I appreciate that advocacy. I would suggest to him that the best place to advocate for our constituents is not always on the floor during question period. I certainly look forward to an opportunity to look into this issue.

I'm very pleased at the initiatives that our government has taken. We've invested in child care, we've invested in the Ontario child benefit, we've invested in a great deal of services for kids and families, and we've focused on women's economic independence to make sure that women can go out into the workforce and make sure that they have an envelope of support around them. The members opposite have not always supported us in these initiatives.

I certainly take the member at his word, that he looks to advocate for his constituent. I look forward to more details with respect to this issue and having an opportunity to focus on this. But I certainly do look for his support as we move forward with a number of other initiatives when it comes to supporting kids. I hope that the New Democratic Party will support us because often, in the past, they have not.

#### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** My question is for the Minister of Education. More than ever, our students are going to require the specialized skills needed to ensure their success in an ever-changing economy. They need these skills to meet the demands that will be placed upon them in a competitive and fast-paced job market in the future. We all agree that we need to ensure that students excel in school in order to become successful members of Ontario's workforce. It's important to me and my constituents in Peterborough that students in Peterborough have the opportunities to achieve the best results for themselves and our economy.

Minister, I'm hearing from constituents that it is difficult to get highly skilled trades workers. What is our government doing to help ensure our young people are prepared to go on to an apprenticeship, college or university?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Actually, our government is committed to ensuring that we prepare students for lives in skilled trades and technology, and that is why we introduced and have implemented the specialist high-

skills-major programs in our secondary schools. I'm happy to say that over 34,000 students will be participating in over 1,300 programs offered in more than 600 secondary schools. Those numbers speak to the fact that this is a program that is taking off in our secondary schools.

Yesterday, I was at RIM Park at the Skills Canada performance; it was an exhibition of students from these programs who were showing off their skills. They're going to go on and become a part of our workforce and help build the economy of Ontario. We're very proud of the students who graduate from these programs.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to correct my record in regard to part one of question five. What I should have said is that the government has extended their short, 45-day public comment period for this project by 75 days. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That is a point of order. The honourable member is allowed to correct his or her own record.

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

*The House recessed from 1143 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Ça me fait plaisir de vous présenter des personnes qui seront décorées dans quelques instants par le lieutenant-gouverneur; des personnes qui ont contribué à la francophonie de la province de l'Ontario. Ce sont M<sup>me</sup> Mariette Dallaire, MM. Yves Saint-Denis et Félix Saint-Denis—le père et le fils, une première mondiale—M. Alain Baudot, M<sup>me</sup> Marguerite Martel et M. Jean-Marc Aubin, qui sont avec nous aujourd'hui dans la galerie du Président. Bienvenue ici même à Queen's Park.

**M. Phil McNeely:** J'aimerais introduire mon assistante, Anick Tremblay, qui est ici du bureau d'Ottawa-Orléans. Elle est ici aujourd'hui pour participer à la présentation des décorations de l'Ordre de la Pléiade.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member of Kingston and the Islands, to welcome to the members' gallery today Ann Bryan-McFie, president of the Kingston Professional Firefighters Association; Fred LeBlanc, president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association; and the other Ontario firefighters joining them. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Having been introduced by the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, I too would like to take this opportunity to welcome in the Speaker's gallery today the recipients of the Ordre de la Pléiade, recognizing their outstanding contributions to the French-speaking communities in the province.

I'd like to take this opportunity to ask all members to please join me in warmly welcoming our guests and thank them for the wonderful contributions they've made to the province of Ontario.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to welcome to the Speaker's gallery the family of René Piché, the member for Cochrane during the 32nd Parliament. Please join me in welcoming today his wife, Olga Piché; Louise Stevens, his daughter, and her husband, Frank, and their children, Jamie Sheremeta, Melissa Sheremeta, Dean Sheremeta, Renée Sheremeta and Jessica Piché; and also Robert Piché, his son, with his wife, Kathy.

They are here today as we pay tribute to René Piché's service to the Legislative Assembly and the citizens of Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park to the family.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This week is Education Week across the province of Ontario, and I will be introducing a private member's bill this afternoon designated to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional learning skills and work habits.

Let me explain. In an age where we have BlackBerrys, iPhones and iPads, information is virtually at our fingertips. It is no longer enough for students to simply learn information, facts and figures. We need to prepare our young people for the 21st century with 21st century skills. My bill will recognize students who have achieved and excelled at mastering the learning skills and work habits in the Ontario curriculum.

The 21st Century Skills Award emphasizes qualities such as individual initiative, personal responsibility and collaboration with others. Both educators and employers agree that these skills are necessary for individual and collective success in whatever field students choose in the future in our connected world.

The OECD has been supporting this work since 1997 while the Conference Board of Canada calls these qualities employability skills which are necessary to enter, stay in and progress in the world of work.

But at the heart of this award are our students, our children. We want to recognize their achievements and support them for success, and I trust all of my colleagues will support the bill this afternoon.

I wish to thank Nan Mantle, as well as her son Jacob Mantle; Kelli Cote, who's an educator; and Wilf Grey, a principal in one of the schools in my riding. I know they support this initiative and I want the members here to support it as well.

### HEARN GENERATING STATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The Hearn generating station in my riding is currently slated for demolition. The Hearn

generating station is a significant part of our history here in Toronto and Ontario and has the potential to be turned into a positive benefit to our community. It's an important part of Toronto's waterfront and landscape. In places like the United Kingdom, such sites have been converted into art galleries. It's owned by Ontario Power Generation and leased to Studios of America, who have the right to demolish it.

The Minister of Culture needs to act. He needs to initiate a process to assess and designate the building as a provincial heritage property. A bad lease signed by the government of Ontario should not be rewarded with the right to demolish a major piece of Ontario's heritage.

### PARKDALE UNITED CHURCH

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm pleased to share today an important milestone in Parkdale United Church in my riding of Ottawa Centre, which celebrated its 80th anniversary this past Sunday, on May 1, at a special service.

This church has a proud tradition of serving our community. Parkdale United was the driving force in the creation of Ottawa Neighbourhood Services back in 1932 and Ottawa West Community Support in the early 1970s. In addition, their In From the Cold program, which operates from October to March each year, provides hot meals and hospitality for up to 125 vulnerable individuals per week. I was proud to be part of a group of volunteers, just a few weeks ago, for that program.

Parkdale United also has a diverse intercultural congregation, and they're open and welcoming to all people. Each year, they also embrace this diversity through their annual Celebrating Our Cultures, where the congregation comes together to experience and learn the cultures, stories and history of their diverse community.

The church is also home to the Parkdale United Church Orchestra, the oldest continuous symphony orchestra in the city of Ottawa.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize some of the great people at Parkdale United Church: Rev. Dr. Anthony Bailey, who is truly a community leader in Ottawa; Evelyn Andrews of the church council; Melodee Lovering, youth and children's minister; Barbara Faught, pastoral care; Troy Cross, the music director; Jennifer Reid, the office administrator; and Khan Chao, the caretaker.

Congratulations to the Parkdale United Church for your service to our great community. Thank you very much.

### WINE INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to rise today to celebrate the bicentennial of the Ontario wine industry.

It is generally accepted that the father of Ontario's wine industry is Johann Schiller. In 1811, Schiller began making wine in what later became Cooksville, selling it to his friends and neighbours. A winery was later established on the same site. In 1867, Justin De Courtenay

took Ontario wine to the Paris Exposition from the first estate winery, Vin Villa on Pelee Island.

From these beginnings, the Ontario wine industry has grown and flourished. Our wines are internationally recognized for their quality. There are now more than 100 wineries in Ontario and about 6,000 people are employed in the wine and grape industry. The industry makes a significant contribution to our economy, to our agriculture and to tourism.

This evening we will be celebrating this milestone, and I want to thank the wineries who are here from Niagara, Pelee, the Lake Erie north shore and Prince Edward county. I also want to thank Jim Warren for his work on this project.

In this bicentennial year, I encourage all restaurants to carry a good selection of quality Ontario wines. I invite Ontarians to visit our wineries and wine regions. I encourage everyone to celebrate this milestone with a glass of great Ontario VQA wine.

1510

#### PENSION REFORM

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** People today are living longer, but they're retiring earlier. The baby boomers are also retiring, but the following generations are getting smaller. Populations are aging and there is a rising tide in the labour force of female participation and changing family structures. There are more people over the age of 65 than under the age of five.

What does this mean to the future of Canada's retirement income system, and where is it headed? Defined benefit plans have been hit by the perfect storm, and defined contribution plans are inadequate. The 2005 World Bank report said that retirement systems should be aligned with socioeconomic changes. Currently, we use RRSPs, but the approach is underutilized for those who are lower-income Canadians.

Today, although we are moving ahead both federally and provincially, we're working together, establishing a working group. There are a number of outstanding issues, primarily the CPP.

This evening we are going to ask the question: How big a priority is pension reform, and can we continue with what we've got? Patrick Longhurst, a pension expert, will discuss these issues at the Etobicoke Civic Centre. We need to understand what those options are, we need to know what is being discussed and we need to know where we're going and what we're going to do as we deal with an aging population and very few funds to support it.

#### TEACHERS

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** It is a pleasure for me to rise today on behalf of my PC leader, Tim Hudak, and the PC caucus to welcome members of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario to Queen's Park. ETFO members,

who work in 2,600 schools throughout Ontario, provide outstanding education and support to our students.

As a parent, I know that elementary teachers can have a profoundly positive impact on a young mind. Our teachers inspire, they lead through positive example, and they provide our youth with the opportunity to reach their potential. Every education system is only as strong as the people it has leading in the classroom. Teachers are the backbone of our strong education system. Today in Ontario, our teachers are classroom and community leaders; they're role models, friends, guidance counsellors and guardians.

Our party is committed to supporting our teachers and support workers in every possible way. We are firmly committed to strengthening our public education system for our students.

In closing, I'd like to welcome the ETFO organization to Queen's Park and thank every teacher and support worker in Ontario for their commitment to providing brighter futures to Ontario's youth. Let us always remember to put our students first.

#### SILFAB ONTARIO

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** On April 18, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and I had the opportunity of attending the grand opening of the Silfab Ontario solar panel manufacturing plant in my great riding of Mississauga-Brampton South. Silfab will immediately bring 71 jobs to the Mississauga community and will employ up to 200 once at its full capacity.

The Italy-based company Silfab was attracted to Ontario by the province's vibrant clean and green energy economy, and has made Mississauga the location of their first and only plant in North America. As our economy continues to turn the corner, Silfab's investment is just the latest endorsement of Ontario's strength as a global leader in clean and green energy.

This is terrific news for Mississauga families and Ontario's growing clean and green energy sector. This government is helping Mississauga to turn the corner and help grow our local economy, create good jobs and protect our environment.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** The 2011 budget contained great news for Ontario farmers. This government introduced the most significant made-in-Ontario agriculture program in 25 years. We made a commitment to make permanent the risk management program for the grain and oilseeds sector and to implement new risk management programs for Ontario's cattle, hog, veal and sheep sectors. In addition, we committed to a self-directed risk management program for the fruit and vegetable sectors.

The farmers in Chatham-Kent Essex know they are being heard. They said they needed predictable, stable and bankable funding, and we are delivering just that. Farmers can now count on stable financial support that

will help protect family farms and ensure that Ontarians continue to enjoy local healthy food.

The risk management plan is about building a foundation for a strong and prosperous agricultural food industry. Ontario's agricultural food industry contributes \$30 billion to the province's economy every year and provides over 700,000 jobs.

Agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility. I encourage the federal government to partner with the province and its farmers to support the risk management programs put in place by the province to bring much-needed stability, predictability and bankability to Ontario's agricultural sector.

#### SUPPORT STAFF APPRECIATION DAY

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I rise in the House today to commemorate Support Staff Appreciation Day as part of Education Week. Support Staff Appreciation Day was introduced over a decade ago by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation to recognize the invaluable contribution that support staff like secretaries, custodians, technicians and educational assistants make in helping our students achieve their potential. My own daughter Amanda is an educational assistant in the developmental services classroom at Oakridge Secondary in London.

It is essential to have the collaboration of everyone in the education community to build a better future for our children. This is demonstrated every day by the hard work and dedication of support staff working alongside our educators in schools to help foster a positive and supportive learning environment for students.

Our schools are much more than buildings, and we understand that it takes a collaborative approach, including the integral role of support staff, for students to succeed and learn. Today we stand with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation and the broader education community to recognize support staff appreciation across Ontario.

Happy Support Staff Appreciation Day, Amanda.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 160, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to occupational health and safety and other matters / *Projet de loi 160, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail et la Loi de 1997 sur*

*la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne la santé et la sécurité au travail et d'autres questions.*

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

##### BIG A AMUSEMENTS LTD. ACT, 2011

Mr. Delaney moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr47, An Act to revive Big A Amusements Ltd.

**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):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

##### TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SKILLS AWARD ACT, 2011

##### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE PRIX COMPÉTENCES POUR LE 21<sup>e</sup> SIÈCLE

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 190, An Act to create the Twenty-First Century Skills Award for school pupils / *Projet de loi 190, Loi créant le Prix Compétences pour le 21<sup>e</sup> siècle pour les élèves.*

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

*First reading agreed to.*

1520

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's very appropriate to introduce this in Education Week, and that is the intent. The bill allows the Minister of Education to confer an award known as the Twenty-First Century Skills Award to no more than one elementary school pupil and one secondary school pupil for each school board if, in the minister's opinion, a recipient has demonstrated the following skills in relation to schoolwork during the current school year: responsibility, organization, ability to work independently, collaboration, initiative, self-regulation and, if the pupil is enrolled in a French-language instruction unit, ability in oral French. The minister can also pay a bursary to a recipient of the award out of the ministry's budget.

I'd also like to thank Nan Mantle, Kelli Cote and Wilf Grey, all educators who have reviewed this bill. I appreciate their response.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

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

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

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 14 be waived.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

### RENÉ PICHÉ

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

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I rise on behalf of New Democrats and our leader, Andrea Horwath, in regard to René Piché, a person who was well known to myself and many people who come from the constituency in which I reside.

René was quite a colourful individual; that would be a good way of putting it. He was person who had a lot of vision when it came to what needed to be done in northern Ontario and somebody who said, "You know what? It ain't going to happen if I sit at home and wait for it to happen on its own," and decided at a very young age that you had to be active in democracy in order to be able to make things happen.

He first came to Kapuskasing some years ago, I believe back in the 1940s, from Cache Bay, just out of Sturgeon Falls. He went to Kapuskasing to find a job and thought he was going to find his success in life working in a paper mill. He decided, as did many others, that he didn't want to do that. He wanted to run his own businesses and became a very successful business person in the Kapuskasing area.

He started up a number of businesses, but the one that I think most people remember and hold close to their hearts is the Northern Times, which even writes about me every now and then. Can you imagine? The Northern Times was started by René and became quite a leader when it came to papers in northeastern Ontario. Eventually, he started up Norweb, which was a printing company that printed virtually every weekly paper in northeastern Ontario and, I would venture, a whole bunch more outside of the northeast.

In all of that time, he understood that you had to give back to your community, so he became involved in municipal politics, ran and was eventually elected as mayor. When he was mayor, he started up something called the mayors action group. We now know it as the

Northeastern Ontario Municipal Association, but it was novel for the time. I remember that as a young man growing up, at that time in my 30s or 20s—whatever it was—you'd hear about this mayors action group, and it was always synonymous with René Piché.

René was the chair of that organization for many years and, along with other municipal councillors from across the northeast, advocated for such things that were very—when you think about it, back then it was just like advocating for things like a Ministry of Northern Development and Mines as we know it today, back then the Ministry of Northern Affairs. René was the guy who headed up that whole push to have that ministry within the government of Ontario so that northerners could have their own ministry to deal with those issues that are so unique to northern Ontario.

He was also very instrumental, through this organization, along with others, in getting started the air ambulance service we know as Ornge today. It wasn't Ornge back then; it was air ambulance run by the ministry. But it became quite a success in being able to shuttle patients from hospital to hospital when it came to air transfer for critical transportation of patients in need.

As well—you wouldn't know this—but with regard to the island airport in Toronto, the mayors action group in northern Ontario said, "We need to have a hub so we can get close to the centre of Toronto," and advocated on behalf of southerners in order to develop the island airport. Quite frankly, that was done by René Piché and a number of mayors in northern Ontario because we understood that we need to have good communication, good transportation between the north and the south. Pearson has its place, but the island airport had a very special place when it came to coming down here. As a private pilot, I want to say I thank you because it's a great place to land—10 minutes from work and here you are.

In that whole time as mayor, he understood something. I've got to say to my good friends the Conservatives: He headed the Common Sense Revolution before there was ever a Common Sense Revolution. René headed up a number of initiatives in the town of Kapuskasing. I don't have the time to go through them, but it was about trying to bring the common sense approach to government that later was taken by the Conservatives under one by the name of Michael Harris. René had been there a long time before. I always wondered, did René have discussions with Michael back then, and is that where that all came from? I don't know. But it was known in Kapuskasing that René was a no-nonsense kind of guy. You either agreed with him strongly or you disagreed with him strongly, but one thing was sure: René was going to get it done. There are people to this day who see him as one of the most effective mayors we've had in Kapuskasing. There are others who view it differently because they may have been on the opposite side of a fight.

Something that a lot of people don't know: He was a professional firefighter for five years. I didn't realize that until I read his bio. I'm not going to go through the story,

but he had lots of dealings with the fire department. I think a lot of people may not have appreciated that he was a firefighter at one time.

He then ran successfully for Parliament, was elected and came here to the Legislature. He was here for about five years, if I remember correctly. He was one of those who got caught in the sweep as the Conservatives were on the way out and the Liberals on their way in with that large majority. He was one of the people who got caught up in that sweep. But René understood that elected office is only part of what you do in order to serve your community. He was active as a member of this assembly. He was the whip for the government caucus. That would have been a lot of fun in a minority Parliament, let me tell you. He was also the minister of northern transportation. It was one of those ministries that was created by Mr. Miller in the dying days of the Conservative government, and it was an understanding that transportation in northern Ontario was different. He was the first and probably the only minister of northern transportation.

I know I'm a little bit over, but I just want to end by saying a couple of things that have to be said. After he was defeated in 1990, we went through, in Kapuskasing, an epic situation where Kapuskasing was going to lose basically its only employer in town, Kimberly-Clark. We were going to go from three or four paper machines down to one machine. The community, the workers and everybody said, "That's not going to happen. That's not on. We need to find some way to save this mill." The workers and the community came up with the idea of worker ownership as an idea to be able to save that mill, where the workers would buy the mill and they would run the mill as either complete owners or part owners of that mill. René started up a citizens' coalition, the citizens group, which is basically the representatives of small business, individuals and others who weren't working at the mill in order to do the kind of work that had to be done to get the government of the day—yes, the NDP government—to do worker ownership.

I've got to tell the story. Here we are, there's a plan that was put forward for worker ownership. It was quite rich. I'm not going to get into all of the details. One Bob Rae, the former leader of the New Democrats, who was Premier at the time, said no to the deal. He said, "No, we're not going to move on this worker ownership deal at present," because he thought at the time that it wasn't the deal that we needed at the end. René said, "Well, I'm not going to take that for granted." He and all the other citizens, leaders of the union and others said, "Shelley Martel, Gilles Bisson, Len Wood, get up here. We're going to meet with you guys in Kapuskasing and we're going to tell you why you've got to do this." We show up to the meeting at the civic centre, and there was this great big protest at The Circle in Kapuskasing, where virtually every person who lived in the Kapuskasing area showed up. René and the gang had us all come into the civic centre, and at that particular meeting announced to us that the highway was being closed in and out of the municipality and that we had to change our minds.

So I give it to René. I don't know if it was his idea, but I'll tell you, it was quite effective. We had to negotiate our way out of Kapuskasing, and eventually we came down and finally convinced Bob Rae that he should get off his Liberal ideas and get onto NDP ideas and, in fact, do the worker ownership, which was eventually done. The worker ownership turned out to be a great success story, not only for Kapuskasing but I think for all of Ontario. Today, we still have a mill in Kapuskasing because of the work of René, Len Wood, Shelley Martel and a whole bunch of other people who were involved, but René was certainly a big part of that.

I think as citizens of the province, we only wish that we had more citizens in our province who—and, yes, I'll admit it: René was a Conservative, and on a lot of things I didn't agree with him, but he understood the idea of civic duty. And that is the issue: that you have people who are prepared to continue serving and do what they can even though they're not in elected office. I think my hat goes off to them.

**1530**

To the family: I know his widow is here, and I know a lot of the family—I can't see their faces up there, but I saw you a little while ago when I came in. I just want to say to you, thank you very much for having lent us your father, your husband and your grandfather. On behalf of the people of Kapuskasing and area and as the member for Timmins-James Bay, Andrea Horwath, New Democrats and all members of the assembly, we want to say thank you for having lent us your father. He certainly was a true leader in many ways.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I join with my colleagues in welcoming the family of René Piché here today. I want to welcome his wife, Olga, whom I just had the opportunity to meet; his daughter Louise and son Robert; and their respective spouses, Frank and Kathy. We have some grandchildren as well, I believe: Jamie, Melissa, Dean, Renée with a double "e" and Jessica. Thank you all for being here today. We appreciate it. We are delighted to have the opportunity to celebrate the life and service of René Piché, a fellow northerner.

René was born in Cache Bay in May of 1931. Cache Bay used to be just on the edge of my dad's riding back in the 1960s and 1970s, so I know it quite well. He grew up in Sturgeon, which was definitely a part of my dad's riding, so I know Sturgeon Falls well. I know that when he was 17 or 18 he moved to Kapuskasing—Kap, as we call it up in the north—and devoted his life to his community and to serving his community through a variety of ventures. My colleague Mr. Bisson has gone through a number of his business achievements.

He did serve for a long time, from 1971 for 10 years, as the mayor of Kapuskasing. He oversaw the expansion of the city, was a big proponent of economic development, and there was substantial growth in the region during that period of time.

Also, as Mr. Bisson referred to, he was a founding member of the Northeastern Ontario Municipal Association, an association that continues to this day to lobby on

behalf of northeastern municipalities and has made a great contribution to the awareness of issues in the north. We owe a debt of gratitude to him and to the group of active northern municipal politicians who came together in the 1970s to form that organization, which is now continuing to advocate on behalf of the north.

I think the group's crowning achievement was the development of the air ambulance service in the north, one of the best in North America, which Mr. Bisson also referred to, and which probably led to him getting more involved on a provincial level and throwing his hat in the ring in 1981 when René Brunelle retired after some 23 or 28 years.

Mr. Brunelle, as I recall, because I was a page in the late 1970s, was a very soft-spoken, quiet man. Mr. Piché, I understand, in contrast, was a little more loud and rowdy, shall we say—a good French Canadian from northern Ontario. He was described to me this morning by Sean Conway, who sat in this House for 30-plus years, as incredibly jovial and someone that you always wanted to sit down and have a chat with.

He spent time in the Legislature serving under Bill Davis. He was elevated to cabinet by Frank Miller and was referred to as the minister without portfolio responsible for northern transportation. He also served for a time as chief government whip, which, as I can attest to, is not always the most fun of jobs. Being the House leader, I know that the government whip also has a tough job, and certainly we appreciate the time that he no doubt devoted to those duties.

In 1985, Mr. Piché was defeated by René Fontaine. I just have to pause there because I know René, and I can only imagine the battle of the French Canadian titans in the riding in 1985. I'm sure it was quite the contest—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The debates would be great.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** The debates would have been lots of fun; absolutely. It was referred to in the *Globe and Mail* on May 3, 1985, in the following way: "In the weeks leading up to yesterday's vote, Cochrane North shaped up as one of the province's fiercer contests and true to form, it was neck-and-neck until Liberal René Fontaine pulled ahead by 11%.

"It was a battle of two former mayors in the heavily francophone riding—Mr. Fontaine, the ex-mayor of Hearst, and former Kapuskasing mayor Mr. Piché, minister responsible for northern development." It goes on to talk about the battle that ensued, and I can only imagine what a battle it was. We do have some fierce battles in the north, but we all come together to represent the north.

I know that after his defeat he continued on in the quest to represent the north. He went back to being mayor for a while. He continued in his quest to better the opportunities, as Mr. Bisson described in some detail, for the folks of Kapuskasing. After retiring from politics, he continued in his service to the north by spearheading one final and crucial, important project for his community: the establishment of a regional doctors' office complex, which he chaired and which was opened in 1996 with 12 physicians—no easy feat in northern Ontario and, I'm sure, a lasting legacy for the community.

Monsieur Piché and his wife, Olga, later moved to Ottawa, and, sadly, Monsieur Piché left us on January 22, 2011, after battling cancer for several years, which I'm sure was difficult for his family. He was 79 years of age.

As a fellow northerner, it's always a great opportunity for me to say thank you to my predecessors and to those who have fought hard to represent the north and who have provided a great deal of service to the province and to the people of the north. So to the family today, I just want to say thank you for sharing René Piché with us for those five years. Thank you for his service to public life over 30 years and for all that he did for our northern communities. Thank you, and we're so glad you could be here with us today.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm pleased to join the tributes today for former member of this Legislature René Piché. Tomorrow, René Piché would be turning 80. Happy birthday, René. Unfortunately, we're not going to be there to join him—or maybe fortunately.

I never knew René Piché, but from what I've heard about him over the last couple of weeks, I sure wish I would have known him. He seemed like my kind of guy. He was born on May 5, 1931, in Cache Bay, Ontario. In 1948, he moved to Kapuskasing, where he took a job at the mill for a short period of time. Then he served as a professional firefighter, as my friend from Timmins—James Bay has said, for five years. So to my firefighting friends in the gallery today, one of your colleagues is being honoured today. For five years, he served as a professional firefighter.

In that ensuing time, based on the calendar, he was married to his good wife, Olga, who is here today, for 59 years. Sometime in that period they would have wed. They were blessed with four children, Gerry, Louise, Robert and Donald.

In 1961, as you've heard, he started the weekly newspaper the *Northern Times*, which continued to grow. By the time he got out of the newspaper business in 1998 and sold *Norweb*, it was basically printing every newspaper in the region. He was an entrepreneur as well as a public servant.

In 1971, he got into politics for the first time, as the mayor of Kapuskasing, and served for 10 years. I always find that when you're doing one of these tributes, there's always that little bit of separation. My father, who served here, at the latter part of his time here—Mr. Piché's time was 1981-85 and my father was here from 1963 to 1987. He also served as a reeve in Barry's Bay—the same idea as a mayor in a smaller community—for 10 years before coming into the Legislature. Mr. Piché served for 10 years as mayor of Kapuskasing. All of the tributes that I've heard laud him as one of the best, most progressive mayors that community ever saw.

As I said, he was elected in 1981, succeeding René Brunelle, who had been the member since 1958 for the riding of Cochrane North. I was able to talk to my colleague Norm Sterling earlier and get some of his recollections of Mr. Piché as a member, and I'm supporting what both my colleagues Mr. Bisson and Ms. Smith

have said about him: He enjoyed this place, he loved this place, he loved being an MPP and he loved the camaraderie.

He was an extremely effective member of this Legislature. I must say, while he was a member of the Progressive Conservative caucus and a member of the Progressive Conservative government, he was essentially a non-partisan. He was here to do the job and serve the people that he represented, and particularly the people from northern Ontario, who, quite frankly, have always needed strong representation to ensure that their message is heard. He was that kind of a member. He was tireless in that regard.

But he did love the social aspects of this job as well. He loved to have some fun, and he had a great sense of humour. I wish I'd had a chance to have looked through some of his Hansard; I'm sure that would have reflected it as well. You know what? If you're not having fun in this place, it's going to grow stale on you pretty quickly. He was one of those people who recognized that and enjoyed his job here to a great degree.

**1540**

Norm told me that they called him Peach, and a peach he certainly was.

In 1985, unfortunately, he lost his seat. As Mr. Bisson said, as the Progressive Conservative dynasty of 42 years was coming to an end, he was a victim of that time. Timing is everything in politics. René lost his seat in 1985. He attempted to win it back in 1990, but do you remember what happened in 1990? That was when the NDP swept the province. So, unfortunately, we only got to have him as a representative in this House for that short period of time, 1981 to 1985, because of circumstances and timing in politics—as we know, or anybody who has served in this House knows. It would have been wonderful to have had him here longer.

Some of the things that were said about René when he passed away on January 22 of this year tell you a little bit about how revered he was in the north by those people who worked closely with him and those people who were affected by the work that came before them. Vic Power, a Timmins mayor, commented that Piché was influential in the creation of the Ontario government's own northern Ontario air service. "He was the one who really got northern Ontario going, which was to our perspective a very successful ... airline for northern Ontario," said Power.

Matt Rukavina, Kapuskasing's former chief administrative officer, commented, "We've lost the biggest supporter the North ever had," adding that his instrumental role in forming the Northeastern Ontario Mayors Action Group gave northern Ontario the voice in Queen's Park that it was always lacking and cemented the idea that transportation was a key factor for northern prosperity.

As has been mentioned earlier, he became the minister of northern transportation. That was something that meant so much to him: to improve the ability of northerners to move within their own district. Consequently, his government created a portfolio that was tailor-made for Mr. Piché: minister of northern transportation.

I know that the clock is ticking and we have limited time. Unfortunately, that's the situation. We could go on for a great deal of time about his accomplishments both in and outside of the political arena.

I want to end by thanking his family for allowing him to serve for those years. As a son of a former member, I recognize the sacrifice that families make. Your sacrifice was to the benefit of all of the citizens of the area that he served and, indeed, particularly to northern Ontarians, but to all Ontarians who were able to benefit from his efforts and his dedication here for his time in this House—and as I say, beyond that, because even after he left here in 1985, he continued to work to improve opportunities and transportation and services in the north.

So I say to you, thank you very much for your commitment to his career. On behalf of all members of the Progressive Conservative caucus, thank you very much for his dedication and your sacrifice.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I want to thank the members for their comments. A copy of Hansard will be sent to the family so that you will have that to view today's events.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** As Ontarians, we're blessed to live in one of the most diverse societies in the world, a society whose citizens show mutual respect for our varied backgrounds and experiences, and it is in that spirit that I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the month of May as Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage Month.

In a province as diverse as Ontario, our Asian and South Asian communities are themselves especially diverse. Between them, the Asian and South Asian communities represent people who trace their roots to India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, Vietnam, several African nations, and the Caribbean and South America, among others. And the people who make up Ontario's incredibly vibrant Asian and South Asian communities speak many languages, practise many religions and represent many different ethnicities. In some cases their histories in Ontario and in Canada extend back many, many generations, even into the 1800s. Indeed, May 5 also marks South Asian Arrival Day, commemorating the first arrivals from the Indian subcontinent to the Americas that day in 1838.

Whether their histories stretch back over a century or more recently, the origins and stories of the Asian and South Asian communities—their struggles and their triumphs—are all unique, and those struggles and those triumphs make us who we are. All Ontarians, no matter where we trace our origins, have contributed so much to

the vibrant and resilient society that we are today. Our communities have distinct cultural backgrounds, but together their contributions define Ontario's rich identity.

Today our Asian and South Asian communities number almost two million individuals. That's nearly one in six Ontarians. But beyond their numbers, their contributions to our province in business, science, culture, civic life and more are immeasurable. The Asian and South Asian communities have helped to transform Ontario into a truly global force. Our ability to strengthen our economic ties with nations such as China, Japan, India and Pakistan is due in large part to a diverse and internationally connected population.

One connection that particularly touches Ontarians of Indian descent is that 2011 is also the Year of India in Canada. That's of special significance to our province, because Ontario is home, as we all know, to a large and thriving Indian community. Today in Ontario, India's cultural imprint can be found throughout our province. Thousands of visitors have flocked to the Art Gallery of Ontario to view a special exhibition called Maharaja: The Splendour of India's Royal Courts. Next month, Toronto will play host to the International Indian Film Academy Awards, a three-day celebration of South Asian film and culture. Events like these showcase Ontario as a welcoming and inclusive society, a vibrant society that is open to the world.

Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage Month is a time when we acknowledge the long and lively histories of these communities. Together we honour their legacies and reflect on their achievements. Of course, we do this formally in May, but the contributions of the Asian and South Asian populations are something that we value every day of the year.

It was the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Canada's first Asian Canadian Governor General, who once said, "At our best, we are in constant search of something beyond, of ... dreams and destinies that we reach toward, together." I encourage my colleagues and all Ontarians to celebrate with their neighbours, their friends and families the contributions Asian and South Asian communities have made to our social, cultural and economic well-being. They are proof that a diverse society of people from around the world can live and work together in harmony to achieve our individual dreams and our shared aspirations for a stronger, more vibrant and more prosperous Ontario.

#### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

#### SEMAINE DE LA SANTÉ MENTALE DES ENFANTS

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to rise to acknowledge Children's Mental Health Week in Ontario, observed in the first full week of May each year.

J'ai l'honneur de prendre la parole à l'occasion de la Semaine de la santé mentale des enfants, qui a lieu chaque année au cours de la première semaine complète du mois de mai.

#### 1550

I'm pleased to see fellow members in this House wearing the green ribbons distributed by Children's Mental Health Ontario to celebrate this important week.

Approximately one in five Ontario children and youth has a mental health challenge. That's about 500,000 kids. These young people are dealing with issues that range from anxiety and depression to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and schizophrenia. While there has been encouraging progress made towards demystifying mental health issues, the stigma associated with mental illness remains. That's why Children's Mental Health Week has two key roles: to decrease the stigma that young people feel, and to increase overall awareness of mental health.

We all need to talk about this important issue in our families, in our communities and across the province. Since becoming Minister of Children and Youth Services, parents have told me that the road is often difficult and lonely for children dealing with mental health issues. Like any parent, these parents have hopes and dreams for their kids, and they all want them to be the best that they can be.

This government shares these aspirations, and we demonstrated that in our 2011 budget. Starting this year, we will be making significant new investments in children's mental health, growing to \$93 million a year in 2013-14.

Notre gouvernement partage ces aspirations, et notre budget 2011 traduit cet engagement.

We're starting with children and youth because we know that many forms of serious mental illness begin during childhood and adolescence. In fact, 70% of mental health and addictions issues begin early in life. We've heard from families, providers and experts about the importance of early identification and intervention. This was echoed in the advice we received from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions and the Minister's Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions. We've listened carefully to this advice, and we will work to strengthen community-based services and create a more integrated mental health system and build capacity in the education system to support children and their families.

We know that if we identify mental illness and intervene early, we can get most kids back on track for success. We also know that there is work to do to build a more efficient, effective and accountable mental health system, and we will make immediate enhancements to children's services and produce measurable results in the short term, while laying the foundation for this broad system reform. We will continue to build on the excellent work being done by community agencies and health care professionals to create a mental health system that delivers what children and youth need when they need it, as close to home as possible.

Our government has made good progress in the areas of children's mental health, and we will continue to do more.

As former UNICEF director Carol Bellamy said, “In serving the best interests of children, we will serve the best interests of all humanity.”

À l’occasion de la Semaine de la santé mentale des enfants, je tiens à réaffirmer l’engagement de notre gouvernement à continuer à travailler avec nos partenaires dévoués en vue de soutenir les jeunes ayant des problèmes de santé mentale et leurs familles.

In recognition of Children’s Mental Health Week, I want to reaffirm our government’s commitment to working with our dedicated partners to support young people with mental health challenges and their families.

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

#### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I’m very pleased today to speak on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus in celebration of Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage Month.

In 2001, the Progressive Conservative government of the day supported the bill to proclaim May as South Asian Heritage Month and May 5 as South Asian Arrival Day. Raminder Gill was my colleague at the time. He was the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale. He introduced this legislation as a private member’s bill, and it passed third reading on December 13, 2001. We’re very proud of that legislation, which enshrined in law the recognition of our South Asian community here in the province of Ontario. The bill passed, I should add, with the unanimous support of this House.

In the same spirit of non-partisanship, I was very proud to work with the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex in 2008, becoming the first MPPs of different parties to co-sponsor a bill and see it passed into law. When the standing orders were changed to allow for co-sponsored bills, I saw it as an opportunity to work together across party lines. As I said, our bill recognizing Emancipation Day in Ontario was passed by this House. It just goes to show that you can do almost anything if you’re prepared to share the credit.

But today we credit Canadians of South Asian and Asian backgrounds who have made—and continue to make—major contributions to our province and our country. For a brief summary of just a few of those contributions throughout our province’s history, I want to read from the original bill passed here in 2001. It states the following:

“South Asian immigrants began arriving in Ontario at the start of the 20th century. Working primarily in the sawmill industry, South Asian immigrants settled in various parts of the province. For South Asians, the month of May has been a time of celebration and commemoration of their arrival from the Indian subcontinent to the Americas beginning on May 5, 1838.

“While most South Asians came to our country from India, many others came to Ontario from such places as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Uganda, Kenya, South

Africa, Mauritius, Singapore, Malaysia, Fiji, the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Today, South Asians make up a significant proportion of Ontario’s populations and are proud to draw upon their heritage and traditions, contributing to many aspects of culture, commerce and public service across this province.”

Mr. Speaker, I couldn’t have said it better. On behalf of the leader of the official opposition and the Ontario PC caucus, I want to offer my very best wishes to all Asian Canadians in this time of celebration.

#### CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I am pleased to rise today, on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize Children’s Mental Health Week.

As part of Children’s Mental Health Week, I had the opportunity to join the Minding Our Dufferin Youth conference on youth mental health issues this morning in the riding of Dufferin–Caledon. This is a great example of how different organizations in a community can collaborate for a single goal: to help youth with developmental, mental, health and addiction challenges.

In my community, organizations representing the legal, justice, children’s mental health, housing, education, addiction, policing and health sectors all joined together this morning to coordinate this outstanding conference. I congratulate them for their efforts.

As many of you are aware, I was on the select committee which studied mental health and addictions across Ontario. We are now into day 57 of the commitment that was made to table a mental health and addictions plan within 60 days. I have to remind my colleagues across the floor that we are all waiting for that plan to be tabled, as was voted on and endorsed by a PC opposition day motion.

I do acknowledge that there was a single line in the budget that talked about investing in children and youth’s mental health, but wouldn’t today, as we mark Children’s Mental Health Week, have been a wonderful opportunity to give us even one example of where that budget announcement investment is going to take place? We are now, I believe, six weeks past the budget and we are still waiting for any kind of announcement on where the investments are going to take place, where they will happen, which organizations will benefit from them. It would have been a beautiful opportunity this afternoon as we mark Children’s Mental Health Week to talk about that.

Unfortunately, we haven’t seen that from the minister. We are still waiting. The families are still waiting. Quite frankly, I think the families have waited too long. We need to see some actual action and initiative now.

#### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I am rising to respond to both of the ministerial statements. Unfortunately, I only have five minutes to do so, so I will do my best.

I rise on behalf of New Democrats, first and foremost, in honour of Asian and South Asian Heritage Month. This month, as we celebrate our nation's Asian and South Asian communities, we must pledge to remember the lessons learned from their perseverance and triumph throughout some very ugly chapters of our history as Canadians and the role they have played in building communities in Canada from the earliest days of our nation to the present day.

The Asian and South Asian experience in Canada sheds light on some of the more troubling aspects of our history. From the Chinese head tax to Komagata Maru or the internment of Japanese Canadians, the journey from then to now has been one marked by hardship and injustice.

**1600**

To truly demonstrate that we have learned from our past, we must do more than just set a month aside; we must work diligently to remove barriers that force many Canadians to overcome unnecessary adversity in order to enrich the province and country we are all proud to call home. Eliminating discrimination and racism requires real action. We have to increase access to tools like affordable child care, housing and post-secondary education.

The enduring lesson of the Asian and South Asian experience is the triumph of hope and hard work in spite of daunting obstacles. Ontario's New Democrats honour the sacrifice of the early Asian and South Asian Canadians and their descendants with a renewed commitment to build a province that brings out the best in all of its citizens.

#### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In response now to the Minister of Children and Youth Services: The children's mental health sector has struggled for many, many years under this government without adequate resources; 25% of Ontario's children are affected by mental illness.

I want to first of all commend the families, parents, community members and organizations who have advocated long and hard for sustainable funding to this sector. I credit them and those who work in the field for getting the government to respond in any way at all to this very important issue.

The time for action is immediate. Liberal funding announcements are fine, provided that they actually translate into direct investments to help those families who have pleaded for supports for so long. Far too often, funding announcements—in fact, any announcements from this government—become fodder for politicking and are dangled in front of people: more promises, promises that never, ever materialize. We fervently hope that this is not one of those occasions where funding decisions are loudly promoted but quietly deferred until after the next election.

There is some reason to doubt the McGuinty government's commitment in this particular situation. On April

14, three Liberal MPPs of the Legislature's all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions voted against Bill 117, the Children's Mental Health Act, a Liberal private member's bill. Bill 117 proposed the committee's foremost recommendation for coordinated services. Liberals unanimously supported it at the committee but voted against it in the Legislature. This flip-flop gives us cause for concern and gives everyone in children's mental health cause for concern. It appears to be a betrayal of the very principles underpinning Ontario's mental health strategy for children and youth. The question is simple: Why did its own members vote against an all-important plank of coordination to ensure that families get timely and equitable access to an integrated and client-directed health system?

New Democrats envision a mental health system that is well coordinated, that is efficient, providing excellent services and programming. Our kids deserve nothing less, yet the most obvious step to achieving this goal was rejected by the McGuinty Liberals less than three weeks ago, and shame on them for that rejection. Equally troubling are the service cuts, the staff layoffs and the program closures that have characterized the first four months of this calendar year. The lack of accountability for these short-sighted decisions is frustrating, to say the least.

My comments today reflect the concerns that I have heard personally from parents, service providers and children and youth workers across the province. They continue to urge me to press the McGuinty government on these points. The sooner we step up and address the need for timely treatment of mental illness in children and youth, the more lives—the more futures—we will be saving.

#### PETITIONS

##### FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the fire protection adviser for the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and the united counties of Prescott-Russell retired in 2008; and

“Whereas the position has not been filled as several attempts by management were denied; and

“Whereas, during this same period, positions were filled in other areas of the province of Ontario, leaving the above-mentioned united counties the only region without a fire protection adviser; and

“Whereas fire departments in these united counties currently have to wait four hours or longer before a fire protection adviser can arrive from another region to assist them;

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

“That the fire departments of Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and Prescott-Russell ask the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to allow the Office of the Fire Marshal to fill the position of fire protection adviser immediately.”

I agree with this and shall sign it and send it to the Clerk’s table.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. I have presented this a number of times, but it seems someone is not listening.

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

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

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

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt, specifically at 4148 Regional Highway 2, Newcastle, and Lakeridge Road in Durham.”

I’m pleased to sign it, support it and present it to Erica, one of the pages here at Queen’s Park.

#### PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It’s a pleasure to stand and read this petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I would definitely like to thank Diane Wilton of Kildare Court in Mississauga for sending it to me, and also, because I know she’s watching, say hello to Andrea at home. It read as follows:

“Whereas many seniors, visually impaired persons and other non-drivers do not need or are not eligible for a driver’s licence; and

“Whereas many day-to-day transactions such as cashing of cheques; opening a new bank account at a financial institution; returning merchandise to a retail store; boarding a domestic flight; gaining admittance to bars, clubs and casinos; checking in at a hotel; obtaining a credit card, and even renting a video require government-issued photo identification; and

“Whereas Ontario’s Photo Card Act, 2008, sets the legislative framework required to deliver a non-licence photo identification;

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

“That the province of Ontario develop a government-issued photo identification card and deliver, in 2011, an Ontario photo card identification for residents of the province over the age of 16 who cannot or choose not to drive.”

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

#### CAMBRIDGE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I have a petition directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas in 1998, the Health Services Restructuring Commission ordered a \$62-million expansion at Cambridge Memorial Hospital featuring a new wing, an expanded emergency department and a mental health schedule 1 facility; and

“Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty, former health minister George Smitherman and Minister John Milloy have all publicly stated that the expansion would proceed; and

“Whereas we are nearing the end of 2010 and the expansion remains stalled;

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

“That the province of Ontario commit to including this long-awaited and desperately needed expansion at Cambridge Memorial Hospital in the capital budget that is presently being prepared.”

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

#### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I’m pleased to introduce the following petition, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the people of the province of Ontario deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and their grandparents as requested in Bill 22 put forward by MPP Kim Craitor; and

“Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

#### 1610

“Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each ... grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant’s willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each ... grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their ... grandparents.”

I am extremely proud to sign my signature in support of this bill.

#### TOBACCO CONTROL

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many of our youth are encouraged to use tobacco products due to the distribution of cheap cigarettes by organized crime; and

“Whereas, unlike alcohol possession and consumption, the use and possession of cigarettes by young people is not illegal; and

“Whereas legal distributors or sellers of tobacco products in Ontario strictly regulate the sale by ensuring purchasers have identification proving they are of legal age;

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

“That the province of Ontario make it illegal for persons under age 19 to purchase or consume tobacco products.”

As I agree with this petition, I affix my name thereto and provide it to Viktor.

#### PARAMEDICS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I, too, have signed the petition.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

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

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

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

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

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

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

I am giving this to page Caleb. I have affixed my signature to it.

#### PARAMEDICS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’m going to sign this petition and send it to the table with Kyla.

#### HIGHWAY SAFETY

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the intersection of Highway 12 at Fairgrounds Road in Orillia is a main traffic link for Notre

Dame Catholic School, for the Odas Park fairgrounds and a number of local businesses; and

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

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

I’m in favour of this, and I’d like to pass it to Amira to give to the table.

#### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I’m pleased to join with my colleague the hard-working member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex especially in thanking Rob Cole, Jason Lambert and Bonnie Campbell of Glencoe, who have sent me this petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. 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 fully support this petition, I have signed it and I’m going to ask page Jasmyn to carry it for me.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature, as I am in agreement, and give it to it page Rachel.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I’m pleased to introduce the following petition to the House:

“Whereas special education for the district school board of Niagara has been historically underfunded, we would like the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to allocate funding to the DSBN for high-needs special education comparable to the provincial average of \$508.69 per student;

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

“The district school board of Niagara currently has a shortfall in funding for special education of approximately \$1.5 million for 2010-11. School councils across our school board have started this petition to be presented to the Minister of Education.... The district school board of Niagara has the second-lowest funding for special education in the province. This issue not only impacts students with special needs, but all students and educators within our board.” They asking the assembly of Ontario to support this application and this petition.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 3, 2011, on the motion for second reading of 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 Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** First, I seek unanimous consent to defer the New Democratic lead by the member for Parkdale–High Park.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Do you understand the request? Agreed? Agreed.

1620

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker.

In preparing for this 20 minutes, I just happened to pick up a copy of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, and lo and behold, it fell open to page 744. Sometimes, these things happen. It is, at the very least, serendipity.

It was a good thing I did, because page 744 is an explanation of second reading. What Bosc and O’Brien explained in Canadian parliamentary procedure was that

central to the role of second reading “is a general debate on the principle of a bill.” In the footnote, it says, “Other expressions may be used to refer to the ‘principle’.... Sometimes, the expressions ‘scope’, ‘general scope’ and ‘general objectives’ are used.” I took comfort in that, because sometimes, during the course of a debate, I take a broad, broad, broad approach; sometimes I take a very focused and narrow approach—and I realize that the parliamentary procedure reference here justifies that broader approach, the general scope. What this is about is retirement, retirement of firefighters. I thought, “Well, a broad approach, then, allows me to speak in the context of, amongst other things, retirement.”

I do want to commend the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, who is stickhandling this bill through second reading. He’s complying with—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** And the minister is looking for a quorum count over there—he’s complying with the principle, a long-standing principle, that either the minister or the parliamentary assistant to the minister sit through second reading—or third reading, for that matter—even though they may have already finished their contribution to debate. But I understand that the parliamentary assistant will be joining the debate in his own right in relatively short order—as a matter of fact, in around 14, 15 minutes’ time.

What this bill does is fix up a problem that this government created. This government zealously, with great fanfare, announced that it was ending the retirement age in the province of Ontario—he called it the “mandatory” retirement age. I quote the Minister of Community Safety, who just the other day, in commenting on this bill, said that the Liberal government, by eliminating this retirement age, was going to end age discrimination. If 90-year-olds still have to work instead of retiring at the age of 60 or 65, I suppose that’s one peculiar way of putting it. The Minister of Community Safety went one further. He said that eliminating the retirement age meant that Ontarians could now choose when to retire. Please. I like the Minister of Community Safety. He and I have known each other for a long time. It’s like when you have a close relationship with anybody: Sometimes, I know how he’s going to finish his sentences. Sometimes, I know what he’s really thinking, notwithstanding what he’s saying.

“Ontarians can choose when to retire”: Not darned likely, is it, Speaker? How many Ontarians get to choose when to retire? Fewer and fewer Ontarians have a defined benefit pension plan. The ones who do find that those pension plans have been corrupted during the course of years and decades of underfunding, something that a fellow named Bob Rae permitted here in the province of Ontario and that subsequent governments have maintained—big companies, the so-called too-big-to-fail companies, remember? General Motors, Chrysler, the ones that were the beneficiaries of huge taxpayer bailouts. Then, of course, you have the sad issue of the pension benefit guarantee fund that hasn’t been amended

for years, and we’re still stuck at \$1,000 a month, notwithstanding New Democratic Party efforts and private members’ bills as well to raise that to \$2,500 in a government that ignores the plight of workers, like Atlas Steels workers down where I come from, who had a good pension plan—the problem was, it wasn’t funded—and who, after they retired, found their pensions slashed and found themselves reliant on the pension benefits guarantee fund, with a maximum of \$1,000 a month.

I beg to differ with the Minister of Community Safety. I think the government is now realizing some of the mess that it created. We warned them about it—not just New Democrats, but people out there in the community warned this government about all sorts of problems.

The reality is that most people look forward to retirement at a reasonable age so they can still be healthy and fit and so they can do the sort of things they couldn’t do when they were working: so they can maybe take courses, so maybe they can play with their grandkids and take care of those grandkids while mom and dad—because inevitably, in this Ontario, if anybody is working, everybody’s working at two or three jobs, and if there is a mom and dad that are working, both of them are because they can’t afford to survive the escalating hydro rates and Mr. McGuinty’s HST. Or, as my colleague says, they can volunteer. But more and more seniors, people who wanted to be retired, find themselves working, not because they’re eager to go back to that workplace, but because they have no choice. Many find themselves taking minimum wage jobs, jobs that they’re far overqualified for, but jobs that they’re desperate to work at because they need the money, because their savings have been attacked by a recession and by mutual fund operators and investment operators who are more interested in their trailer fees and in their commissions and, as often as not, in churning accounts to generate fees than they are in creating benefits for their principal, their client. That’s that classic tension between principal and agent. The broker has his or her own interests as well; they want to make money. The tension between the broker’s interests and the client’s interests oftentimes results in the client’s interests coming second.

Here we’ve got retirees, seniors who have lost their savings. Mind you, people here at Queen’s Park have a pension. They have a wonderfully creative pension that was designed by Mr. Harris in 1996. It’s called a defined contribution pension plan. Every member of the Legislature voted for it—I was here—Conservative, Liberal, New Democrat. I don’t expect to hear any protests from MPPs, because they do in fact have a pension, unlike a whole lot of workers. Theirs is a defined contribution pension plan. In their wisdom, back in 1996, they decided that it was better to convert to a defined contribution, away from a defined benefit.

In the context of firefighters, the New Democrats made this comment yesterday—I want to be very clear, we don’t expect to spend a whole lot of time debating this bill on second reading. We support the bill. It restores an effective retirement age, a meaningful one, a

relevant one, an appropriate one, for firefighters. It gives them some hope.

As a matter of fact, there was a Human Rights Tribunal decision—Espey and the city of London—which noted, as many other jurisdictions have noted, that firefighters, like so many other workers, though—firefighting is dangerous. The exposure to hazards, to toxins, to chemicals creates a predisposition for any number of diseases, respiratory diseases, cancers. The Human Rights Tribunal here in the province of Ontario said that mandatory retirement for firefighters at age 60 has long been a controversial topic. Issues of health and safety are a primary concern, as is the need to ensure that the firefighters are capable of meeting the demands of suppression fighting. That's carrying the hoses. That's carrying the ladders. That's carrying people. It's climbing up the ladders. It's doing all sorts of heavy—and it's coming to the aid of your sisters and brothers who might have fallen in the course of performing their duties.

**1630**

I was thinking about my own retirement this afternoon, and I'm not talking about anything imminent. But, of course, Wednesday here is cabinet day, and if you're not in cabinet—and in case anybody was under any misapprehensions, I'm not. It has been a long time since I was; a long time. We have this huge gap on Wednesdays here at Queen's Park, because that's when cabinet meets. The Legislature sits in the morning from 9 and then question period at 10:30, but then there's this huge break from noon till 3 o'clock.

When it's cold and miserable outside, you go downstairs to the cafeteria and have a coffee and a grilled cheese sandwich or whatever it is. But on a day like this, when it's a little cool but very nice and bright and sunny, I like going out for a little bit of a walk. I was thinking about retirement. I said, "What a delightful thing this is, to be able to go out for a little walk." I went up north on Yonge Street. I went to see my friends at the Cookbook Store, over at the intersection of Yonge and Yorkville.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** A good store.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Great staff; wonderful people. I've known them for years—the Cookbook Store, Canada's food and wine bookstore, at 850 Yonge Street. They've got a website, cook-book.com, which is a great website. This may surprise you, but I've been buying cookbooks from them for years, just like I've been buying Delta and Porter-Cable power tools for years.

The cookbooks I collect—there are hundreds of them; well into several hundred of them by now. Just like the Porter-Cable hand tools, the table saw and the radial arm saw in the basement, they're pristine because I figure that someday I'll be able to use the power tools; someday I'll be able to go to those cookbooks and cook some stuff up.

I know I can handle the power tools a little bit. I'm not great; I'm no Bob Vila. I'm sure I can handle the cooking, and I'm no Emeril Lagasse. But the Cookbook Store is a great store on Yonge and Yorkville. I bought a goat meat cookbook today, which I thought was rather neat because I like buying rustic or peculiar stuff.

In any event, in case I don't retire in time and there's a lawn sale, come on down; there are going to be all sorts of power tools and all sorts of cookbooks, amongst other things, down on Bald Street there in Welland.

See, we don't do hard work here. We work long hours sometimes. We work on weekends; that's true. The work of a politician takes a toll on families. People who are trying to raise little kids as politicians are under special pressures. Those kids miss out. The most serious physical risk here is the occasional paper cut or bruised ego. We don't have a big roster of workers' comp claims coming out of Queen's Park.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** A BlackBerry falls on your toes.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** As the member says, although I wish to goodness they didn't allow BlackBerrys in the chamber because it would improve the quality of debate. People wouldn't be playing with their BlackBerrys; they'd be focusing on what's being said in the chamber and perhaps preparing their responses, I say to the minister.

It's important that this bill go to committee. It's very important that this bill not die in some prorogation. I know that the government says it's going to sit through to the calendar date of June 2, but after Monday, anything could happen.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Which Monday?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Yesterday. You don't want to recall it. I understand, I say to the Minister of Agriculture. She wishes she had slept through Monday.

So I say to you, anything can happen here in the chamber, in this Legislature, prior to June 2. It would be a darned shame if the House prorogued before June 2 and this bill got sucked up into that black hole of prorogued bills. It would be a shame if the legislative agenda were such that this bill didn't get to third reading, which is why the New Democrats said yesterday and we're saying again today that we don't want to prolong the second reading debate. I've been speaking to it. I'll be finished in four and a half minutes. Ms. DiNovo, the member from Parkdale-High Park, will speak to it when the bill is next called. We'll then not be calling any more speakers.

We expect the committee hearings to be sufficiently long to accommodate all those people who want to make comments, including the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. I suspect that AMO will want to say things. I suspect that the fire chiefs of Ontario will want to say things. There may be others. But I also suspect that they can be accommodated in the course of one or two days maximum, and then get this bill back in here for third reading and get it passed, because firefighters have been calling for this ever since that foolhardy move on the part of the McGuinty Liberal government that eliminated the retirement age for so many working women and men here in the province of Ontario.

The real motivation for eliminating—I remember some of the arguments: "The dignity of work." No, I call it the dignity of having enough income so that you can do the sorts of things you want to do with your wife or your husband or your spouse or your family or your friends or

your neighbours, so that you can pursue those things that human beings should be able to pursue as part of leisure time and as part of creating a healthier and stronger community and quality of life.

Once again, it's easy for us to talk about the dignity of work. We don't work very hard physically, and, quite frankly, there is no test of any sort that an MPP has to pass once they're elected to sit in this chamber, neither physical—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, no. The test is neither physical nor is it any sort of, “Can you add, multiply, divide, read”—amongst other things—“spell?” So here we are, and with very comfortable incomes, and it's easy enough for us to talk about it. Why would you people not want to work until you're 100? Look, you can have leather-upholstered chairs and sit on them, and you can heckle and interrupt other speakers. You can do your BlackBerry and do your mail or look at—Lord knows what people are looking at on those BlackBerrys, like the Minister of Northern Development.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I am listening.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** He can do two things.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, no. As a matter of fact, the research on neuroscience says that you can't do two things at a time. You merely think you can, but what you do is you flip back and forth. It's like reading and watching television or reading and listening to music. You can't do two things at a time. As a matter of fact, the exercise to prove that is to take two people together in a room in front of you, each reading from a different text simultaneously—I've done this; this is an experiment—and see if you can understand anything of what anybody is saying. This is only two people.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Cookbooks?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Cookbooks, if you wish. And that's if you want to illustrate how people can't do two things at one time, which is why you can't use your cellphone while you're driving, because you can't do two things at one time. Okay? It's not like chewing gum and walking, *inter alia*.

So I'm going to wrap this up in around a minute and 20 seconds. I wish I hadn't accommodated my dear friend and colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park by giving her the hour that I would have had otherwise, because I found this 20 minutes to be rather useful as a warm-up.

But I commend the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association for their tenacity, for dealing with this issue on a regular basis. They've been dogged in pursuing it in their lobby days and in contacts with individual members. I know down where I come from—I mention it all the time—Mike Fowler, who is the president of the association down there and a good friend and great firefighter, doesn't fail to mention this to me every time I see him, whether it's over at the King Street fire hall or whether it's in the backyard of my house, or the side patio more often, or whether it's as we're passing each other at the market square on Saturday morning—where

I'll be, by the way, on Saturday morning with Malcolm Allen, the newly re-elected New Democrat MP for the riding of Welland.

I look forward to seeing what people have to say in committee. I trust that if the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association seeks amendments that they say will better impact on them, there will be support for those amendments. I know there certainly will be coming from the New Democratic Party.

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

1640

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** It's always a pleasure to stand up and speak after the member from Welland has gone up and always manages to get back to the subject, and it's always entertaining.

I would like to express our deepest gratitude and respect for the men and women who keep our families and homes safe, and who do so with great selflessness, professionalism and dedication. My father was a firefighter in the city of Winnipeg for 36 years, so I grew up in a firefighter's home and absolutely understand the challenges of that job. Of course, when they're going into a building, they're always dealing in stressful situations. My father used to describe going to work for 12 or 14 hours as being 12½ hours of waiting and half an hour of hell. You just never knew what you were going to be running into when you got there. We know that it's a very stressful job, arriving on the scene to deal with either an accident or injuries or a fire. They're going into situations in fires carrying a lot of weight, a lot of equipment, and then having to deal with people, rescuing people. It is a very physically demanding job that takes a lot of courage and fortitude to go to.

I believe that going with the retirement age of 60 is the right thing to do. I think if my father had retired at age 60, he'd still be with us today. The fact that we're going to be dealing with this—a lot of the firefighters are in much better physical shape than they were many years ago when my father was on the force. There's a lot more attention paid to it. I'm really pleased to be part of a government that's bringing forward this legislation on behalf of the firefighters of Ontario.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've had the privilege of speaking on this bill and also listening to the member from Welland, who always brings an interesting perspective on the issue. I'm happy to say that I'm looking forward to our critic, Garfield Dunlop, commenting on it as well.

I had a look at a report here from a human resources law firm, Hicks Morely. It's interesting to make sure we frame this discussion clearly. It says, “The mandatory retirement amendments specifically apply to firefighters who are ‘regularly assigned to fire suppression duties.’ This definition will only include firefighters who are unionized under the act, and exclude all volunteer firefighters, whether non-union or unionized under the Ontario Labour Relations Act, 1995. It will likely also

capture platoon chiefs and district chiefs in suppression divisions. However, it will likely exclude those firefighters in the communications divisions, prevention divisions, mechanical divisions and secretarial positions.

“It is not clear whether firefighters in the training divisions will be included or excluded, as they are usually involved in the training of suppression firefighters and therefore, may arguably be considered ‘regularly assigned to fire suppression duties.’”

There are some clarifications required in the drafting of the bill, which our leader, Tim Hudak, encourages us to support, this provision of retirement for full-time professional firefighters.

At the same time, in my remarks I want to thank the professional firefighters who are here for the work they do, much like our armed forces. We’re all here, I think, from all sides to pay tribute and thank you for the work in putting yourselves and your families at risk. I did mention the three or four fire chiefs and one volunteer who had just retired from my riding—Ron Cordingley.

That’s what I think is essential to it all: to listen, give you the opportunity at the table, and some hearings to get this right and define and clarify some of those provisions.

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

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I’m pleased to rise in support as well. I think it’s an opportunity for us to recognize with a great deal of respect the work that the firefighters do in our communities, and at the same time recognize the hazardous nature of the work that they do.

The mandatory retirement would be for emergency calls. These are the times when there’s a great deal of hazard to the work and the physical requirements are significant.

It is recognized that the firefighters in our community are particularly important for a whole host of reasons, and we must at all times remember that it’s important to ensure that they feel that they have a safe environment in which to work. One part of that, of course, is the physical requirement, as I indicated, and their capacity to deal with it.

Some 50 of the 75 municipalities already have firefighters with mandatory retirement. This bill, if and when passed, would in fact allow the municipalities, I think, two years to go forward and negotiate mandatory retirement. I think it’s a reasonable request, and I think it speaks to the challenges that are being faced by the folks themselves.

I think the other challenge we need to think about is that it really reflects just full-time firefighters; it does not reflect the others. We are also providing for some consistency and uniformity across the requirements for unionized firefighters in this province, and that actually would allow the municipalities themselves to address local cost impacts.

So here we are: an opportunity again to have a good, solid discussion. It will go to committee. It will have the opportunity for people to come forward and provide any particular amendments, if they’re required, and at the

same time ensure that hopefully there is speedy passage of this bill in the not-too-distant future.

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

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I’m pleased to be able to offer a few comments with respect to the remarks made by the member for Welland.

First of all, I would want to say that I too have been to the Cookbook Store, so I felt that I’d better speak on that to begin with, recognizing how difficult it is to make sure that your credit card stays in your purse—it’s almost impossible.

Certainly, one of the problems with cookbooks is the fact that they look so inviting that you can’t resist, and so you buy. Then you have to store the cookbook, even if you never get around to making anything in the cookbook. So I share the member’s interest in that. I’m not quite sure how he segued between that and retirement, but I will attempt to do that now.

I want to particularly comment on the concern raised by the member with regard to passage of this bill. It’s been very clear from all the speakers that there is support for this bill. There’s support for moving the bill along into committee. And I think there’s concern recognized by the speaker from Welland about the fact that this must be done. We don’t want to spend the time now and then leave the bill to die on the order paper. So I would offer that urgency.

I’d finally like to recognize that certainly in my riding, as in everyone else’s, we’re all very conscious of the kind of commitment people make in being firefighters and recognize the stress that comes with that. Particularly, I’m conscious of the fact that in communities where there is a significant volunteer part to firefighting, there’s a tremendous amount of training and time that people spend.

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

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I suppose it should be noted here and now, because the issue will arise about this being discriminatory, that the reality is that in law it’s prima facie discriminatory.

However, there is an issue of a bona fide occupational requirement, and the Supreme Court of Canada, in a case called Meiorin, has set out three things that are required to determine—to create—that bona fide occupational requirement with respect to age: (1) that the standard was adopted for a purpose “rationally connected to the performance of the job;” (2) that the standard was adopted “in an honest and good-faith belief that it was necessary to the fulfillment of that legitimate work-related purpose;” and (3) that “the standard is reasonably necessary to the accomplishment of a legitimate work-related purpose.” It must be demonstrated as well that it is impossible to accommodate the employee without imposing undue hardship.

It was noted in the city of London 2008 Human Rights Tribunal decision that in the case of firefighters, addressing that third requirement, the issue of “reasonably neces-

sary,” “the adjudicator accepted medical evidence that ‘death from coronary heart disease is multiple times more likely while performing emergency firefighting duties than while performing non-emergency duties’. Also, in cases of firefighters of an advanced age, there would be increased concerns of safety not only to the firefighter but also to the public and to his or her colleagues should a cardiac event occur when responding to an emergency.”

**1650**

Those are just some of the considerations made by the tribunal. These are the very considerations that dictate that, in this particular instance, this occupational requirement of retirement at age 60 is valid and does not offend the Ontario Human Rights Code, and that addresses that argument that some might want to raise across the province.

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

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I want to start off by welcoming and thanking the members of the various fire departments that are here in the members’ gallery as well as in the west gallery to listen to the debate. It’s an important debate. I’m going to try to cover some of the areas that are mentioned in the bill that’s in front of us today. Hopefully, Bill 181 will be able to pass before this session comes to an end.

I wanted to start this debate by mentioning that there was a resolution that came forward back on March 10 of this year from the MPP for Algoma–Manitoulin, Mike Brown, calling on the government to introduce legislation allowing for the mandatory retirement for firefighters at the age of 60. The resolution was debated on that day and was unanimously adopted by this Legislature on that same day, March 10, 2011. The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services responded to that resolution and introduced Bill 181, which makes amendments to part IX of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

The proposed bill that’s in front of us today contains provisions to (1) provide for a mandatory retirement age for firefighters at the age of 60; and (2) establish a statutory duty of fair representation on firefighter bargaining agents.

Before I discuss these two provisions, I just want to mention a few words about my own experience dealing with firefighters in my previous capacity as a city councillor, both in the city of Scarborough and later on in the city of Toronto, when the megacity came into being in 1997.

In this legislation before us, we’re talking about recognizing and respecting the unique physical and hazardous work that firefighters do to keep the community safe. When I was a city councillor, I had the opportunity to visit a fire station. At that time, the fire station was located on Danforth Avenue in my riding, close to Birchmount Road. The firefighters went and did something that I thought was very unique. They had me put on their uniform or their outfit, which included the gloves, the overall protective covering and the boots, and then they

made me walk. I found out that I was wearing something very, very heavy, onerous and cumbersome, and at times I could barely move forward. Then they took a firefighter’s axe and put it into my hands. They said to me, “Now try walking.” Again, for a young person who was supposed to be pretty healthy, I found it extremely difficult to move forward. Then I thought to myself, “Imagine going into a building that’s on fire and trying to put out that fire using physical energy and either using an axe or directing a hose in that direction.” I thought, “It’s pretty hard work.” I began sweating in the suit. Maybe, at some point in time, technology will allow for something inside the suit. I know that they use it in certain astronaut suits to keep them cool so they don’t get overheated, or the body doesn’t get overheated.

Anyway, I thought about the fact that people are rushing in—firefighters are rushing into a fire carrying either an axe or pulling a hose into or towards a building, whether it be a residential, an industrial building, a commercial building and so on, and trying to spray out that fire. It’s extremely difficult. Then I thought of the worst-case scenario: having to go in there and trying to remove a person who is trapped in a fire. Again, you’re carrying that heavy equipment around your body, you’re going into a fire and you’re trying to pick up another human being and take them out of the building.

Then I began to realize, at that point—again, I’m one of these people who has to see it to believe it, and when I saw it, I began to believe it. I thought, “This is really onerous, hard work. You have to be in good shape to do it.” So I thought, “Okay, maybe after so much practice, it gets a bit lighter or easier.” Then another question came into my mind, and that question was, what happens when you’re going into, let’s say, an industrial place or somewhere where they have chemicals with long chains at the end of the molecule? These substances don’t just dissipate into oxygen or carbon dioxide or go into the air; they stick around. Not only do people or firefighters end up breathing this in; if the skin is exposed, the possibility exists that that material can get into your body. So you have to make sure as a firefighter that you’re well covered and protected, you’re able to breathe and that you have a physical ability to go into a hazardous situation, whether it be a home, an industrial place or any other location that catches fire, and put out that fire.

Up until 50 years ago or 80 years ago, fires were put out that were mostly made of wood. The west section of this building was made of wood, and it caught fire—and I don’t remember the exact date, but a while back—and it was mostly wood that burned. Nowadays, if you go in the same building or even this chamber, you’ve got to deal with carpet and all sorts of other elements that can catch on fire that wouldn’t burn the same way that wood burns. So we’ve entered a new era that’s only 50 to 100 years old, where plastics are burning—and all sorts of other materials. I don’t know what these chairs are made off, but that same material can catch on fire and will burn in a different way than wood and will cause different results to occur.

One other quick story—and I don't want to start telling too many stories because I want to get to the act. Again, my time is limited, but I remember—and I'm sure that many of the firefighters here know this. I'm going to admit some guilt here. When I was young, I used to help my parents, and my parents used to make tomato sauce every year. Many Italian Canadians like to make tomato sauce in the autumn, around September. We would take wood and burn the wood, and on top of the wood we would put a big pot of water and put the jars of tomato sauce on top. One day, I was asked by my parents to keep an eye on the fire. So I was putting wood in for a while, and then my nose began to get really stuffy. So when my parents came back home, they said, "Okay, you can leave now." I had to go and blow my nose. I want to put this in a polite and good way, but basically what came out of my nose was black. I thought to myself, "What is this?" and I got scared. I was a young kid at the time and I thought, "What's coming out of my nose?" It was black, and I thought, "It doesn't look right." It was explained to me later that basically it was the result of the smoke coming from the fire. That's only from one small incident.

Again, firefighters go into much more difficult situations and have to deal with, as I said earlier, much different types of substances that burn differently. Maybe the stuff that would come out of my nose wouldn't be black these days; it would be all sorts of colours or maybe no colour at all, which would perhaps be even more dangerous.

I want to get back to the legislation. I believe in this legislation. As an MPP, I believe that this is important legislation that needs to be approved as soon as possible.

I want to talk, first, about the issue of mandatory retirement. This bill would allow a mandatory retirement age for firefighters who are regularly assigned to fire suppression duties provided that it's not lower than the age of 60 years and is set out in a collective agreement. If a collective agreement does not contain a mandatory retirement age provision, it will be deemed to contain a mandatory requirement provision setting the age of retirement at age 60. The mandatory requirement provisions would not apply to volunteer firefighters or to managers.

Firefighters would not be required to retire if the employer could accommodate them without undue hardship—perhaps assign them to a different function which wouldn't be fire suppression.

The mandatory retirement deeming provision will come into force two years after royal assent of this bill.

Local municipalities can negotiate a retirement age. The Ontario Human Rights Code allows for mandatory retirement if it is found that a workplace environment is a bona fide occupational requirement.

There are approximately 75 collective agreements in this province for full-time firefighters, and the majority—about 56—include mandatory retirement provisions. Actually, about 50 of them require mandatory retirement provisions. What we're proposing to do largely reflects current practice. (1) The average age for firefighters is

57, and few firefighters retire over the age of 60; (2) most firefighters' collective agreements have a mandatory retirement age of 60—approximately two thirds of them do; and (3) approximately 26 municipalities do not have a mandatory retirement age in their collective agreements.

#### 1700

The second part of this bill that I wanted to talk about briefly and address is the duty of fair representation. The proposed bill would establish a statutory duty of fair representation on firefighter bargaining agents and allow firefighter access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board—we call it the OLRB—for duty-of-fair representation complaints. The duty of fair representation provides employees who believe their union is not representing them fairly the right to file a complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board. The statutory duty provision, as set out in section 74 of the OLRB act, 1995, does not apply to firefighters under part IX of the Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, so we need to amend that to allow firefighters the right to go to the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

It's important to be able to go and represent yourself at that board, because I think the alternative is perhaps a bit too expensive. Either you have to hire a lawyer or appear before the Ontario Human Rights Commission. If you hire a lawyer, there's the whole process of taking your employer to court or arguing with your union and also having to deal with the Human Rights Commission. It sometimes takes longer than one expects before their case is actually heard. So the bill in front of us today allows for firefighters to appear before the Ontario Labour Relations Board. And the labour relations board tends to have a quick or an expedited fashion of dealing with these different matters, and in a more appropriate manner.

I just wanted to reiterate a few more things that the Minister of Labour mentioned yesterday regarding mandatory retirement at age 60 for firefighters. He basically said the following, and I'll comment on it once I read it:

"Mandatory retirement at age 60 for firefighters engaged in suppression activities has generally been found by the Human Rights Tribunal to be a bona fide occupational requirement.

"Tribunals have reviewed extensive medical evidence and have generally found that:

"(1) age is a very significant contributor to the risk of cardiac events among firefighters;

"(2) there is a significantly increased risk of cardiac disease around the age of 60; and

"(3) the safety consequences of such an event for a firefighter, the public, and his or her colleagues may be grave."

Bill 181, which since its introduction has received the support of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, acknowledges the concern of increased health and safety risks with age and demonstrates our collective concern for the well-being of Ontario firefighters. We're all aware that firefighters engaged in active firefighting

work under unique conditions. Their work is extremely physical and unpredictable. They contend with hazards such as intense heat, thick smoke and dangerous chemicals.

As I mentioned earlier when I spoke, times have changed, and when they conduct the fire—getting back to my earlier story about visiting a fire station and having an extensive tour—what firefighters have created is a chair, and what happens is that a firefighter will suit up, go into a fire, and to prevent any kind of cardiac arrest or other physical problem, they have a chair where they will sit and be able to recuperate, breathe, drink water. I forget the name of the chair. It was almost like a lawn chair, basically. You sit in that chair, and you're able to recuperate before you go back into that fire.

I actually find it quite brave for a firefighter to be able to go into that situation. We all know what happened with 9/11. The firefighters there rushed to the scene. Were they concerned about their own safety? Yes. Did that stop them from going into the building? No. Did it cause some of them to die? Yes. And the reason is pretty clear: Firefighters do care about the safety of other human beings.

I was watching television last night, and the firefighters were talking about how many of them had died and perished because they were trapped on floors—I think some of them were on the 30th and 40th floors, just after the incidents had happened where the planes had flown into the buildings. They weren't thinking, "You know what? I'm not going to go up there because this building may collapse," or, "I'm not going to go up there because the equipment's too heavy." They carried their heavy equipment, which I think would be similar to the equipment that our firefighters carry, without thinking about their own lives. They were concerned about the lives of the people trapped up higher in the building, and they went up there. And many of them lost their lives doing so.

I know the same thing would happen here. We hear about fires that occur, and then you hear afterwards about firefighters who suffer cardiac arrest or have other inhalation problems. I used to think: "What does that mean, breathing in smoke? How can that harm someone?" But, in fact, many fatalities that occur during fires happen when people, even the occupants of a building, breathe in too much smoke. Smoke is the killer, not the actual fire.

Getting back to the issue of age and retirement at age 60—you do change. I'm different at age 49 than I was at age 29. As much as I'd like to be able to bench-press a certain amount of weight, I can't do it anymore, or if I do it, I feel pain in my joints afterwards. It's just not the same when you get a bit older. That's why my dad and my mom, who are both around the age of 80, complain even more about their aches and pains when they wake up in the morning. We do age. There has to be a cut-off point, and the legislation in front of us presents the age of 60 as being that cut-off point.

It's difficult for a 60-year-old to go into a fire and be able to do it successfully. Yes, people are healthier in

general; people have longer lives, but the body has its limitations, and a 60-year-old going into a fire will be different than a 20-year-old or a 25-year-old. There are a lot of young firefighters who have just come out of their training and are out there doing the work. They have a better ability to go in there and do the job than someone who is 60 or over. It's not an issue of discrimination. It's a measure of common sense and of fact: An older person is going to have a tougher time going into a fire. We are trying to address that concern and make sure that we don't have situations of cardiac arrest or problems of other physical dangers that can occur, especially when a firefighter is a bit older.

I think that it's important that we pass this legislation. The second aspect that I spoke about earlier is an important one: the duty of fair representation—that they have the chance to appear before the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

Finally, in the time that's allocated to me, I just wanted to mention another thing. There is a letter that we received from AMO. They've issued some concerns. They may appear at committee and say, "There's a cost here to the municipalities. They're going to be having to pay more to their firefighters, and it's going to be more expensive to change the existing legislation." But I think the ministry has looked at this, and we're trying to provide consistency and uniformity throughout the province. The bill would give municipalities flexibility to address any particular local cost impacts. The proposed legislation would not directly impact pensions. For municipalities without collective agreements that set out a mandatory retirement age, the age is often set by municipalities through bylaws or employee contracts. Again, approximately 50 of the 75 collective agreements already have a retirement age of 60 or 65.

So I don't think that AMO's arguments, with the greatest respect, are going to negatively affect the proposals in this bill, and the firefighters have responded to those concerns; they're better articulated by the firefighters than they are by myself here today. We have agreed with them—or at least I am agreeing with them today—that you do basically have a cost-neutral situation here, and it doesn't harm the municipalities from entering into this type of a collective agreement with the firefighters.

**1710**

Again, I speak to support this bill and hope that we have a quick debate here. As the member from Welland mentioned, second reading debate is to talk about some of the broader principles. If it gets to committee, hopefully we'll talk about some of the more detailed provisions and make any amendments that need to be made, bring it back here and have a quick third reading, and be able to put this bill into law before this Legislature rises on June 2.

I thank you for the time to speak today and look forward to questions and comments.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Scarborough Southwest gave a very insightful description of going through the experience of the equipment and the uniforms and the fire suppression challenges, and I completely sympathize. It's a very worthy description to put on the record.

Our critic, the person most passionate on our side of this, Garfield Dunlop from Simcoe North, will be up shortly. He carries the torch rather passionately on what I call the Solicitor General file, now called the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. There's no one—and I see that the minister, because he's going to do that, is in now. That's why he's here, out of respect for what comments may be added to this discussion.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** He may share the time with the minister because they're on same page. They care about public safety.

There really are some things that need to be sorted out, and I hope they're covered. The member from Welland, with his legal training and acumen, referenced three conditions to be non-compliant with human rights provisions. It's important for people today—I'm over 65, and I intend to be here for another 10 years, the people willing.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Ten years?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Twenty, perhaps. My goal is to be here as long as Mr. Bradley, for instance, or Mr. Kormos, for that matter.

I'm not in the kind of duties that the member from Scarborough Southwest described, carrying around a Scott Air-Pak with 50 pounds and smoke and all these various things that you're challenged with. But there needs to be clarification.

Certainly, I would encourage the association that is here listening to contact your MPP and bring them up to speed. This is your life, this is our safety, and I think we want to get this bill right.

So I'm waiting for Garfield Dunlop to definitively—

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

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I listened carefully to the comments by the parliamentary assistant, and he made a valuable contribution to this debate, including some very visceral descriptions of his own experiences with carbon and smoke inhalation.

I'm glad the Minister of Community Safety is here because maybe he'll regale us again with observations about how the elimination of a retirement age gives Ontarians the choice as to when to retire. Maybe he'll talk about Freedom 55—or is it 65 or 75 or, indeed, 85?

Down where I come from, I say to you, people don't have those choices if they don't have a pension. People don't have those choices if their modest savings have been swallowed up by a recession and by fund managers who have more interest in generating income for themselves than in protecting the scarce assets of a senior who is retired from Atlas Steel, who, of course, can only collect \$1,000 of his pension because this government won't increase the pension benefits guarantee fund cover-

age to the \$2,500 that has been recommended in the pension report and that New Democrats have been advocating for years now—private member's bills from me, private members' bills from my colleagues.

So I don't know whether the minister is going to talk about how Ontarians now have been liberated; they're free, free to work. That is a—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Didn't the NDP give holidays on contributions?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Oh, wait a minute. The minister missed my comments that it was Bob Rae who gave contribution holidays to the “too big to fail,” and subsequent Premiers like Harris, Eves and McGuinty have maintained that—Tories and Liberals, every single one of them. Shame on them all.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments. The member for Ajax-Pickering.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I want to just take the couple of minutes I have available to commend the member from Scarborough Southwest for his presentation on the bill and the comments he made.

Let me digress, though, if I can, for a minute. I'm only hopeful that the member from Durham's constituents have the insight not to keep him around for another 20 years. I mean, please. Respectfully, I like him, but 20 more years? My goodness.

My most current reference—actually, I'm going to a retirement function tomorrow night for Bruce Compton and Dee Amos out in Pickering, both with the fire department, one a platoon captain and one a dispatcher whom I have had the chance to work with in part of my earlier life. Having spent 29 years in elected office, 21 of those in Pickering, I've gotten to know the firefighters and the great work that they do and the support team that works with them.

Having said that, I think politicians should come here a little bit like yoghurt: We really need to come with a best-before date. I, for one, want to leave before my best-before date. I'm not sure when that is exactly; I just know that if I leave by October, it will be before my best-before date. So my plan is to leave accordingly at that point in time and join those in relatively early retirement—like our firefighters, those in suppression, many of whom are here with us this afternoon, who deserve the opportunity, if it's not currently built into their collective agreement, to be able to take a retirement at an age when they are vital, when they do have the capacity, as the member from Welland said, to enjoy those years when they are still physically healthy and able to do that, particularly after, in many cases, having spent 25 or 30 years working in the industry under the types of stresses that the member from Scarborough Southwest speaks of, the physical drain that puts on your body, both the training to be able to do the job and actually doing the job required. We want to thank them for that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Just to correct the record, that was the member from Pickering-Scarborough East.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I want to congratulate the member for his comments on Bill 181, and he brought a lot of the good points about why we're debating this bill. I want to make comments on my colleague from Durham. I didn't realize he was going to spend so many more years here in the Legislature. He should have been a firefighter; maybe he'd be enjoying life more.

I'll have an opportunity, as you heard. I'll be doing the leadoff here. I'm not sure how exciting the leadoff is going to be, because it's a fairly simple bill. I think the House wants to pass this bill, and I look forward to that opportunity to spend my leadoff time.

I think, above all, I want to reemphasize what the member from Welland said earlier. You know what? This is a bill that the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association has lobbied for, I know, for at least the last five years, and I think they've got the bulk of the people in this Legislature supporting this legislation.

We don't want this debate to carry on a long time. We think that we should get it to committee as quickly as possible. Possibly, we might even be able to do what happened with the sex offender registry bill, where we actually had committee hearings in the morning, we'd done clause-by-clause in the afternoon and got it back for third reading. That may be a possibility here. I'm not sure—I can't speak on behalf of everyone—but that worked out well, and it worked out well for the sex offender registry folks as well. They were very happy with that commitment from this Parliament.

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

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I want to thank the members from Durham, Welland, Pickering–Scarborough East and Simcoe North for their remarks. I think we're all basically on the same page, with a few aspects to be tweaked or worked out at committee, so I appreciate their remarks. I think we're all in agreement: We want to get this passed before this sitting ends.

I welcome the firefighters who were here from the east in the members' gallery here and the west gallery. I don't know if there are any in the east gallery; I think there are a few other firefighters here as well. I want to thank them all for coming here, because they're listening to the debate, and I know that they're all interested in seeing how this debate plays out.

Again, I thank them for their remarks, and I look forward to the leadoff from the member from Simcoe North. Let's hopefully get this bill through the legislative process as soon as possible.

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

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm very pleased to be able to rise today and speak on the leadoff on Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that I'm critic for community safety and correctional services, and this is a Minister of Labour bill. However, because it ties in so tightly with community safety and our firefighters, I made an agreement with the member from Lanark–

Frontenac–Lennox and Addington that I would do the leadoff on this and carry the bill in the debate.

I'm very pleased to do that, particularly because, as I mentioned earlier, we've had around five years to digest what the professional firefighters have asked us to do with this legislation. I think, overall, it's a pretty balanced bill. Some people have asked me, "Why are the volunteers not included at this point?", and this concern and that concern. They took what the membership of the professional firefighters' association had requested, and that is to have this legislation apply to them at this point. They did that, based on many years of study, history, statistics and data that concluded that for people who fight fires, there's an age group of around the age of 60 where you don't have as much stamina and you're more prone to have some types of injuries and cases of heart attacks, which puts your fellow colleagues in jeopardy as well. So it's definitely a labour bill and a public safety bill as well at the same time.

I'm happy to say that I felt the bill was balanced. We'd had so many meetings with the professional firefighters, and we had the support of the leader of our party, Tim Hudak. I think it was good to move forward at this time.

I like to always read the explanatory note into the record. I think it's always good to have that on record in this kind of debate.

"The bill makes several amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

"Section 46.1, which imposes a duty of fair representation on bargaining agents for firefighters, and sections 46.2, 46.3, 46.4 and 46.5, which provide mechanisms for enforcing the duty, are added to the act. These provisions come into force on December 1, 2011"—later on this year.

"Section 53.1, which deals with mandatory retirement for firefighters who are regularly assigned to fire suppression duties, is added to the act. A collective agreement may include a provision requiring such firefighters to retire at a specified age of 60 or over. Such firefighters shall retire at the age specified in their collective agreement, unless their employers can accommodate them without undue hardship.

"After a two-year period, an additional element will take effect: Collective agreements that do not contain mandatory retirement provisions, or that provide for a mandatory retirement age under 60, will be deemed to contain a provision requiring retirement at the age of 60.

"Section 53.1 applies despite the Human Rights Code."

That's all part of the explanatory note that we've had an opportunity to look at, and it's clear there for everyone to see.

A little bit of our briefing notes on it: The bill was introduced by Minister Sousa on April 18, with second reading starting May 3. We have the two critics.

Our key message for our sake is that we believe that the mandatory requirement is appropriate in occupations that are highly physical, such as fire services. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has also expressed his support for this. Both

the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs have been advocating for this. We'd like to listen to deputations from all stakeholders during committee hearings and make amendments accordingly.

The bill makes amendments to part IX of the Fire Protection and Fire Prevention Act, 1997. I already mentioned it in the explanatory note, but I will repeat it again. The proposed changes are as follows: It provides for a mandatory retirement age for firefighters, and the bill would allow a mandatory retirement age for firefighters who are regularly assigned to fire suppression duties, provided it's not lower than the age of 60 and is set out in a collective agreement. If a collective agreement does not contain a mandatory retirement age provision, it would be deemed to contain a mandatory retirement provision setting an age of 60 years.

Secondly, the bill establishes a statutory duty of fair representation on firefighter bargaining units, and would establish a statutory duty of fair representation on firefighter bargaining agents and allow firefighters access to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for duty of fair representation.

The average retirement age for firefighters now is approximately 57, and a few firefighters do retire over the age of 60. So it's not really going to apply to a tremendous number of people, because the younger people start at 24 or 25 years of age and are old enough to draw pensions at the age of 57 or 58. The mandatory human rights provisions would not apply to volunteer firefighters or managers.

The Ontario Human Rights Code allows for mandatory retirement if it is found to be a bona fide occupational requirement. There are approximately 75 collective agreements for full-time firefighters—this has been said a few times in the House today—and the majority, about 50, include mandatory retirement provisions. Approximately 36 municipalities do not have a mandatory retirement age in their collective agreements.

I'm glad to see that so many folks are here today from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association—I talked to president LeBlanc a number of times over the past few days—and I do want to compliment them on their diligence and their passion for this issue over the last four or five years. So it's good to see that the bill was brought forward.

Secondly, we also have to remind members that the member from Algoma-Manitoulin actually had his resolution passed in this House. We all supported that—all three parties—and I think it's safe to say that that was a motion we dealt with based on this, and maybe that actually spurred the government to move forward with this legislation.

I'm not sure how many colleagues in my caucus would like to speak to this bill. We've had a couple now—myself and Mr. O'Toole—and I think it's safe to say that not a lot more members will want to speak to this. So we might be able to get this bill to committee fairly soon, depending on how many government members, and I know there's still the leadoff to do from

the third party. We want to make sure that's done; however, we would like to get this moving along fairly quickly, because I think we are all concerned that when we're this close to the end of the legislative session, if we prorogue a week earlier, we don't want this bill to get caught up in that prorogation. We want to make sure it's passed and proclaimed and doesn't become some kind of election issue because of some people's concerns.

I want to talk about a lot of the firefighters in our communities—although we have an hour to talk, we've already kind of summed up the bill, so I want to talk about a number of the firefighting organizations I represent and some of the people I work with. Certainly, one of the people who come here regularly on firefighters' lobby day is my colleague and friend Michael Gagnon from the Midland fire service. He always arrives and we usually have lunch or breakfast or something like that and chat about all the issues and go over the file and the issue notes for that particular day. Michael has always been a very strong and passionate firefighter in the Midland area.

I can tell you that based on last year, when we had the tornado in the town of Midland—it hit the community very suddenly almost a year ago; about 11 months. I can tell you it was a real tragedy for the community, but the fire service and Chief Kevin Foster did a remarkable job. No lives were lost, and the reaction and professional conduct of all the emergency services—they did a remarkable job. So we're very pleased that the Midland fire service is supporting this and are supportive of this legislation as well and want it to apply as quickly as possible.

Another friend of mine is Glenn Higgins, who is the president of the professional firefighters in the city of Orillia fire service. I want to point out that they've done a fairly good job in the city of Orillia over the last few years. They've just built a new fire station; it's the second fire station in the community. I know they've got some issues, but they can tell you that they've got a number of—I guess what I'm trying to say is that this community, the city of Orillia, because of Highway 11, has a tremendous number of calls it makes. My office in Orillia is on a corner not too far from the fire hall, and when you actually spend time in that office and spend the whole day, you realize how many times that fire truck leaves that office—over and over and over throughout the day, as they get calls on the highway and for the heart attacks and all the different things that apply.

#### 1730

Again, Glenn is supportive of this legislation. He was also here on lobby day. He supports the bill from Michael Brown, from Algoma. I think it's safe to say that they're onside with everything the professional firefighters are doing province-wide.

Kevin White is our government relations gentleman from the city of Barrie. I know that my colleague from Barrie is here today as well. I'm quite sure Kevin meets with her as well on lobby day. They've got a very, very busy fire station in the city of Barrie. It's one of the

fastest-growing communities in the province. I think there are four stations there now, and because of the Barrie-Innisfil annexation, they'll have to add another station sometime in the old Innisfil section.

I have to apologize; this is where I kind of have a conflict of interest here. My daughter's partner is a firefighter with the city of Barrie firefighters, so if there's a conflict in this House, it's me, because I'm speaking in support of something that will help him, okay? But I don't really consider it a conflict. He's somebody who's always on my case about the issues around firefighters, the issues around mandatory retirement, presumptive legislation and all that sort of thing. It's great to work with these guys.

On top of that, it's interesting, because today the leader and I went out and the leader spoke to the Ontario fire chiefs' association. Their conference is today at DoubleTree out on Dixon Road. They have quite an interesting program. We talked about all the different—you know, presumptive legislation.

One of the things that was near and dear to all of our hearts, and that I would like to put on the record today, is the way the fire services communities responded to the two gentlemen who lost their lives in Listowel, the two firefighters, the volunteers in the North Perth organization, back a few weeks ago. It was simply a tragedy. It was interesting to attend the service and see the fire service community from all across Ontario and other parts of the country, as well as the States, showing up to support these gentlemen who had lost their lives.

In my own community, I've got a number of fire services. Many of them are volunteer firefighter organizations as well. One of the neat things—this morning I met a gentleman from the Ontario Fire College. One of the things that the communities in Simcoe county are quite proud of is the amount of training that the municipalities allow the volunteers to get. A lot of them go to the Ontario Fire College in Gravenhurst for that training. One of the interesting things about the training is that it's often—many of these young guys who are volunteer firefighters want a career as a professional firefighter. This training helps them a lot in applying for jobs, and many of them have received jobs not only in Barrie, Orillia and Midland but they've received them in Toronto and the GTA, and they're very proud of that.

That's one thing: If there's ever a conflict with volunteers and municipalities that don't have a full-time firefighter, in many cases the municipalities actually complain that they pay all this money to train volunteers so they can move on to a full-time job. But we do that in many organizations and many different jobs in this country. I can tell you that it's always quite nice when you hear those stories: Some guy who joined the fire department at the age of 18 or 19 gets a lot of training, and the next thing you know, he has an opportunity to get a full-time job, and well-paying, with pensions and all that sort of thing, and we're very happy that that happens and it applies.

I wanted to say this about the volunteers, because with the mutual aid system, the volunteers, of course, work

with the full-time guys. We've had some simply amazing stories up in the Simcoe county area over the years, and one of the things is to do with train derailments. Train derailments are an amazing thing to happen, but in the township of Severn, which is where I live in the county of Simcoe—it's in the centre of my municipality—you may recall, Mr. Speaker, that earlier this year, there was a large train derailment. It was sort of on the Muskoka-Simcoe North border at Severn Falls. A large freight train went off the rails. It was just amazing how all of the fire departments came together with the police services and responded and got the people out of their homes. There was actually an evacuation in the area. It was interesting to see how they worked and got everything under control. The Canadian National came in with their equipment. There were not a lot of delays in railway shipping at that time, but it was because of the good work of the emergency services that were there almost immediately.

The Severn township fire department has, I think, a total of three full-time people: the chief, the deputy and, I believe, the fire prevention officer. I met the chief today down at the Ontario fire chiefs' association and we were chatting about that.

Just recently, last Thursday, the township of Severn purchased a new pumper truck. I know that the company they purchased it from asked Severn if they could get it back for a couple of days because they had to take it down to the exhibit at the Toronto Congress Centre, where they had a couple of days of showing off all the nice new equipment that is available to the fire departments. So Severn took their equipment down there too. They have a total of four stations in the township of Severn, covering a fairly large geographical area, including a tremendous amount of crown land.

The township of Oro-Medonte is another one of my large communities. It's got a total population of about 22,000 people. I believe there's a total of four full-time people in that department, along with five stations. They've got a lot of equipment, but one of the things in Oro-Medonte that they are responding continually to—as well as the township of Severn—is the fact that they've got the Highway 400 extension and Highway 11 going through the centre of the township. They get a tremendous amount of calls from those four-lane highways, which require a lot of attention and a lot of care.

Again, they're tied in a lot. It's amazing to watch the mutual aid system work, where Barrie and Orillia come out to help them at times. There were times when they've had to go back into the cities as well with some of the big fires.

As well as those two, we have the township of Ramara, which is down by the Beaverton area. It takes in an area up to Orillia. I believe there are three stations in the township of Ramara, one new building included. Ted Conway is the chief there; I'm not sure if Ted made the convention here today or not. However, they had a major train derailment about eight years ago when some chemical leaked out of one of the cars. I can tell you that at that point, because there are a lot of quarries in the area, the quarries' front-end loaders came to their rescue

and helped them with pushing clay into certain areas so that the chemical couldn't get into the farmland and into the water supply.

On top of that, I have two other townships, Tay township and the township of Tiny. I think Tiny has five stations and Tay has four stations. These are all well-manned stations, with well-trained people, and as I said earlier, a lot of the guys who are trained by the municipalities often go out and end up with jobs as full-time firefighters in some of the other communities, like Barrie and Orillia. Many of them commute back and forth to Toronto.

**1740**

On top of that, we also have the Penetanguishene Fire Department. It is a volunteer fire department, with a couple of full-time people: the chief and one other. Penetanguishene is tied in with the group of Tay, Tiny, Penetang, Midland, Beausoleil First Nation and also the township of Georgian Bay. They all work together on a lot of projects together to help with fire prevention.

As well, we have two other First Nation fire departments: the Beausoleil First Nation, which is out on Christian Island in Georgian Bay, as well as the Chippewas of Rama. The Chippewas of Rama probably have, in my opinion, the most equipment per capita, but they also look after the casino at Casino Rama. It's a full-time fire department. I believe there are 12 full-time members there, and they have some remarkable equipment that they use. They've also got a tower truck etc., just in case there are emergencies around Casino Rama.

The riding I represent is a fairly large geographical riding. There are a lot of halls, a lot of stations, a lot of people putting a lot of time and effort into these jobs, and every time we do something in this Legislature that applies to helping them, I think it's very, very important.

As I said earlier, we will be supporting Bill 181. This follows along the line of a lot of the other things we've done in this House around fire protection. One of them, of course, was presumptive legislation. I recall the day we passed presumptive legislation—I believe the former speaker was the minister at the time. I think it was a fairly proud day in this Legislature. The minister introduced the bill, and I believe that within five minutes, it was all passed. Jim Wilson, the member from Simcoe-Grey, asked if we could have unanimous support to have second and third reading, and we passed that bill that day and got it done so it was done once and for all. We almost did the same thing with the sex offender registry. I think it was good that we showed that leadership as politicians in these types of things.

Last year, the minister, after some questions in the House on volunteer firefighters who showed up—I think it was Mr. Levac and Minister Fonseca at the time who made an announcement out in Paris, Ontario, saying, "You know what? We'll apply this same law, the presumptive legislation, to our volunteers." I believe there's something like 20,000 volunteers across our province.

I just want to get back over to this one problem that I've got, and I am hoping that the government will listen

to this and will take this very seriously. I had asked a question in the House here about a week ago on firefighter Tom LeBlanc, who lost his life with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He passed away after 32 years' experience as a forestry firefighter working for our province. He's not covered under presumptive legislation. There's nothing that covers him. Apparently, they're saying that there's not enough proof that he had contracted cancer because of the forest fires. But the fact of the matter is, this guy probably has inhaled more smoke than a lot of firefighters would ever dream of inhaling, because the forestry firefighters don't have the same apparatus and they sometimes spend weeks in the bush. This guy spent 32 years and fought fires all over North America for the Ministry of Natural Resources.

I asked the question to the minister. The minister met myself and Tom's widow, Kim, down the hall at a meeting, and we talked about it again. I'm hoping that that's not going to die. I'm hoping that the WSIB and the Ministry of Labour can make this happen so that our full-time firefighters who work for this government—they work for the Ministry of Natural Resources—can be covered with that same legislation.

I believe they're hiring part-timers right now for the forestry season. I think I even saw on the news a little earlier here today that there's already a forest fire burning somewhere in California. Those kinds of guys will be asked to go and help those other jurisdictions fight these fires. So it's important that we apply that.

I know it's all part of the presumptive legislation, but if we're going along with the mandatory retirement—when we get to committee with Bill 181, we're going to be hearing from different organizations. We know that AMO will likely come, because they've got a few concerns. The OPFFA responded back, and I like the answers that I see in there. I'm hoping that there will be a very positive response from AMO. We'll see about the hidden costs or any costs that there are, and we'll try to work with those.

We also know that the Ontario fire chiefs' association—as I said earlier, we were out there this morning at the conference and our leader, Tim, spoke to them, and they now have some concerns that maybe the volunteers should be covered at this time. We're not 100% sure. They may come back and ask us to do some kind of an amendment. Of course, we know that the OPFFA will be there and there may be some other organizations that will show up to either support or have some kind of negative comments about the bill.

I think we know in this House that basically we all support what we've seen, what we've been told or been lobbied about for the last five years, and I think it's safe to say that we'd like to have this bill get before the committee as soon as possible. I'm not sure when the bill is being called again, but it may be as early as next week. I'm not sure how long we're here. I believe the calendar date is June 2 when we actually leave here, but if the House happens to adjourn the week before, which wouldn't surprise me at all, we don't want this bill to get caught up in it.

I've talked with the other critic, the member for Welland, today, and so we can say together that we support getting this bill passed as quickly as we possibly can and getting it to committee. If it's possible to do the clause-by-clause on the same day—if anybody is hearing any negative comments or some kind of an amendment they'd like to see in the bill, it would be nice to bring it forward as soon as possible so we at least know, even before the committee hearings apply, that it's something we can work with.

With that, I've covered a bit of territory. I just want to thank everybody for their support of this kind of legislation in this House. Like I said earlier, although it's a Ministry of Labour bill, in the end it affects people in community safety, and we want to make sure that we protect those who protect us.

I think it's safe to say, as we mentioned at different times and as was mentioned in all the briefing notes that we've received from the different stakeholders, that the age of 60 is an age when trends definitely happen. People are more likely to have heart attacks or problems that would affect your fellow partner. We saw that earlier this year in the fire right over here on Yonge Street. I believe it was an arson case—I'm not sure if that was the final outcome or not. They've actually torn the building down. It was over by the Delta Chelsea area. A couple of firefighters went through the roof of that particular building. They had all the precautions in place, but what a lot of the firefighters are telling me is, if someone has a heart attack or has an incident that would have some kind of an impact on their partner, the partner couldn't help to get them out, or both could be caught in the blaze.

This is really all about saving lives. Community safety is the safety of the firefighters and the protection of the firefighters as well, and I think it's safe to say that we should be supporting them.

As I said, our caucus will be supporting this legislation. Our leader supports it. The PC caucus supports it. As we move forward, we hope that this bill can not only be passed in the next couple of weeks—we don't want any delays on it—but proclaimed as quickly as possible so that we can get everything coming into action before the provincial election hits, before this House prorogues later on in the season.

Thank you for this opportunity, and I appreciate this opportunity to speak.

1750

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

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I listened to the member with his valuable contribution to the debate.

I'm not very pleased with all of the references to the afflictions that accompany men and, I suppose, women as they approach the age of 60. I'm 58, going to be 59, and I was fine until I was reminded by Mr. Dunlop. Now I need my 300 milligrams of ibuprofen, which I usually take about an hour earlier, around 5 p.m., rather than waiting until 6.

The position has been well put. I do want to say that I truly wish that we were proceeding with a bill that would give a reasonable retirement age, along with a good pension, to every worker in this province—every worker.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** How about MPPs?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Mr. O'Toole interjects. He says MPPs. MPPs have a pension. All three political parties, under the leadership of Mr. O'Toole's Mike Harris, created a defined contribution pension plan back in 1996. I was here; I witnessed the member's colleagues voting for it. So he has a pension plan and also a salary that's far more than most working people in this province.

As I say, I truly wish we were debating and proceeding with a bill that would give every working woman or man in this province a reasonable retirement age with a decent pension upon their retirement. We all know that the motivation for this government removing retirement age—the issue of discrimination was hooey. It was all about the collapse of pension plans and the pressure that mostly my generation, baby boomers, are putting on those pension plans and the reluctance of the corporate world to want to share in funding those pension plans.

As to the cost to municipalities, let's just raise this point: Pensions are workers' salaries. We're not talking about additional cost. All a pension plan is is a deferred salary, so I don't want to hear anything more about that from AMO or from the member over here to my right—my far right, I suppose.

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

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I would share with all the members that March 17, St. Patrick's Day this year, was a very sad and tragic day in my riding. Deputy fire chief Ken Rea from Atwood and firefighter Ray Walter from Listowel tragically lost their lives responding to a fire. Many people today were at a very moving and beautiful service that was held in Listowel Memorial Arena. I always remember that you could hear a pin drop for an hour and a half in an arena that was filled with well over 1,000 people. They did that out of respect, and it brought into great relief for all of us how much we need our firefighters.

I'd say to all members: We need them, and they have come here and said, "We need something from you, our elected leaders." We need them, and they have come with all respect and said to us, "We need something from you. Could you please do this?"

I can't think of a member who would not want to vote for this bill out of respect for the bravery that is shown each and every day by our professional firefighters and by our volunteer firefighters. I know that my good friend the Minister of Agriculture—and I say to my friend from Simcoe North, our professional firefighters and our volunteer firefighters work hand in hand when mutual aid is required. They're all brothers as firefighters—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** And sisters.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** And sisters as well, I say to my friend. So as a result, I think it is important for us, as my friend from Simcoe North said, to dispose of this bill

as quickly as we can. Make sure that we get the bill right, but it is important for us to show the political leadership, all three parties here, to ensure that this request from the people in our society who we need can be met, and it's our way of showing respect to them. We need them, and in this case, they need us. Let's not miss that call.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I just want to acknowledge on our side—I'm sure the member from Simcoe North will also reflect, as he does—the tragic event at Listowel, as you referenced. Again, it was even here on the remarks that were put down out of respect. I think that for me to besmirch in any way what's been said and the support that's been expressed for Bill 181 would be a fine place to stop.

The member from Welland brought up that he hopes that all workers receive fair treatment. I think we all do. That's something that's complicated in terms of today's age of moving out of an era of globalization. I worked at General Motors for 31 years, and I think those days are somewhat in question at the moment. But my point is that we do have a pension provincially. It is a defined contribution plan. It's quite a different pension than a defined benefit plan. So we have one. I've been here almost 15 or 16 years, and the total value of that, with my own taxable contributions, would be less than an RRSP. If you formed a RIF or an income fund from that—I'm over 65—you'd get about \$600 a month.

In fairness, that's a brief explanation of a very complex topic. I'm not asking for sympathy. I am looking at young people like Mr. Wilkinson or the member from Scarborough who's here. That is an issue that needs to be addressed. If you have difficulties, the Board of Internal Economy will deal with that.

I offer this back to you because I'm over 65 and I had a good long working career. There are people here who spend a long time here fighting the fires of supporting public policy, and it should be respected. I'll leave that on the record.

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

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

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to thank the members from Welland and Durham and the Minister of the Environment for their comments. We have these leadoffs, and they do take—it's hard to speak for an hour on an issue, so you have to get into the volunteers and the whole business of fire protection. I think we do a pretty darned good job here in the province of Ontario. Our municipal partners, whether they're professional or volunteers, do a great job.

One of the things I haven't heard in the debate yet and one of the things that people don't realize outside of probably their own communities is how much volunteer work our firefighters do in our communities for the different diseases and fundraisers etc., for different community organizations. We see it with the sale of their calendars. I don't know if any of you guys up there—

maybe Fred has been on a few calendars in the past; I'm not sure. I know that every year my wife gets a calendar from Sudbury. I don't know why, but the Sudbury firefighters always send her a calendar every year.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Yes, you know why, Garfield; come on.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I don't know why. I think it's that when I did the blood sampling bill, I went to Sudbury, and ever since then they send her a calendar. It's not addressed to me; it's addressed to my wife.

I just want to thank all the members of the House for supporting this legislation. I hope, as we said earlier, it can get to committee quickly and we can pass it and have it proclaimed before this House adjourns a little later on in the spring.

On behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus, we're proud to support this legislation, Bill 181.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We certainly did have a broad discussion on the general principle of this bill today, and I thank all the members for it.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in his office.

**The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker):** The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

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 / 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.

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

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

An Act to revive 1314596 Ontario Inc.

An Act to revive S.L. McNally Consulting Services Inc.

An Act to revive Bahram & Hamid Inc.

An Act respecting the Ursuline Religious of the Diocese of London in Ontario.

An Act to revive 1312510 Ontario Ltd.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** According to my trusty pocket watch, it is 6 of the clock. This House is adjourned until Thursday, May 5, at 9 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
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Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
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Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
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<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Gélinas, France (NDP) <b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Oakville Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
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
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) <b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	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) <b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	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 COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS 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  
Yasir Naqvi, 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**

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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**

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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**

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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 Qadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
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