



No. 119

N° 119

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 39th Parliament

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

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 11 May 2011

Mercredi 11 mai 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 11 May 2011

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 11 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 Hindu prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO BY REDUCING CONTRABAND TOBACCO ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 APPUYANT LA STRATÉGIE ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE PAR LA RÉDUCTION DU TABAC DE CONTREBANDE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 9, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act/ Projet de loi 186, Loi modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur le tabac.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Bill 186 is entitled "Reducing Contraband Tobacco." It doesn't seem to go to the point of eliminating tobacco, and I question that. I don't know whether this government is concerned about rubbing some groups the wrong way.

My opposition colleagues and I have stood in this House on many occasions asking for the crackdown on illegal tobacco, and time and time again over the last eight years these requests have been ignored. Now we have this bill before us that reduces contraband, ostensibly, but it doesn't seem to work to eliminate it. Why is that? That's the question I'll put out there.

Illegal tobacco is destroying communities. Along with cheap smokes, the contraband market brings with it weapons, drugs and an obvious disregard for the law. Illicit tobacco is ruining corner stores; we've heard that a number of times in our finance committee. It's robbing the Ontario government of somewhere between \$500 million and \$600 million a year in taxes. Corner store operators have been forced to dig into their pockets to comply with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, yet the McGuinty government turns a blind eye to those selling illegal cigarettes to underage children. Again, when you have a high-tax item like tobacco, the legal trade cannot compete with the illegal, tax-free tobacco trade.

This has been deplorable. It's been eight years now. Eight years ago, we didn't really have any illegal tobacco of any significance. Eight years ago, we didn't have the

greedy, tobacco-tax-grab Liberal government in power. Eight years of tobacco tax hikes have created this crisis, this mess. What we see now is an unintended partnership between government policy and the underground economy. It's put tobacco farmers, manufacturers and retailers at a competitive disadvantage. It reminds me of a quote by Samuel Johnson: "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

Nowhere is this more prevalent than in my area, Haldimand-Norfolk—obviously Brant county with Six Nations. In Caledonia, home of the five-year land dispute, residents have reported seeing children transporting illegal packs of cigarettes into town on the handlebars of their bicycles. We have smoke shacks on Ontario government property just outside the town of Caledonia.

I'd like to talk a bit about Doug Fleming of Caledonia. He attended the Queen's Park media studio in 2007 to talk about smoke shacks. Mr. Fleming had grown tired of watching those kids ride into town on their bicycles with illegal smokes, and eventually he decided to put an end to it.

In an attempt to draw attention to the matter, Mr. Fleming set up his own smoke shack in town. When he suggested to the OPP that he was breaking the law and should be arrested, the OPP refused. While in the media studio, Mr. Fleming said, "I had turned to a life of crime in an attempt to have the law enforced, but it wasn't working." In conclusion, Mr. Fleming said, "If Premier McGuinty wants to create a smoke-free Ontario, it seems to me that he's not doing a very good job."

Come down to Caledonia. You'll see the smoke shacks blatantly located on Ontario government land—on MTO property on provincial Highway 6—and on Hydro One property. One of them is under one of the large towers that militants have blockaded any wires going up on.

Allowing an illegal market undermines this government's very own anti-tobacco policy. People buy cigarettes out of the trunk of a car. It's significantly cheaper. If you're underage, you're not asked for ID. And again, why would teenagers pay \$62 for 200 cigarettes when they can get them for \$6? Lowering taxes, increasing enforcement, and beefing up education and information is an answer. Basic economics kick in on the tobacco trade.

Along with illicit tobacco come other criminal elements, as I've mentioned. I could see supporting Bill 186 if the bill's goal was to eliminate illegal tobacco. That's not the goal. It's to reduce illegal tobacco—maybe reduce it something like from 50% to 45%; we were not given the figures.

Three years ago the federal government and the RCMP announced a program. What's happened? Contraband has gone up. Illegal factories have gone up, and even the legal ones—the federal government licenses the legal ones. There are well over 50, legal and illegal, in Ontario and Quebec. Organized criminal activity has gone up. So much for that strategy.

There's a simple way to eliminate contraband tobacco. Two years ago, I introduced a bill, the Tobacco Tax Reduction Act. This was done previously in 1994 to eliminate the incentive, to eliminate the motive, for illegal use. If tax policy, plus enforcement, education and border control, breaks the back of the illegal trade as it did in the early 1990s, then government can go into that cycle again and slowly start increasing taxes.

People argue that high taxes are necessary to prevent smoking. The problem is, close to half of the people pay no taxes at all—zero taxes, a zero tax market—hence, in that group, consumption goes up.

This tax-cut solution is not new. In 1994, then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Premier Bob Rae and four other provinces realized illegal tobacco was out of control, like it is now. They dropped taxes and shut down hundreds of illegal smoke shacks overnight. They brought it down to something like 10% of the illegal rate—considerably less than it is today. To quote our local MP of the day: “In my riding alone I have 200 smoke” shacks “on the reserve. I have had many people including the band council and most people on the Six Nations say ... ‘would you please do something about this problem. This problem is hurting our community.’”

0910

For 20 years, I worked for the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario. As I mentioned, back in the early 1990s, there were 200 smoke shacks locally. Taxes were crashed. Overnight—I was there literally the next morning—200 smoke shacks disappeared.

Cutting provincial taxes can only be done on the understanding that the federal government will follow suit, and I look to the spirit of co-operation we had in 1994. Again, the federal government and five provinces slashed taxes and shut down the shacks. It's up to both levels of government to address the criminal networks that have set up shop across the country.

As far as legal manufacturing, it's fine for the federal government to license, but they also have to inspect. They have to go into those native communities that have federally licensed manufacturing operations.

In 2009, Cancer Care Ontario and Hamilton's public health department spoke up on contraband tobacco. There was an article in the Hamilton Spectator, which I quote: “We are very concerned about the impact of inexpensive contraband cigarettes on smoking rates.” This is Rob Cunningham of the cancer society. I'll continue his quote: “We do know it's very bad in southwestern Ontario and has gotten worse in the last couple of years.”

I'll also quote Jan Johnston, a public health nurse: “It's the contraband that has the negative effect on all the progressive tobacco control measures because of the availability and affordability.”

We know of the high school surveys that are being done across the province. There was a study a while ago by the Canadian Medical Association Journal. It indicated that anti-smoking strategies aimed at young people are not working due to the accessibility of cheap illegal smokes: “The widespread use of First Nations/native brand cigarettes, especially in Ontario and Quebec, presents a serious challenge to tobacco-control strategies.” This was a warning from Dr. Russell Callaghan of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

There is little doubt that the government has lost control of the tobacco market. I'm not sure if allowing this illegal trade to continue for the last eight years is the Premier's way of being politically correct. I do recognize that there is mention of words like “native” and “Indian” inscribed in this legislation, and opening up or reaching out for facilitation or discussion with elected band councils, not that the elected band councils are involved in the illegal tobacco trade; they have very little control over this as well.

But for whatever reason, what we've seen over the last eight years indicates to me that there is no excuse for this government to lose control of the tobacco market. We are probably unique among jurisdictions in North America in losing control of half the tobacco trade.

Now, we all know that this is a revenue bill; it's not a health bill. It's a revenue bill introduced by a revenue minister doing the bidding of a Premier who never saw a tax he didn't like—there's quite a list of tobacco taxes that have come in over the last eight years.

We see legislation. It sets the sights very low by “reducing” contraband, because this government has dug the hole so deep and allowed such a criminal network to get so organized that if they tried to eliminate contraband, all hell would break loose in certain parts of Ontario.

I'd like to quote Gary Grant, spokesperson for the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco: “We're talking about a situation where 175 organized crime groups are smuggling illegal cigarettes, drugs and guns into this province and the McGuinty government is unwilling to act. It's really bewildering the government seems to be so out of touch with the reality of the situation.” That was a press release from that organization on March 4 of this year, underlying the fact that they were “shocked” at the time to hear the Ontario Minister of Revenue “reveal that the McGuinty government has decided not to introduce anti-contraband tobacco legislation...”

I guess the pressure ramped up; the big guns swung around on this government and here we are in the dying days of the McGuinty Liberal government finally, after eight years, debating legislation to do something about illegal tobacco.

Just to quote Mr. Grant and his organization further, “We gave the McGuinty government a grade of F for their response to contraband tobacco in 2010...” Well, here we are: It's May 2011 and yet another change of mind by this McGuinty government. Again, look at what you have created.

I'll quote my former employer, the Addiction Research Foundation, also known now as the—well, I call it the Addiction Research Foundation; there's a good reputation there—"Contraband tobacco accounts for 43% of all cigarettes consumed by Ontario high school daily smokers in grades 9 to 12." Obviously, those are our children, our grandchildren.

Right now, when it comes to tax policy, tax hikes are no longer forcing people to quit smoking; it forces them to find a cheaper alternative, whether it's that van or that trunk of a car or the smoke shack that you can visit at Six Nations or most other native communities across this province—certainly in Caledonia and elsewhere. There's probably about 200 smoke shacks in the riding of the member for Brant.

As far as tax policy, if you continue to jack up taxes, at a certain point you do reach the economic law of diminishing returns. This was reached a number of years ago. In my view, there is an approach, as I've said: tax cuts, coupled with enforcement, coupled with border control, coupled with a ramped up education program, something we have not seen from this government—something that we really have not seen from the federal government, even though they've had a three-year program now. I know some posters were out; I don't know whether anybody in this room has seen any of those anti-illegal-smoking posters. But it's going to take a bit more than this if both the provincial and the federal governments are going to have any impact on this war against organized crime.

With respect to the legislation and the proposal for Ontario to get involved in native community taxation, I'll pass on some information coming forward from the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, AIAI. This is from Grand Chief Randall Phillips. This is an editorial in our local Turtle Island News. As we would know, the First Nation leaders have been meeting with the Ministry of Revenue and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs—not the Ministry of Health, by the way. The quote: The changes introduced last week, as he says, "stand in direct opposition to the rights and interests expressed by AIAI in those conversations." This is from Grand Chief Phillips. He said he was taken by surprise. "There are many outstanding issues regarding jurisdiction, economic development and trade that are not even referenced in the proposed amendment." This is the Ontario government legislation. Further on—again, we do hear this a lot—it's putting forward the argument "that the cultivation and trade of tobacco is an inherent aboriginal right and the province has no jurisdiction on the issue." This is from Phillips.

0920

This is the deputy chief now: "Tobacco was a trading commodity for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans, and is an existing aboriginal right under section 35 of the constitution." This is a statement from Deputy Grand Chief McCormick. He goes on to say, "Additionally, the province has yet to state its position on the legality of First Nation manufacturers that hold only a federal tobacco license but not a provincial one."

So the legislation proposes to be working more closely with native communities, with the Mohawk reserves. The only thing I can say with respect to that: Good luck.

They make mention of federally licensed manufacturing facilities, and it's fine for the federal government to give these licences out for tobacco factories, but there has to be inspection. There have to be government bureaucrats who are willing to work in native communities, to sit inside these factories and document what's going in, what's going out, and further to that, what else is happening with respect to the supply chain.

I've been involved with the tobacco business in many different roles over many, many years. I used to work in tobacco; I guess that'd be 1972. I know a little bit about tobacco. I'm not sure if either federal or provincial government employees know an awful lot about tobacco farming, the movement of raw leaf, the threshing, the shredding or the processing, let alone the manufacturing and the retailing. I'm not sure whether federal bureaucrats are up to the job with respect to dealing with the native tobacco trade. And as far as facilitation with native communities working with—whether it be legal or illegal—tobacco, these kinds of discussions, say, around the manufacturing, have to include the non-native manufacturing as well. They have to include the non-native retailers as well.

As far as the enforcement end of this, it's not going to have any impact unless we give our police the support—the moral support and the financial resources—to do the job.

I don't think this bill goes far enough. I do recognize that, at least at the 11th hour, they've come forward with something and are willing to at least talk about contraband tobacco.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an honour to stand and follow my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk. He's certainly a statesperson in this place and always has very reasoned and thought-out comments.

Let's be very clear about the role of tobacco in our province: It kills 13,000 people every year. It kills one person every 40 minutes. If you look outside any high school, if you look outside ministry buildings, about 50% of the butts you find are contraband butts. This is a problem, there's no question, and we in the New Democratic Party see it as a problem. The question is about what sort of solution.

This, I might say, is a typical McGuinty government bill. It goes an inch when you need a mile. It's a punitive bill. We don't think punishment is the answer for any addiction issue. We think education, treatment—a whole range of responses is what this issue demands. To that effect, there are some great templates that have been produced in this province. The nurses' association and the cancer society, among others, have produced many that this government could really simply adopt, but doesn't.

The real problem here is the role of health promotion versus treatment of disease. If you look at the comparison

between the two budgets, for health and for health promotion, you'll see very quickly that there's very, very little emphasis that the McGuinty government puts on health promotion of any sort—never mind on this issue, which is a scourge, there's no question.

Some 13,000 people die a year; one person every 40 minutes. Children, especially young women, are taking this up. We have flatlined in terms of our war on tobacco in this province. We need to do way, way more. So I look forward to—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. The member for Ottawa–Orléans.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased to stand in my place today to speak about the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act, 2011. This certainly is a long-standing problem and one that we have to address as more of the youth are picking up these cheap cigarettes in the schoolyards and elsewhere. We then get into trying to break them of this habit. As adults, we know so many people ourselves—my wife was one—who smoked for so many years. She quit cold turkey about 20 years ago, and it was just amazing that she was able to do it because a lot of people can't give up the habit.

What we're going to do is increase oversight over the distribution of raw leaf tobacco in the province—that's necessary because we know the tobacco companies are involved in this as well, trying to get more of their product out there—and to permit police to seize illegal tobacco found in plain view and arrest people. I just can't understand how we can let these criminals prey on our kids in our schoolyards.

This bill will enable us to do more of that and, for the first time ever, require fine-cut tobacco to be marked so we'll be able to identify it better. That's where the bill is going. It's going in the right direction.

I was pleased to work with Mayor Bob Chiarelli in the city of Ottawa in 2001 and 2002 to bring in new legislation for this whole province with the smoke-free Ottawa bylaw. I was pleased to work with people like Dr. Cushman and so many people around Queen's Park when the Liberals brought in the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, and we got rid of all that advertising that normalizes cigarettes that the kids were seeing in retail—the last vestige of advertising of this terrible product by cigarette companies.

So I think this is a positive bill that will bring us closer to being able to do something to protect our children.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to re-enter this debate on the contraband illegal tobacco act put forward by the Minister of Revenue.

I'd like to compliment my colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk. He has been a constant source of information in this Legislature, given the amount of contraband tobacco and illegal smoke shacks in his own community. He has reinforced in this chamber, on several occasions, the need

for the government of Ontario to act on these illegal contraband tobacco smoke shacks.

I did have an hour-long debate where I was able to contribute my view in a very meaningful way to this debate. At the time, I was able to acknowledge several members of my caucus who, I believe, have been leading voices in cracking down on illegal and contraband tobacco in Ontario.

I'd like to start with my colleague from Carleton–Mississippi Mills who, as you will recall, put forward one of the first pieces of anti-smoking legislation in Ontario. I then move over to my colleague from Simcoe North who, as our corrections critic, has often been a leading voice on cracking down on illegal tobacco, as have my colleague from Halton, my colleague from Thornhill, my colleague our health critic from Whitby–Oshawa, my colleague beside me from York–Simcoe and then, of course, my colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk. This is a legislative group of people who have fought against this illegal trade, the underground economy, putting these cigarettes in the hands of children.

They could have done more. Sadly, for the last eight years, they have done nothing. It's very disappointing that they think that at the 11th hour they can get away with this. But not this time. No one believes them.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'll get a chance to speak a little bit more fully on this, and I think people will not be surprised when I raise the issue in regard to those issues that affect the First Nations directly. The government is trying to do what I think is essentially a good thing, and that is to—

Interjections.

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

0930

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Boy, they're having fun this morning, Speaker.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): What don't you understand about "order"?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Can I go now? Thank you.

Anyway, I was just saying that the government generally is trying to do something that I think is positive, which is trying to control access to tobacco on the part of kids. I think we can all agree that that is a laudable goal; I don't think that's an issue. However, there are particular concerns when it comes to First Nations, which I'll talk about later, that I think need to be taken into consideration. First Nations have been pretty clear, in speaking to the ministers responsible, that there needs to be further dialogue before this particular piece of law goes forward because, as they see it, what the law essentially does is put their band councils under administration in a weird kind of way. I think there's far too much example in the province where the federal government specifically, and in some cases the provincial government, has had a pretty colonial attitude when it comes to how they deal with First Nations.

Is there an issue? Absolutely. Is there an issue that the government wants and needs to deal with? Absolutely; I don't disagree. But I don't think that you can do this in such a way that doesn't take into consequence the serious concerns that First Nations have, which are legitimate concerns, and I'll speak to that a little bit later in debate.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you to the members for Ottawa–Orléans; Nepean–Carleton, our revenue critic; and the member from Timmins–James Bay.

The member for Beaches–East York used the phrase that this is legislation that goes an inch, not a mile; it's not going far enough. The stated goal is to reduce contraband. Let's set our sights a little higher: Let's eliminate contraband. Let's adopt the goal that was adopted by the federal and five provincial governments back in the mid-1990s.

I regret that this legislation is a revenue policy. That's the mindset of this government: to look at tobacco through the lens of revenue. A revenue policy on this is not enough. The revenue enforcement officers who will be going on farms and into factories are going to need an awful lot of training to know a bit about the tobacco industry. The enforcement aspect of this will come to naught if we don't support the officers and if we don't resource the officers.

Regulations are not enough. There are already 200 regulations in Ontario with respect to the tobacco industry. Half the people in the industry do not follow these 200 regulations; they follow zero regulation. We can add more regulation, as will occur with any piece of legislation, but it's not going to have an awful lot of impact when close to half of the tobacco industry in Ontario is illegal; half the industry pays no tax at all. This is the harvest that we reap when we jack up taxes to the extent that half the people involved in this industry, and the customers, walk away and don't pay any taxes at all.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just want to put on the record that generally we're supportive of the direction of this legislation. I think most people would see the direction as a laudable one to try to deal with the issue of how we make sure that we don't make the proliferation of tobacco products so available to young people. I think we all understand the importance on the health front of making sure that we limit that as much as possible.

But in saying that, there are a few things that the government needs to take into consequence, and to try to go back and fix the problem that they've created here. Those are specifically the issues and concerns raised by First Nations.

I want to put on the record a letter that was written by one of the grand chiefs to the minister just recently. She would have received this letter on May 5. I think it's going to lay out a little bit what the issues are from the First Nations' perspective. I'll speak to it a little bit more fully.

He writes the letter to the minister responsible, saying, "I hope that this letter finds you in good spirit and health. I am writing to you on behalf of the member nations of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians to express my deepest concern regarding Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act." He says, "While I understand that Bill 186 is one component of the wider smoke-free Ontario campaign"—and there is an acknowledgment there on behalf of the First Nations, saying that they understand what the government is trying to do. However, they say that "the legislation itself is primarily focused on punitive actions against producers and buyers of tobacco products," and hence is part of the problem here.

We're not doing what we need to do at the front end, which is that we need to be much more aggressive as a province—the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health Promotion—in really trying, by way of education, to discourage the use of tobacco. I think it's part of the point that's being made here. If you just deal with the punitive side, people are still going to do it.

I grew up, as you, Mr. Speaker, at a time when tobacco was probably much more prevalent in our society than it is today. Kids smoked at a fairly young age. Unfortunately, we're seeing the same thing repeating itself again. If we go to a lot of schools in my riding or, I would argue, ridings here in Toronto, we're seeing far too many children—children, specifically—who are using tobacco products. They do so, a lot of times, buying contraband cigarettes. That is the truth. Why? Because cigarettes at a corner store are expensive when you put all of the tax in. Kids, like a lot of people who don't have a lot of money, try to buy it for as cheap as they can. So if you put the emphasis strictly on the punitive measures, kids are going to buy the tobacco because it will still be available.

I just make the point—and I don't agree with this, but I make the point—that there is a lot of contraband in our society, a lot of it is very harmful to health, and we speak about drugs. We have very punitive measures to deal with people who are in the business of selling drugs in our society. But it still finds its market; there are still people who want to buy it. And no matter how punitive you are to try to discourage the distribution of the product, you will still have people who want to buy it. This is the reality.

How do you turn that around? I think one of the things that's lacking in this bill—and this is the point that the First Nations are making—is that we need to put more emphasis on the front end of trying to discourage people from the use of tobacco. It will not entirely go away, but every dollar spent, I would argue, on the prevention side and the education side is far more effective than every dollar spent on the punitive side, because you will always have somebody who will be in the market to produce these products and to sell them, even if you throw it underground, and the proof of that is what's happened in the drug trade. We saw in the United States a huge, huge initiative on the part of the federal government, dating back to the Reagan and Clinton eras, where they went to the "war on drugs," and at the end of the day, do you

know what? The banditos are still making the drugs and people are still buying them, in larger numbers, and all they've effectively done is filled their prisons.

Does that say that I condone the use of drugs? Absolutely not. They're the scourge of this planet; they're the scourge of our communities; they're the scourge of families and individuals. But clearly the approach of the punitive side has not had the effect that people thought it would have. I think that's the point that the chief makes about this particular initiative, in saying that if you put your emphasis on the punitive side—and he doesn't say this in the letter, but I'm making the connection that it's not going to be as effective as it would be if you did it on the education side, trying to prevent people from using these products. I think the proof of that is what has happened in the drug trade.

He goes on to say, "In its current form, Bill 186 presents a narrow set of interests while ignoring those of First Nations. Provisions that place regulatory authority of raw leaf tobacco under the Ministry of Revenue, that penalize producers and sellers of 'unmarked' tobacco products and that enable law enforcement officials to make seizures without ministry approval all impact on our rights and interests." This is an important fact; I know some people may disagree with this, but this is a reality. "First Nations have used and traded tobacco since time immemorial and never have we alienated ourselves from this inherent and constitutionally protected right. Ontario's attempt at regulating First Nation tobacco is an intrusion of our jurisdiction and in violation of section 35 of the Canadian constitution."

I had to be reminded of that. I'm the First Nations critic for our party, I reside in a riding where there are many Cree and Ojibway members in the communities that I represent, and I had to be reminded that the reality is that tobacco was a form of currency at one time within First Nations; it was a primary trading product. That might run against how we see an economy having to evolve, and we may not like the idea of the trading of tobacco, but it is a reality. First Nations have been trading tobacco for many, many years, and it's been almost like a currency, to a certain extent, when it came to trading.

0940

The point that the chief makes in this letter is that "We've always had, and we always view and shall always view that we have a right to produce tobacco and to sell it." They're okay with the idea of finding some regulatory authority about how you distribute the legal product within our society, and I think that's what they want to talk about. But if you come at it strictly from the punitive side, we don't like that, for the reasons I said up front as far as punitive is not as effective as being proactive at the front. The other part is, it runs against the rights under the Constitution, afforded them under section 35.

What I believe the chief is saying here, and I think it's a good point, is that they understand that the government's got a problem. They understand that society's got

a problem. They understand that something has to be done. But they're saying your approach is the wrong one, and they're saying, "Please come back and talk to us so that we can talk about how we move forward, so that we're able to get the stated goal"—and I think there's nobody in this House that disagrees. I, as a New Democrat, as the member for Timmins–James Bay, as a father and a grandfather, understand and support ways of being able to promote people and be proactive so that they don't use tobacco, something that is bad for the health, and that we need to find some way of dealing with that in a more proactive way.

Strictly saying that we're going to go out and we're going to fine people for the sale of illegal tobacco—which is actually a legal product, which is kind of funny—it seems to me that we're really not dealing with the issue, because at the end of the day, people will buy it. If they can't make it as contraband, they'll pay the higher price, so let's not kid ourselves. What we need to do is come at it from the other side, and I think that's the point that he makes.

He goes on to say: "I understand that the legislation attempts to capture the interests of First Nations in section 25, which enables the province to enter into agreements with bands for the purpose of administering the Tobacco Tax Act. This provision, however, only serves to facilitate the introduction of provincial regulation onto reserves through band consent and administration. It does not acknowledge the authority of First Nations to create their own regulations."

I want to remind the government that in 2003, when they were elected, or shortly after, they talked about—and I applauded, along with Howard Hampton, our then leader, and other leaders in northern Ontario, this government for saying that they wanted to have a new relationship with First Nations; that they wanted to do away with the relationship that has existed in this province, that has existed in other provinces and has existed in this nation for years when it comes to dealing with First Nations so that we really do deal with First Nations on a government-to-government basis, have mutual respect and understanding of each other's position and find ways to talk through how we work our way through the many issues that we have to deal with, for the First Nations, in this case, and sometimes, yes, for ourselves. The government made that announcement.

I was quite heartened, quite frankly, when the announcement was made because it looked back at the date when Bob Rae signed the Statement of Political Relationship with First Nations. I've always believed that we need to try to find a way to be able to work together so that we can find solutions to the many problems that face First Nations. But when we see the government, time and time again—in Bill 191, the Far North planning act, and Bill 151, the new pricing system for forestry products. When we look at all kinds of initiatives that this government has had, it has flown in the face of that new relationship that the government says it wants to have.

What the chief is saying in this letter is, what you're essentially doing is returning to a form of colonialism by

basically saying, “We will impose on you what our solution is, and we’re not going to have the dialogue with you in order to find how we can both, First Nations and non-First Nations, get to the same end result”—which is, yes, trying to find a way to keep tobacco away from the reach of children and others.

He goes on to say: “The legislation is also mute on the point of provincial acceptance of federally licensed tobacco products.” This is important; this is very important, and I repeat this: “The legislation is also mute on the point of provincial acceptance of federally licensed tobacco products.” What he’s saying there is, the tobacco products that they produce are licensed under the federal government. So here you’ve got the bands dealing with law as established by our federal Parliament, and the province is going in and basically trying to change the rules of the process without consultation with the federal or First Nations levels of government; just doing it on their own. He’s basically saying, “We’re doing what we’re asked to do under the law, and now you’re changing the game and you’re not even talking to us or the federal government about how that game should be changed.” I think that’s an important point.

“As a result,” he goes on to say, “the bill does little to advance the current impasse presented by Ontario’s unilateral imposition of its own regulations”—and this is the point that I made earlier. “Since the economic livelihood of many First Nation families is currently tied to the tobacco industry, it is of the utmost importance that legislation of this kind protects the inherent rights and interests of First Nations while respecting previously established regulatory authorities.”

So the first part of what he says is, “We’re working under the laws established by the federal government. If you want to change the game, it’s incumbent upon the province to bring the three parties together—the feds, the First Nations and the province—to come to some sort of accommodation about how this is to be done.”

If you’re going to say as a province, “We want you out of the tobacco business”—because, essentially, that’s what this legislation is doing, I believe—then it’s incumbent upon the province to try to find a way to stimulate some other type of economic activity at the very least within those First Nations so that people can go on to another way to make a living. You’ve got to be clear. You’ve got to say, “We accept that you are in a legal business. Tobacco is not a contraband product. We want to find a way with you to license your product so that we’re able to deal with those in the field who are doing it illegally.”

It seems to me that you’ve got one of three choices: You do nothing—and I don’t advocate that because I think you need to do something, and two is, you sit down with First Nations and you figure out a way that you can properly license the production and the distribution of tobacco from First Nations into society. Why is it that we have one rule for Rothmans and du Maurier and then we have another set of rules for First Nations? I just ask the question. If Rothmans makes cigarettes, and du Maurier

and Belvedere and Player’s etc—I don’t remember what all the other makes are—and they basically take a legal product, which is tobacco, and convert it into a cigarette or a cigar, whatever it might be, and then they sell it legally in stores in Ontario, why, all of a sudden, are we saying to First Nations, “You guys are illegal”? Then let’s shut down Rothmans and du Maurier.

It seems to me it only stands to reason that if you apply a law, it should be applied equally in the province. If the stated goal that we have is that we want to take tobacco out of our society, then make it illegal for anybody to sell tobacco. But what the First Nations are saying is that, in the case of tobacco, tobacco has been for some communities—and I wouldn’t say all; there is a limited amount of communities that make their living from tobacco, but there are some. We either have to find a way to license them properly for the production and distribution of the product or, at the very least, it seems to me that the third choice the government has is to say, “Okay, let’s work with you to figure out how we properly prepare people to move to the new economy,” whatever that new economy might be.

I know this is not easy. Listen, I don’t pretend, to the minister who’s listening to this debate today, that it’s an easy solution. I recognize that this is a very difficult solution. But if you’re true to your principle that you set in 2003, which is wanting to have a new relationship with First Nations, then I think you’ve got no choice. Otherwise, the new relationship is the same old, same old. It’s the same stuff that we’ve always had, where the provincial or federal government comes in and says, “Oh, my children, the First Nations, we know best, and we’re going to tell you how to do things because we know better than you.” I just say that to me, that seems like the wrong approach. I think the government was right in 2003 in wanting to have a new relationship and I think you need to prove that you’re serious about that new relationship.

He goes on to write, “All levels of government are required to consult with First Nations on matters that may impact on their aboriginal and treaty rights. For this reason, AIAI had been in contact with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to begin identifying solutions to the many issues surrounding First Nation tobacco products.” He’s telling you in the letter to the minister that he recognizes that something has to be done. “But do it with us,” he says. “Don’t impose a solution on us.” And it goes back to my first point, which is, if you have a new relationship, please demonstrate that you do.

“With this in mind, it is curious that your ministry did not inform First Nations of this initiative until shortly before the tabling of the legislation. Furthermore, I am disturbed by the notion of First Nation input being sought only after the tabling of the legislation.”

I spoke to people who were involved in that meeting with the Chiefs of Ontario about a month ago. I do understand that the ministers had a bit of a rough ride in that meeting, because when the First Nations raised this issue with the ministers, First Nations were pretty hard in

saying, “Hang on a second. We need to deal with these issues in a way that accommodates your need as a province and also accommodates our realities as First Nations. You’re moving without our consent. You’re moving without a discussion. You’re moving without doing what needs to be done to live up to this new relationship,” and you had a pretty tough go. The ministers of the day then said, “Listen, we’re going to set up some meetings so that we can have a chat about this before we table the legislation.”

0950

What ends up happening is, the night before the legislation is tabled, they get a phone call saying, “By the way, we’re tabling the legislation tomorrow morning.” Well, you can imagine, they were not exactly thrilled and excited—our First Nations brothers and sisters—when they heard that, because there is a constitutional guarantee that you must consult and accommodate under the Constitution. The chiefs reminded the ministers at the meeting, prior to the introduction of the legislation. The ministers engaged in, “Yes, we will meet with you and try to work out the problems,” and the next thing you know, it’s, “By the way, the legislation is coming tomorrow.” Well, you can imagine they’re not exactly thrilled and excited about what has happened here.

To go on, it says, “As a consequence of this backward process, we now have a limited opportunity within a constrained time frame to broaden the scope of the legislation so that it protects the rights and interests of First Nations. These circumstances are further undermining the relationship between Ontario and First Nations”—to my first point that I made earlier—“one that the Liberal government committed to recognizing through its participation in the Ipperwash Inquiry Priorities and Action Committee.” This, again, was something that the government undertook that I thought made some sense. Let’s learn from Ipperwash and let’s move forward and never repeat those mistakes again. What they’re essentially saying is that you’re forgetting the commitments you made, not only under the new relationship pledge but also under the priorities and action committee of the Ipperwash inquiry.

He closes by saying, “I therefore request that you remove Bill 186 from the consideration of the Legislative Assembly until proper consultations and negotiations between Ontario and First Nations have taken place and a win-win solution is reflected in this legislation.”

It’s pretty clear: You don’t have the support of the First Nations. I recognize it would be a difficult thing to try to figure out how we make this happen. I recognize that. If I was the minister, I would recognize that there’s some work to be done to get to an agreement. I don’t pretend that it’s going to be easy for the provincial government.

I just want to end on this point: You have made a pledge and a commitment to First Nations, and that is, that you are going to have a new relationship. When you see examples like this, where the government is not living up to that relationship, I think it drives First Nations

further and further away, and that is not something that serves the interests of Ontario, our citizens and our country in the way that it should.

I ask the government to take into consideration what has been said, not only by myself, but what has been said by the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians. I think you need to live up to your commitment and to do what you said you would do, and that is to have this new relationship with First Nations that they so much want.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments relative to the comments of the member for Timmins–James Bay?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I found the member’s comments very helpful and edifying. I just want to remind people what it is that the legislation is there to do. It’s there to prevent youth from starting to smoke. It’s there to enhance smoking cessation resources and supports. The member touched upon one aspect of the legislation’s objectives of reducing the availability of cheap and illegal tobacco.

The member made some good points regarding Ontario’s relationships with First Nations, and I need to bring the member back to this focus on the other two parts: preventing youth from starting to smoke, enhancing smoking cessation resources and supports, and the part that he discussed, reducing the availability of cheap and illegal tobacco.

It’s an issue that requires the support of, not merely our partners in First Nations, but also the federal government, the provinces of Quebec and Manitoba—our neighbouring jurisdictions—and the bordering US states. The member knows as much as we do that illegal tobacco hurts our communities and threatens more than a decade of success in Ontario’s fight to control tobacco and to reduce its consumption. This is a whole new initiative, if you will, where traditional sources of tobacco have actually seen their share of the market decline, and this cheap and illicit tobacco, as said, rather than be part of the solution, the purveyors of it—and I’m not suggesting that the First Nations are the sole purveyors of it, but those who are involved in the production, the distribution and the sale of illegal smokes—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Am I out of time?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): You are. Thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It’s a pleasure to enter into debate with my colleague from Timmins–James Bay. I often enjoy his interventions in debate because he will often bring the experiences his constituents have on a particular bill to this floor. He is also a great champion of natives in our province and of the north, and I appreciate that. He raises some very valid points.

I believe that the big challenge that we have with this legislation on this side of the House—and as I’ve mentioned in my leadoff, we will be supporting it because some of these efforts need to be done. We just feel in the official opposition that more ought to have been done

earlier, and that's why there's an awful lot of room for criticism of this government through its eight years of allowing the illegal contraband tobacco trade to continue, which has forced illegal and contraband cigarettes into the hands of Ontario's youth. It has also reduced revenues by anywhere between \$500 million and \$1 billion annually as a result of their lack of enforcement.

I think in this whole debate, the most poignant quote came through my colleague from Thornhill about a year ago, and it came from Police Chief Bill Blair from Toronto, who said—and I paraphrase, because I don't have the quote in front of me—that because they've allowed the illegal contraband tobacco/drug trade to occur, a lot of that money is going towards guns on our streets. The reality is that there is a huge underground economy and there is a huge linkage with organized crime that could have been dealt with eight years ago, and on the eve of this Parliament rising, we're now dealing with it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Parkdale–High Park for questions and comments.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's always engaging to listen to the member from Timmins–James Bay. He knows his stuff. What we didn't hear from the government side in response was an answer to his fundamental question, which is, why did this government not consult with First Nations before they moved ahead with a bill that clearly had to do with First Nations and First Nations constitutional rights? We haven't heard a word on that from the government side.

Listen, if the government wanted to just punish those who purvey cigarettes, this bill doesn't do it very well, it doesn't have many teeth, and the OPP themselves have said they're stretched already just enforcing the laws that are already on the books. So it doesn't punish well, and it certainly—in contrast to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville—does not help kids not start smoking. It doesn't do anything in the prevention field. This bill does neither well.

In fact, what it has done, and the only thing it has done well, is to insult First Nations, insult their constitutional rights and refuse to engage with them in any kind of meaningful consultation. Yet again, we've seen other examples of that in this House. The member from Timmins–James Bay has stood on many occasions on behalf of First Nations and talked about their rights and the fact that this government, really, despite their promises in 2003, have not followed through on that portfolio.

So I'm looking forward to his summation, but it would be very interesting, I would think, if in further debate the government would actually answer the challenge that the member from Timmins–James Bay brought before us; that is, why did this government not consult with First Nations about a project that has been part of really their métier since the beginning of time in this country? That I wait for.

1000

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

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I'm very pleased to comment on this bill. First of all, the bill has two objectives, really: to prevent youth from starting smoking; and, secondly, to stop contraband cigarette distribution.

Our government is taking action to increase oversight of the distribution of raw leaf tobacco in the province and to permit police to seize illegal tobacco found in plain view. I was shocked just lately when I walked into a long-term-care facility and saw a man walk in with a bag of 250 cigarettes and sell those cigarettes to the people—I would call them patients—the residents of this long-term-care facility.

Besides this, I remember being on a standing committee way back after I got elected the first time in 1995—we used to call it the Ombudsman standing committee. At the time, the Ombudsman was Mrs. Jamieson. Mrs. Jamieson came to the committee and recommended to the government of the time that we should look seriously at giving or authorizing a licence to a First Nation to manufacture cigarettes. That was turned down. Probably, it was a mistake at the time. If we had done it, we probably would have proper control on these illegal or contraband cigarettes.

Let me tell you, going back last year, we found out in an article in the paper that they even found animal skin in the tobacco of cigarettes that came from Asian countries. Really, we want better control over this, and that's exactly what our government is—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. The member from Timmins–James Bay, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My, my, my, where do I start? Sometimes it gets a bit frustrating in this place. I think we're all trying to do the right thing. I don't give a darn if you're a Liberal, New Democrat or Conservative; we all come at it from a bit of a different perspective, but we try to do the right thing. Unfortunately, because of the way this Parliament, over the years—the power has run from this very chamber to the corner office of the Premier. I don't mean just Dalton McGuinty, but it's gone on for far too long. This place becomes less relevant, because we don't learn from the debates, we don't learn from each other to the degree that we need to.

I was very cautious in my comments about this particular bill. I said at the very beginning that I understand what the government is trying to do. If I was the minister, I would be trying to find a solution as well because there's some very real problems that have to be dealt with. But essentially, there are two things that I was trying to say, and unfortunately, it doesn't seem as if much of it is going to be taken heed of. And that is, if we want to deal with the use of contraband tobacco, let's do so, but let's do so with a strategy that involves the First Nations, because, yes, they are part of the source. They're not the only, and I argue they're not even the major source, but they are part of the source, and we need to find some way of dealing with that. What I suggested was that you had three approaches: Do nothing, which I don't favour; try to find a way to fix regulation so that it achieves the objective that we all want and, at the same

time, respects that right of First Nations under the Constitution and lives up to the commitment of the government; and/or find something else for these people to do. That's the other option, and that's very difficult, I understand.

But the other part was that there's no emphasis on the promotion side. We can make this stuff as illegal as you want, and you can lock people in jail, but at the end of the day, people will still buy contraband tobacco. Why? Because it's cheaper, and that's what drives people to buy it. So we need to find other solutions to this problem as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? The member for Oak Ridges–Markham. I don't know why I had a block against that; I apologize.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's a very beautiful and wonderful riding, Mr. Speaker.

It certainly is a pleasure to enter into the debate on Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act.

Certainly, the war against tobacco is something that I've been involved in for at least 25 years. In my former capacity as the medical officer of health for York region, I had the opportunity to observe, in fact, both previous governments and the actions that they took in this regard.

But I'd like to actually go back even further. Our colleague from Timmins–James Bay did allude to the groundbreaking work that was first done by the US Surgeon General Luther Terry in 1964 with his report on smoking and health, where gradually the awareness of the harms not only of tobacco use but also of second-hand smoke were brought to the fore in North America.

It was remarkable that US Surgeon General Everett Koop released, first in 1982, a whole series of reports related to smoking and health—literally, in 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1988. He showed not only that smoking caused more deaths from heart disease than from cancer but also that smoking was the major cause of illness and death from chronic obstructive lung disease in the United States. He also mentioned very specifically that nicotine was a highly addictive substance, even likening it to cocaine and heroin addiction. We've heard in the House, over the course of the debate on this bill, many stories about family members or individual members here who have struggled with this highly addictive substance.

This is why legislation in this regard is not easy. You're dealing with scientific evidence. You're dealing with, perhaps, very powerful lobby groups. You're dealing with a substance that people like. So it's not in the least surprising, in fact, that legislation to control tobacco has taken us so long. I see Bill 186 as an excellent additional, incremental step in this war against tobacco use, and essentially, I truly believe that this should be a non-partisan issue. I'm very optimistic that all parties will see fit to vote in favour of this legislation. It certainly deserves that consideration, and we have heard some positive remarks in that regard.

I do want to acknowledge, going back to when I was first the medical officer of health in York region in 1988, on the health committee, that the regional councillors on that committee all smoked. As a new and enthusiastic medical officer of health, I did bring to the attention of

the regional chairman that I felt this was entirely inappropriate in view of the literature, the science, that was known at the time. I'm happy to say: January 1, 1989, the health committee of York Regional council was smoke-free.

However, we knew that we had to do far more than simply make some symbolic changes like that. I was extremely involved in the early 1990s as president of the public health association at that time and came to the Legislature and spoke at committee in favour of the NDP government's legislation, the 1994 Tobacco Control Act. It was far-reaching. It prohibited selling or supplying tobacco to anyone under the age of 19. Vendors were responsible for ensuring that customers were of legal age by requiring photo identification. There was a requirement to post age restrictions, health warnings etc. In fact, the emphasis was very much on education.

After the passage of the Tobacco Control Act, local public health units were charged with enforcing the legislation. Certainly in York region, we took the approach that with education we would see real societal change. I remember that at that committee hearing we urged the province at that time—we, the health professionals that appeared—to go even further. However, in the judgment of the government of the day, we felt that, fundamentally, it was over to municipalities to pass bylaws to regulate smoking in their own jurisdictions.

In York region, it took us some six years to get a regional bylaw. The region of York is composed of some nine area municipalities, and we had to obtain a triple majority in order to pass a region-wide bylaw. What that meant was that we needed at least five municipalities to agree to the bylaw, those five municipalities had to make up a majority of the population of York region, and then we had to have a majority on regional council to have a region-wide bylaw.

1010

I'm actually delighted because my assistant in that struggle in York region was an individual named Soo Wong. She's a public health nurse; lately, a Toronto school board trustee. She was my right-hand woman to go and educate area municipalities and all the stakeholders—the restaurants, the bars and so on—in York region in order to pass our regional bylaw. I was so delighted last Saturday, May 7, to be at the nomination of Soo Wong as our Liberal candidate in the riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. I know that should she be successful on October 6, she will bring great expertise in this particular area given her great experience with York region public health.

Having passed our municipal bylaw in York region, what we of course discovered was that there were issues around boundaries, certainly for York region. The city of Toronto had a somewhat different bylaw; the same with Durham region and Peel. We started approaching the then government to say that clearly there was a need for province-wide legislation. I must say that in the late 1990s we felt—and I'm rather surprised by the Conservative caucus members who stood up and urged us to do

more. They had every opportunity during the Harris-Eves years to do far more in terms of moving towards province-wide legislation. I will mention, however, that the minister of the day, Elizabeth Witmer, did make some forward progress. She did convene an expert panel in 1999. It was composed of tobacco control decision-makers and they consulted with experts across Canada and the United States to, in fact, look at a renewal of the Ontario tobacco strategy and look at best practices, especially from the US Centers for Disease Control. But in terms of actual forward movement, there was very little during those years.

I'm happy to say that when the McGuinty government took office in 2003, those of us who were still in the field renewed our pressure for province-wide legislation. I was certainly delighted, in 2005, to know that the Smoke-Free Ontario Act's passage would do a great deal in this ongoing war, yet another very positive step forward. The creation of the Ministry of Health Promotion also shows that our government has placed a very high premium on the value of health promotion programs, education and gradual societal change.

Now, coming to the issue of contraband—of course, this issue is not new at all. In the early 1990s there was a major issue. Tobacco taxes were actually reduced by the federal government and the effect of the deliberations over where tobacco taxes should go—they were quite high—meant that contraband was very much in evidence in Ontario. Some of the statistics, though, recently have become very alarming, so that over the last few years the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit has released a special report. They released this January 2005—actually, they released it in June 2006. They were looking at statistics over some 18 months, from 2005 to 2006. Their finding was that some 37% of Ontario smokers purchased cigarettes on reserve, with 26% saying they had done so in the past six months. The Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council also released a study that concluded that contraband in Canada is increasing and their statistics showed that some 22% of cigarettes smoked in Canada were illegal and that that had increased from some 16.5% in 2006.

Of course, their point was also that government was losing some \$1.6 billion per year in tax revenues, and in Ontario, that amount was estimated at some \$449 million.

It was also noted that the primary sources of contraband were on First Nation reserves in the St. Lawrence basin.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): It being 10:15, pursuant to standing order 8, this House will be in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I just wanted to wish my dad a happy birthday. He turns 72 today.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm very pleased to introduce, from Kitchener-Waterloo Counselling Services, the executive director, Leslie Josling; president of the board, Wayne Hobbs; and a director, Liz Watson-Palermo, here today for family services day. I know that Dr. Sue Horton is here as well. Congratulations.

Mr. Rick Johnson: I'd like to introduce four people from my riding who are here from the beautiful town of Bobcaygeon. They're here in the west members' gallery: Jim and Carol Young, and Lorna and Andy Harris.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm very pleased to be able to introduce members of Family Services York Region: Elisha Laker, the executive director; Mariana Benitez, the clinical director; and Susan Warren, manager of Families and Schools Together, group and cultural support services. Please help me welcome them to the Legislature.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I want to welcome Mr. Raymond Boyer, executive director of the Sudbury Counselling Centre, who is here for family services day today. He does great work in the community, and I'm happy to have him here with us in the Legislature today.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'd like to introduce two people from my riding: Deborah Lavender from Halton Family Services, and Susan Jewett from Burlington Counselling and Family Services. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They're here even from Timmins—James Bay. We have Richard Lambert-Bélanger, who is the executive director of the Timmins unit, and we also have Garry Dent from the community of Kapuskasing.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Joining us in the west members' gallery are page Melanie Soltau's parents, Tony and Karen, and it looks like grandmother Gloria Richards has decided to join them as well.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'd like to introduce a couple of individuals from my riding. First, with the Ontario Community Support Association, Patti Lennox is here. She is the supervisor of caregiver support services at Community and Primary Health Care.

I'd also like to introduce Allan Hogan, who's the executive director of Family and Children's Services of Leeds and Grenville. He's here for Family Service Ontario day.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's a great day in the Legislature today. There are several people from London. First, I'd like to introduce Bev Noble and Sandra Savage. They're with Family Service Thames Valley.

I'd also like to introduce Brian Dunne from Participation House, who's here for Ontario Community Support Association day.

And I'd like to introduce Diego Ortiz, a constituent of mine from London North Centre.

Welcome, all.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'd like to welcome Mr. Steve Rudback to Queen's Park today. He's the father of page Allison Rudback, and he's here to watch his daughter in action today. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Rudback.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I would like to welcome to the Legislature today Mr. Jon Thompson, executive

director of Riverside Community Counselling Services in Fort Frances. He too is here as part of the family services day. Welcome.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I have a number of guests today as well. Alan McQuarrie is the executive director of the Community Counselling Centre of Nipissing, and he's here with board member Derek Thompson. They're way up there, and we welcome them.

I also want to welcome today my good friends Jason and Nancy Corbett. Many of my colleagues will know Jason. He was my constituency assistant for many years. They're here today to enjoy the Legislature. Welcome, Jason and Nancy.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'd like to welcome Sue Stinson from Peterborough, who is here with the Ontario Community Support Association; and also, Kelsey Ingram, who is the daughter of His Honour Judge Alan Ingram and Dr. Jenny Ingram, from Peterborough.

Mr. David Caplan: Two wonderful volunteers from Don Valley East are here: Diana Dong and Jane Wu. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I would like to introduce the grade 12 class from Stephen Lewis Secondary School in my riding of Mississauga–Erindale. Together with their teachers Ryan Harper and Michelle Smith, they are seated in the west gallery. I want to welcome them to question period and to the Legislature as well.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to introduce some guests from Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin: Executive Director Mark Creedon; Acting Board President Jim Leising; board member Ehsan Khandaker; and from the Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin mentorship sistering program: Theresa Koutzodimos, Margaret Czach, Valerie Anderson, Parveen Sodhi and Lama Osman. They're here for family services day at Queen's Park. Welcome.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to introduce Heather Bebb, the executive director of the Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County. She's in the gallery up above.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to welcome in the members' east gallery from the Thunder Bay Counselling Centre, here for family services day, Nancy Chamberlain, the executive director of the Thunder Bay Counselling Centre; Abi Sprakes, the manager of clinical services; Darlene Niemi, a board member from Children's Centre Thunder Bay—a great example of partnership between agencies in the community of Thunder Bay; and Connie McLeod, a past board member of the Thunder Bay Counselling Centre who is now a board member of Family Service Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'd like to introduce April Zheng, mother of the great page Viktor Zhou, who's here with us in the gallery today.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today, and ask the members to do so, regional councillor Bruce Timms from St. Catharines.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I'm delighted to see my friend the executive director of Stratford family services, Susan Melkert, here today. Welcome.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'd like to introduce to you today the family services groups that are here in the House for family services day. I would like to welcome them, especially John Ellis, the executive director, and Alex MacDougall, the board president.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome as well Patricia Hollingsworth, the executive director of the Northumberland Community Counselling Centre. She does a great job, along with her whole team.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Like my colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, I want to welcome members from the Thunder Bay Counselling Centre. But I also want to introduce Carol Cline from the Catholic Family Development Centre in Thunder Bay as well. Welcome, Caroline.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I just want to introduce Vivi Dong from Norstar Times, a major Chinese publication in the Scarborough area, who is visiting with us today.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I am absolutely delighted to introduce to the Legislature distinguished members from the government of Cuba. They are Her Excellency, Madam Carmelina Ramirez Rodriguez; the consul general, Jorge Soberón; and the minister counsellor of the Republic of Cuba, Antonio Rodriguez Valcarcel. Welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome, Ambassador—it's nice to see you again—and Consul General. It's a pleasure to have you here today.

On behalf of page Hamza Naim and the member from Ajax–Pickering, we'd like to welcome his mother, Sylvia Naim, and his father, Mohammed Naim, to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery for family service day here at Queen's Park, I'd like to welcome Sandra Savage, Bev Noble, Alex Connoy and Martha Connoy. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the press gallery this morning, I'd like to welcome the press gallery summer intern, Chris Herhalt. Chris will be working with the Queen's Park press gallery until September. He will then be returning to Carleton University to complete his studies in journalism. Welcome to Queen's Park, Chris.

With all the introductions today, anybody who was not formally introduced, welcome to Queen's Park.

1040

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, I laid out a PC plan to help give families relief from skyrocketing hydro bills by ending your sweetheart Samsung deal—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. That took a grand total of 18 seconds for interjections, and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of the Environment. Member from Sault Ste. Marie. Member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Please continue.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Ontario PCs will end your sweetheart Samsung deal and the massive subsidies through your FIT program to give Ontario families the break they need.

Later on this afternoon, we'll continue our efforts to give average families a break with our motion to call on the McGuinty Liberals to stop raising taxes on Ontario families. I know you're addicted to tax increases. I know that's the path that the McGuinty Liberals want to go down. Our motion calls on you to stop your tax increases.

Will you just be direct? Minister, is your plan to increase the HST, to bring in a carbon tax, the eco taxes, or all of the above?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The official opposition introduced a job-killing policy yesterday—a job-killing policy that will undermine the development of a new sector in this economy and that will undermine the development of a range of communities, from Windsor through to Ottawa.

Let me give you some of the reaction to your announcement yesterday. Here's what a fellow named Paco Caudet, the general manager of Siliken Group, a Spanish manufacturer of solar panels, said: "We would have no more basis to operate here"—I'm sorry; it was Klaus Dohring, the president of Green Sun Rising. "It would have a devastating effect (on the sector)."

I will give more quotes to the Leader of the Opposition. We will stop you and your job-killing plan. We're going to stand up for Ontarians. New jobs, a greener economy and a healthier economic future for—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: On October 6, the Ontario PCs will stand up for Ontario families and end this job-killing government that has chased 300,000 manufacturing jobs from our province.

There are two things that you're guaranteed from the McGuinty Liberals: one, hydro bills will go through the roof; and, two, you will raise taxes once again.

We're simply asking you, Minister, wouldn't it be a bit more honest just to say right now what your plan is? Are you going to increase the HST by one point, or is it two? Are you going to bring in a carbon tax? Are you going to bring in the eco tax, or all three of the above? We remember Premier McGuinty swearing he wouldn't raise taxes. He has done it over and over again.

Minister, are you really going to go for the hat trick and increase the HST once again?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Under the next McGuinty government, there will be no carbon tax and there will be no increase in the HST.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Halton. The Minister of Education. The member from Burlington. The member from Oxford. The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. The member from Sarnia–Lambton. The member from Nepean. The member from Oxford. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Minister.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We won't allow that party to kill more jobs in Ontario. We will stop you in your tracks. We're going to speak up for Ontario farmers. You want to take away their feed-in-tariff contracts.

The Leader of the Opposition didn't tell the full story. The feed-in tariff is important to develop a new industry, cleaner energy and new jobs in rural and urban Ontario. That leader and his party will kill them. The people of Ontario will stop you dead in your tracks.

We're going to stand up for new, clean jobs with the tax regime we have today that will build a better future for our children and for our province.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: So now we've seen the Liberal campaign slogan: "The McGuinty Liberals won't raise your taxes. This time, we really mean it." Minister, come on. We've seen this movie before. In 2003, Premier McGuinty said, "I won't increase taxes." He nailed families with the so-called health tax. In 2007, he said, "This time I won't raise your taxes; I mean it." He hit us with the greedy HST tax grab.

Minister, people are on to you. Won't you admit it today: Your plan is to increase the HST and hit Ontario families once again?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Boy, the wisdom from pages. We just had an interesting discussion—the observations of pages.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: People are on to the Leader of the Opposition. They know now that he will kill jobs in favour of opening the market to competition. What happened last time they did that? Prices spiked 40%. Then they had to cap them. They know that you want to close hospitals, lay off nurses, fire teachers and undermine the gains we've made in health care and education that benefit this economy.

We have an economy that's growing again. We have recovered the jobs that were lost in the downturn and more. We will continue to build a new clean renewable energy sector in Ontario that benefits our farmers, that benefits our cities, that benefits our children and that builds a better future for all Ontarians.

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Deputy Premier: Our motion later today calls on the McGuinty Liberals to stop raising taxes on Ontario families who have been hit many times by Liberal tax increases before. They're hit by \$1.41 gasoline, where your HST is costing them 10 cents more a litre. The McGuinty Liberals' response? Well,

they scrambled and cobbled together their own motion that says that the McGuinty Liberals won't raise taxes; they won't cut them either. That sounds familiar. We remember that story from 2003, when you signed the Taxpayer Protection Act, and then, once you had the keys to the Premier's office, you ripped up your promise to Ontario families and jacked up taxes.

Deputy Premier, Ontario families won't be fooled again. They want change. They—

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Leader of the Opposition is simply manufacturing this to fill the void in what he hasn't said. He hasn't said he's going to cut the HST, but we think he is, and he's going to take \$3 billion out of health care. He has now confirmed that he's going to kill the green energy sector, a growing sector that will help clean up our environment, that will give us better power and a better future. He said that.

They said before they wouldn't close hospitals, and they closed 18 hospitals when given the chance. We're building new hospitals, we're hiring nurses, and we're hiring teachers. We're creating full-day learning; we know they're going to cancel that.

This is all about a better future for Ontario. We've laid out a plan. It's clear and consistent. Their secret agenda will undermine the growth of this province and lead, in our view, to a return to the dark days of Harris economics in—

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

1050

Mr. Tim Hudak: There are two things guaranteed from McGuinty Liberals: You'll increase hydro rates, and you'll raise taxes on families once again.

The Ontario PCs will stand up for hard-working families. We'll give them relief on the skyrocketing hydro bills and we will cut taxes across the board to give families relief and the chance to catch up. To date, Minister, you took \$3 billion from the so-called health tax. You took \$3 billion from your HST tax grab. You took \$1 billion by turning the debt retirement charge into a permanent tax grab, but you still have a \$17-billion deficit. My question is simple: How many points do you have to increase the HST to pay off your \$17-billion deficit?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Leader of the Opposition yesterday gave us a preview of what Ontario will look like. He's going to kill 16,000 direct and indirect jobs in the green energy sector. He is going to cut money from health care; he's going to cut \$3 billion from health care. He is going to shut down full-day learning in kindergarten and junior kindergarten. He is going to do what Mike Harris did to municipalities, downloading costs to municipalities, which represented a huge tax increase to all ratepayers. Ontarians have seen that movie. They will reject it—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Simcoe North will withdraw the comment that he directed to the minister.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm not sure what I said to the minister.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member will withdraw the comment.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I withdraw the comment, whatever it was.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No. Just an unequivocal withdrawal.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Withdraw.

Interjection: I didn't say anything.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You did say something.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Perhaps the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound may want to lobby his leader for a question.

Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I wish they'd withdraw what they said yesterday, that they're going to kill jobs in Ontario. We're going to continue to lower taxes, which we've done. We're going to continue to build a clean, green renewable sector—better environment, better health care, better education and a better future for all Ontarians.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's a simple matter of arithmetic: Either our spending must be restrained to meet our revenues or our taxes must be raised to pay for all the McGuinty Liberal spending. The McGuinty Liberals won't tell you what they'll do, but we all know: McGuinty Liberals will raise taxes. It's what you always do. You can't help it.

The Ontario PCs will not. We will cut taxes across the board, give families a break they deserve. Why are you bound and determined to increase taxes on the backs of Ontario families? You've already killed 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs. It's time for change that will give families the relief they deserve.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: When we cut income taxes for Ontario's families, he voted against it. When we lowered the business rates for small businesses, he voted against it. When we created the Ontario clean energy benefit to reduce energy prices by 10% for all Ontarians, he voted against it.

He has now confirmed that they will cut nurses from our hospitals. If you're a nurse in this province, watch out for that party. If you're a teacher in this province, watch out for that party. If you're a student in school, anywhere from junior kindergarten to post-secondary, watch out for that party, because they're coming after you. They're coming after your future.

We're going to fight them and we're going to beat them on October 6.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Sergeant-at-Arms, can you confirm that there is a defibrillator outside the door, please? I'm a little concerned about the energy coming out of some members today.

I would just remind members on both sides—and actually this is not even directed to the third party, but it's directed to the government and the loyal opposition—that we have a number of guests here. We have a group of students up here, probably grade 10 civics students, who we are trying to ensure receive a good education in this province, an education that demonstrates respect for different opinions, allowing somebody to speak and listening to an answer. I would just remind everyone of the example that we're trying to instill in them. What's happening in here is not useful for our future leaders.

New question.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Last year, New Democrats requested information relating to the government's unfair HST. In January 2010, the freedom-of-information coordinator recommended that the government release information immediately. Can the Acting Premier explain why this request was delayed until May 2010?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'm proud of our record of compliance with freedom of information, which is higher than any other previous government. The information she has referenced has been released, and I look forward to continuing to work under the auspices of that particular act and the regulations that ensure true, better, more transparent government for all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: On January 19, 2010, the staff responsible for the freedom-of-information act wrote an email to the finance minister's political staff recommending that two documents related to our freedom-of-information request be mailed the following day. In response, a member of the minister's political staff emailed, "Please phone me before this." The documents were then delayed for four months, conveniently close to the end of that session. If this wasn't another case of political interference, what was it?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: It was an email, and I remind the leader of the third party that all the information requested has been released in accordance with the act.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, in January of last year, the civil service recommended that information about the HST be sent out that day. Political staff in the minister's office intervened, and the information went into limbo for four whole months. Will the Acting Premier disclose what was discussed in the phone call that resulted in that delay?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: "Limbo" is not in the Ministry of Finance. I'm not privy to what was in that phone conversation. It may have been in fact to make sure the information was being released. I don't know the answer to that.

What I know is this: All the information requested has been released, it's in public hands, it's been subject to

questions here and subject to debate across the province, and we look forward to that kind of transparency and accountability moving forward.

GASOLINE PRICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Acting Premier: This morning, gas prices are averaging \$1.37 a litre across Ontario and are approaching \$1.50 a litre in northern communities like Wawa and Marathon. Many people just don't know how they're going to cope with these rising prices. Why is this government cutting corporate taxes for banks and oil companies that make millions speculating on gas prices while drivers are being asked to pay more and more and more?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In fact, the leader is right: This phenomenon that is happening around the world is seeing gas prices—I saw last night that here in Toronto it went up to \$1.416 at a couple of service stations downtown. I believe they are in fact at \$1.50 and higher in some northern communities, which we think is very problematic for families and for our whole economy.

The challenge for all governments is to determine what steps are appropriate to deal with this, what steps will in fact help consumers, help the economy. Those are complicated questions; they're complicated by who has jurisdiction. For instance, anti-combines legislation is the jurisdiction of the federal government. It's further complicated by a range of other issues related to the tax system. I look forward to a further discussion with the leader after her supplementary.

1100

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People are looking for any help that they can get, but the McGuinty Liberals have different priorities. The mom who has to drop the kids off at child care and then drive to work isn't getting any help at all. There's no plan to confront gas price gouging. In fact, there is a new tax on the cost of filling up. But the McGuinty Liberals are offering some relief to the corporations making record profits off the high prices of gasoline. When will this government start actually putting the people of this province first?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In fact, those tax policies have helped businesses that are being negatively impacted by the price of gasoline. Does she not think, for instance, that our auto manufacturers have to ship product both into the plant and out of the plant? She's taking what I would call a very short-term view of this thing and, frankly, not really dealing with the problem.

A couple of issues: first, we would call on the federal government to exercise its power under the anti-combines act to look at collusive pricing among oil companies. That is one thing that could happen. The federal government also has some \$300 million in special tax cuts for the oil industry. The Prime Minister has said he'll get rid of them by 2015. Ontario says, "Get rid of them today." That's what we ought to be doing, that's where a difference can be made, and we would support those moves immediately.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's this Liberal government that is not doing anything to deal with the problem. The McGuinty Liberals refuse to even discuss a plan to confront gas price gouging. They don't want to make things better. Then they brought in the HST, which actually made things even worse. Now, I know this government doesn't care about helping people who are paying more at the pumps every day, but are they willing to reconsider their corporate tax giveaways to businesses making a fortune from those very gas prices?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We want to help the forestry sector in northern Ontario get back on its feet. They have to buy gasoline and other oil products. We want to continue to build that northern economy. We want to help small businesses. That's why we cut the small business rate by 17% to help them at a time when the dollar is going up and the price of oil is going up.

With respect to consumers, we now have the lowest tax rate on the first \$37,000 of income, which that member voted against. We have the most generous sales tax credits in Canada on the HST.

Those are the right moves. Now it's up to the federal government to exercise its proper authority under anti-combines legislation and get rid of the special tax cuts for oil companies in the country.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Energy. The Ontario PC leader understands that families are squeezed by all of Premier McGuinty's increases to skyrocketing hydro bills. It's why he announced yesterday that an Ontario PC government will give families relief from paying a \$7-billion tab for a sweetheart Samsung deal you're adding to hydro bills. Premier McGuinty is so out of touch he thinks Ontario families can afford to pay, so you mocked the relief that we would provide Ontario families. It backfired badly when you didn't even know the details of the \$7-billion sweetheart deal that you signed. Did you only get a blacked-out copy of the deal as well?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Interesting question. I want to share a quote from the Tillsonburg News with the member opposite. This is what it said: It said that Siemens is currently in the process of hiring around 300 permanent employees for their blade plant. It said that renovations at the plant are currently under way, creating 600 additional construction jobs. Let me quote directly from the article as it refers to a comment made by the member for Oxford: "Hardeman said the province's deal with Samsung and Siemens could survive under a Tory government...."

That stands in stark contrast to the very comments that the Leader of the Opposition made yesterday. I think workers—the thousands of workers that your plan is going to put out of work across this province—deserve to know: Who is calling the shots over there? Who is right? Is it the leader—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I would just ask the government members to be respectful of their own minister. Your own minister was up answering a question and you are shouting him down.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don't think he tried to answer the question.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You just asked the question. You should be listening very hard for the answer.

Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: An Ontario PC government will stand up for families and seniors; you stick with a \$7-billion sweetheart deal by adding it to their hydro bills. Premier McGuinty chooses his foreign multinational corporations over Ontario families. He is so out of touch with Ontario families that he thinks they have an unlimited ability to pay for his sweetheart deal. You'll say and do anything to keep—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Please continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You'll say and do anything to keep Ontario families paying for a \$7-billion sweetheart deal that hasn't produced a single watt of power or the jobs that you promised.

But it turns out you don't understand—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): My apologies. Your minister is sitting right behind you. He needs to hear the question.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Whoever is playing the little trumpet under their breath can cease.

Please continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: But it turns out that you don't understand the deal you signed, or you haven't read it. How could you stick Ontario families with paying a \$7-billion tab for a sweetheart Samsung deal that you haven't even bothered to read?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to share with the member opposite what the mayor of Windsor thinks about the announcement of the Leader of the Opposition yesterday: "We all know in this region that the Green Energy Act gave birth to the renewable energy sector in this province, and has created thousands and thousands of jobs. If anybody has any doubts about the jobs being created I would invite them to the city of Windsor and we'll certainly give them a guided tour of the employment lines where people are now finding jobs and opportunities that once did not exist."

My colleagues from Windsor and I would like to cordially invite the member opposite and his leader to Windsor so that he could meet with those workers face to face: the thousands of workers in Windsor who are getting employment through our Green Energy Act and who they want to put out of work. Perhaps they can explain to those workers why they want to put them out of work. Just—

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

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. The McGuinty government has promised to open 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics by 2011, yet as of today, only eight clinics are funded and operating. That leaves 17 clinics that have been announced but have not been funded.

Nine out of 10 Ontarians face unacceptable primary health care wait times and one in 11 has no access to primary care. Will the minister open the 17 remaining nurse-practitioner-led clinics, clinics that she promised? Will she open them before the next election?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to talk about this very innovative approach in Ontario, the nurse-practitioner-led clinics. What I can tell you is that people from across the country and beyond are looking at this model because they really do believe, as I know the member opposite does, that this is part of what we need to do to improve access to primary health care.

I am delighted that we learned from the pilot in Sudbury and have announced 25 more nurse-practitioner-led clinics that are opening right across this province. I can tell you, last week I was in Essex with the member from Essex to open the newest nurse-practitioner-led clinic. I can tell you that the patients who were there are ecstatic about the care they are receiving, and the professionals who are working there are also—

1110

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I take from this that the promise will be filled for eight out of 25 and not filled for 17 out of 25.

The minister knows that there are serious problems accessing primary care in Ontario, and she knows that adequate numbers of nurses working to their full scope of practice is an essential piece of relieving that pressure. Yet today, Ontario has the second-lowest registered-nurse-to-population ratio in all of Canada, and nurse practitioners still do not have open prescribing rights. If we want to address Ontario's problem in primary care, we must strengthen nursing in Ontario.

Minister, will nurse practitioners have open prescribing before October's election?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What I can tell you is that our commitment to improving access to primary care is as strong as can be. We have seen tremendous progress: 1.2 million more Ontarians with access to primary care than when we took office. We are now at 94% of Ontarians with access to primary care. It's not as high as we'd like it to be, but we have made tremendous progress, and we're committed to actually continuing with that progress.

We believe that having access to primary care is fundamental to the strength of our health care system, and that's why we have taken the steps we have. I was very pleased yesterday to be part of an announcement: 170 more doctors have chosen Ontario than have left Ontario. We have reversed the brain drain, and that's only—

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

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. The Leader of the Opposition has just brazenly criticized the McGuinty government's work in creating jobs through the FIT program and the Green Energy Act. At a time when our province's economy is on the road to successful recovery, the member opposite is promising to kill good Ontario jobs if his party is elected this October. This makes no economic sense.

As a result of the McGuinty government's green energy initiatives, one of the world's largest solar companies decided to locate its solar panel manufacturing plant in my riding, supporting 500 jobs. And I know that many more ridings have got green energy jobs.

Can the minister explain why any party would vow to—

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

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'm delighted to attempt—attempt—to understand the rationale between that opposition leader and his policy released yesterday to gut the Green Energy Act, which is exactly what he announced.

It is extremely disturbing when the number one issue for people is jobs. The number one is, how are we recovering our economy, when his buddy the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, said, "a fragile economic recovery." We need stability. The worst thing that we could see in a business investment climate is instability, which is what the Leader of the Opposition introduced.

It isn't just in Guelph where we see the hundreds of jobs. There are hundreds of jobs in every pocket of Ontario related to the new green industry. It is nonsense. It's just incomprehensible that they would choose this tack to actually kill jobs in Ontario when we need more jobs in Ontario—

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: There's another element to the Leader of the Opposition's critique of the McGuinty government's FIT and Green Energy Act programs. The member opposite continually promises to provide Ontario families with relief from growing hydro bills. He blames the FIT programs that are creating jobs for these hardships. Would killing programs in a new and growing sector that is providing jobs to my constituents and thousands of other people right across this province bring relief to Ontario families—getting rid of their new jobs?

I would like to ask the minister to inform this House as to why Ontario needs to invest in and support the green energy sector.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I have got to set the record straight. This same Leader of the Opposition suggested those green megawatts or kilowatts—they're not even attached to the grid yet. So how, in fact, are we paying for them and them being embedded in the price? He admits they're not done yet, so it's clearly not affecting the price.

The truth is that even in his own backyard we have the potential of investors. The mayor of Port Colborne was here yesterday telling us that there are two European companies travelling to Port Colborne now that are interested. His own economic development commission has been working with this company to land them here—two of them.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition, what are we to say to these foreign investors? What are we to say when they are coming to the Niagara region for green jobs, jobs that we're fighting for? We're fighting against every other jurisdiction. We have moved mountains to bring these jobs to Ontario and they're coming. That job killer is sending them away—

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

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Peter Shurman: To the Minister of Energy: Ontario PCs are listening to families who are looking for a leader and a party that will give them relief—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. I did want the clock stopped, please.

Please continue.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Our leader announced relief for families who pay the tab for your \$7-billion sweetheart deal with Samsung. But McGuinty Liberals are so out of touch they are trying to say that the \$7-billion, sweetheart Samsung deal adds only \$1.60 a year to hydro bills. That's as laughable as saying that your energy experiments will add only 1% to hydro bills or that hydro bills have remained flat year over year.

What makes you think that you can treat Premier McGuinty's increases to hydro bills as if they were the—

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: If they really cared about families, how could they have put the use of coal up 127% during their time in office? The Leader of the Opposition's announcement yesterday totally scuttles the incredible progress we've made over eight years to replace dirty coal with cleaner sources of power.

Let me share with you, though, how the medical profession feels about this. I want to quote the executive director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. This is what he said: "The Conservatives' proposal to kill green energy will be a disaster for

human health and the environment. It will mean returning to coal—the world's most climate-destructive fuel—and the thousands of illnesses and hundreds of deaths that coal causes in Ontario each year. Doctors are appalled that Mr. Hudak would embrace such an irresponsible plan."

We share the sentiments of doctors and medical professionals across this province. They're placing the health of ourselves and our kids—

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: Fairy tales; I ask questions and I get those kinds of answers.

The Premier and this minister are so out of touch that the next thing you know, they'll say that the smart meter tax machines actually save you money. Even Premier McGuinty admitted that the Samsung deal was a large contributor to hydro bills, going up another 46% over the next four years. Ontario families have been squeezed during the recession. An Ontario PC government will stand up for families who pay the bills by using every tool at our disposal to give them relief options. Renewable energy will be part of our energy supply. Why do you insist that renewable energy will only be part of your supply mix if it is too expensive for Ontario families to afford?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Just as we're turning the corner, recovering from the global recession; just as our globe-leading clean energy economy has created 13,000 jobs by the end of last year, and we're well on track to create 50,000 new jobs; just as Ontario's clean energy economy has attracted billions of dollars from the private sector; just as our Samsung initiative is in the process of opening four new manufacturing plants; just as another 30 manufacturing plants have been announced, that Leader of the Opposition this week wants to bring that incredible progress to an end, kill our clean energy economy, kill the thousands of clean energy jobs that we're creating and send a message to the world that Ontario lacks the boldness to compete for private sector investment.

The worst threat to jobs, the worst threat to our health, the worst threat to our future is a reckless Leader of the Opposition with a—

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

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Economic Development, if outbursts like that continue, I will have to warn you.

New question.

1120

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. To great fanfare some months ago, you announced what was called the northern growth plan. A lot of people in northern Ontario—municipalities, mayors, aldermen, media

and others—found it quite laughable. Essentially, what you did was to have a plan to make a plan.

Recently we saw in the province of Quebec that a northern growth plan was announced, but specific to that plan was not only a timeline of what they want to do but the associated dollars for making that plan work. Are you planning to do the same in Ontario? Are you going to follow the Quebec lead?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It's great to have an opportunity to speak once again about the excitement surrounding the northern Ontario growth plan release. May I say that I think the member is quite incorrect. There's tremendous support for it, certainly among municipal leaders and the private sector.

In terms of Plan Nord, which was released yesterday, we congratulate the province of Quebec. Certainly, the northern Ontario growth plan stacks up very favourably, in terms of the commitment to investments that we are making in northern Ontario. In fact, let's look at some of the investments that are in place already in terms of northern Ontario resources: \$5.6 billion every year in the mining supply and services sector over a 25-year period if there is no growth—and we expect substantial growth in the mining sector—that's \$125 billion; let alone the northern Ontario heritage fund, a \$100-million fund which we do not see in the province of Quebec. Our investments in highway infrastructure—millions over the last number of years.

We are very excited about the northern Ontario—

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The fact is, you tied no money to the plan that you announced a few months ago. What you've essentially done is developed a plan to make a plan. People in northern Ontario are quite specific: What are you going to do when it comes to the investments that are needed to build the infrastructure necessary to support the communities—both on the physical side, in terms of infrastructure, and the social infrastructure that needs to be dealt with?

We saw the plan come out of the province of Quebec. La province du Quebec said, "We're going to associate some dollars. Here's what they are." They've demonstrated in their plan how much they're prepared to spend over a period of years.

The question to you is, are you prepared to at least follow the lead of Quebec and tie dollars to your plan so that at the end of the day it actually becomes something of value?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: You know, this certainly isn't a competition. We are very pleased about the plan brought forward by the province of Quebec yesterday. The investments that are committed in our growth plan not only compare favourably but are probably substantially more, when one looks at the investments in northern highways—it's very, very true—let alone our commitment in terms of developing the northern policy institute and our multi-modal transportation strategy.

There's no question that, in terms of their plan and ours, we have many, many common goals—which is to

develop our economy in the northern parts of our province. The commitment by the Dalton McGuinty government is a substantial one that is backed up by billions of dollars in infrastructure, which will continue on a commitment we feel very, very strongly about. We are incredibly proud of that and incredibly proud of the investment in the northern Ontario heritage fund in terms of the mining supply and services sector, let alone the mining development in terms of the Ring of Fire that we are committed to as part of our Open Ontario plan—

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

FAMILY SERVICES

Mr. Bruce Crozier: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Today in the Legislature, we're joined by members of Family Service Ontario. Family Service Ontario represents 46 not-for-profit member agencies that provide community-based mental health services and programs to over 250,000 individuals and families annually. They have agencies throughout Ontario, including my own riding of Essex, that assist individuals with emotional, psychological, social, physical and financial struggles.

Minister, please tell the members of this House how our government is working to support the important work being undertaken each and every day across our province by Family Service Ontario.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member for Essex for his great question, and I'd like to welcome again the members from Family Service Ontario who are with us today in the Legislature.

Family service agencies provide a wide spectrum of services to assist Ontarians of every age group and socio-economic status. I am proud to say that my ministry's annualized funding to Family Service Ontario has more than tripled since we first came into office in 2003. My ministry also provides violence-against-women funding to 29 agencies that are members of Family Service Ontario. This includes funding for counselling programs, the transitional and housing support program, as well as the early intervention program for children who witness violence. I look forward to our continuing—

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

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Family Service Ontario agencies cover a large spectrum of services. FSO agencies offer relationship and financial counselling, programs to assist substance abuse, as well as services for people with disabilities.

As you mentioned, Minister, Family Service Ontario also plays an important role in helping individuals who are victims of domestic violence, but they also have a role in providing counselling to individuals who are offenders.

Minister, please tell this Legislature what our government's role is in the partnership with Family Service Ontario in providing these important services to Ontarians.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: My colleague from Essex makes a very important point. It really is a partnership, a relationship between services that the family services provide throughout the province of Ontario and the government.

I'll give you a couple of examples. A family might be in crisis because of domestic violence, so the partner assault response program, funded by the government of Ontario through many different agencies, not only assists the perpetrator but provides safety, support and counselling for the victim. The new changes in the family approach, the approach to family cases, will ensure that these very difficult and emotional cases can move through the system faster, with less confrontation and much more affordably, and I'm surprised the NDP don't—

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

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, we now know that you have been working on the decision to close the Sarnia jail for three straight years. During that time, you and your ministry consulted local leaders a total of zero times and have since refused to supply any supporting documentation to justify your decision.

Last week, we learned, thanks to Sarnia Police Chief Phil Nelson, that the cost of security at the Sarnia courthouse will double to over \$770,000 as a direct result of your closure of the jail.

As we all know, there's only one taxpayer, and this is an increase in taxes. When will you show some transparency and let us know—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Hamilton East.

Please continue.

Mr. Robert Bailey: As we all know, there's only one taxpayer, and this is an increase in taxes. When will you show leadership and transparency and let us in on the big secret that there's a real cost to closing the Sarnia jail?

Hon. James J. Bradley: That information has been provided. You know that the ministry officials will provide to any minister who happens to have that job the information on how savings can be effected overall in the corrections system in the province. You will know, for instance, that when your party was in power, you closed a number of jails in the province.

In fact, I have a quote from Mr. Runciman that says the following: "What we are doing with respect to the restructuring process is addressing the call of the Provincial Auditor in two reports, talking about the very high-cost system of corrections in Ontario. We currently have the highest-cost provincial system in the country.... We are making an effort, which the NDP initiated some time ago, to close our older, high-cost, inefficient and in many respects unsafe facilities."

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert Bailey: When you're starting to quote from history—and I see you have no argument—you've got no defence. We didn't close that jail because it didn't make sense then, and it doesn't make sense now.

A week ago, the customs and immigration border guards union stated the decision to close the Sarnia jail seemed as if it was made without "proper analysis." Not surprisingly, Local 19 was not consulted prior to your decision. As a result of your decision, border guards will now have to make a five- to six-hour round trip down Highway 40 to take prisoners to the finance minister's riding.

By my count, we now know that in making this decision, you failed to consult with the mayor of Sarnia, the Lambton county warden, the Sarnia police chief, the First Nations community, the First Nations police force, the OPP, the RCMP, jail administration, jail guards, Canada Border Services, the border guards, the Sarnia law association, the business community, the local MP and the MPP. Minister, who did you speak with—

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: I promised not to quote Ted Arnott on this one today, but I will. It may be the same people who are quoted, when the Conservative government closed the jails in Cobourg, Haileybury, L'Orignal, Waterloo—

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I think the same kind of consultations took place in Cobourg, Haileybury, L'Orignal, Waterloo-Wellington, Parry Sound, Barrie, Peterborough, Guelph, Cornwall, the Burtch facility, Lindsay, Whitby, Brampton, Millbrook and Sault Ste. Marie. Those are all jails which were closed by the previous Conservative government. Because, as my friend the member for Wellington-Halton Hills said at the time, "I think the people of Ontario would expect us to look at how we're operating the system of provincial jails and find ways to do it better and cheaper."

I know that it's very difficult when you think of history, of all the jails that were closed by the previous—

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Health. Four years ago, right before an election, the McGuinty Liberals promised to redevelop the former Grace Hospital site into a long-term-care home, but it's a mess. Construction hasn't started. Windsor families are left with clogged emergency rooms, and the situation is so bad, it's been declared a crisis by the LHIN.

The finance minister, in fact, has recently questioned his own government's management of the project. Does the Minister of Health agree with the finance minister's assessment?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What I am more than happy to say is that we need these long-term-care beds in Windsor and we need them as soon as we possibly can. There have been challenges with the progress, there is no question about that. We are working very hard with various parties to get these beds built and open for the people of Windsor and area as soon as we possibly can.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Just in case the health minister is unaware of the criticism levelled by her cabinet colleague, let me quote his comments: "As finance minister it really bugs me that there wasn't better analysis done beforehand."

Does the minister agree with the finance minister that their government—her government, this government—botched the project? And the most important question is, when will we actually see shovels in the ground on this project?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What I do want to say is that this is a project that we are very focused on. There have been key goals that have been achieved: the incorporation of a single-purpose organization entity as required by the lender; there's been submission of a fully executed site plan control agreement; submission of a fully executed management contract between the operator and Extencare Inc.; submission of sub-trade tender results; and a draft copy of the project's final estimates of cost.

We are continuing to monitor this project on a daily basis. I will underline how important it is for the people of Windsor and Essex county that this building be built as soon as possible.

IMMIGRANT SERVICES

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. My riding of Scarborough Southwest is home to newcomers from around the world. When newcomers get settled into Ontario and into the workforce, it's important that they know their workplace rights. Newcomers who are adjusting to a new work culture must be aware of what constitutes harassment and discrimination. If they feel their employer is treating them unfairly, newcomers need to know who they can turn to for help. They need to know what their rights are and how to exercise them.

Minister, what is the government doing to educate Ontario newcomers about their human rights in this province?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We're fortunate here in Ontario to benefit from the significant contributions that thousands of newcomers make to this province each year. Ontario's fundamental values of inclusion, diversity and respect for human rights make our province the best place in the world to call home.

When our newcomers arrive in Ontario, we have a number of ways to ensure that they're aware of their rights. These include our Welcome to Ontario guide, our website ontarioimmigration.ca and through our many settlement agency partners.

We are the only party with a plan for newcomers in Ontario. Instead of being straight with our newcomers, the opposition leader is hiding his plans to scrap the Human Rights Tribunal. That's not surprising, because in 2003 the only reference to immigration was under the crime section of their election platform.

Unlike the opposition, we stand up for our newcomers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Ontario has a proud tradition of welcoming immigrants from around the world. Many of my constituents have come to Ontario to escape civil strife and oppression. Many of them come to Ontario in search of new opportunities and for a better life.

When newcomers arrive here in Ontario, they need our support to get adjusted to life in our province. This includes learning about Ontario's workplace culture, job search support and language and employment training. I also know that the government has made substantial investments in the potential of our newcomers.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What is the government doing to help our newcomers get integrated into Ontario's workplaces?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you for that question. Integrating newcomers into the workforce is the key to their success and Ontario's success. We have a plan that's working and we're getting results. We're reducing barriers and investing in our newcomers so that they can get good jobs. That's why we've invested in bridge training programs that have helped over 41,000 newcomers find jobs. Our language training courses have helped 120,000 newcomers this year alone at no cost.

Unlike the Harris-Hudak PCs, we've made—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No. I've reminded the honourable member and the government before about the reference to the Leader of the Opposition. He has not been the leader of a government and you cannot persist at that.

New question.

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. The town of Bradford West Gwillimbury and the county of Simcoe have asked you to commit to MTO funding for the new Highway 400 interchange at the 5th Line in Bradford West Gwillimbury. Will your ministry be providing this funding?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite has spoken to me about this issue. I'm very well aware of it.

What you need to know is that this year alone, we've invested \$2.8 billion in road construction and repair around the province: roads and bridges. We're very aware that the baby boom infrastructure in this province needs to be upgraded. We're making record investments

in that. We will continue to do so and I will continue to work with the member opposite on that particular project.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Julia Munro: The new interchange is needed so that Bradford can develop new industries to provide jobs. Before your government stopped the Bradford bypass, development was planned beside the bypass. Now the town has moved its employment plans closer to Highway 400. To be a success, the town's new employment lands depend on the 5th Line interchange.

Will you help the people of Bradford West Gwillimbury? And when might they expect you to be able to put a shovel in the ground?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In fact, we've helped the people of Bradford West Gwillimbury to the tune of \$990,173. We've made significant investments in that particular area alone. We will continue to work with that particular municipality and I will continue to work with this member.

Since 2003, our government has put \$15 billion into building and rebuilding bridges and roads in this province. The infrastructure investment, since we've been in office, has increased exponentially to what it was before.

We will continue to work with every municipality in the province. There are many, many projects that, of course, need attention. This is one that I will continue to work with the member on, and we will continue to make those significant infrastructure investments.

1140

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Tritium is a radioactive substance emitted from nuclear plants into air and water. In 2006, Toronto's medical officer of health said that Ontario's current tritium standard for drinking water is too lax and poses an unacceptable cancer risk. In May 2009, the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council recommended that the Ontario government dramatically cut the tritium standard. Why has the government failed for two years now to implement the council's recommendation?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my colleague for the excellent question. First of all, just a bit of facts: Of course, tritium is a naturally occurring element in the environment, but the member is absolutely correct that when it comes to our Candu reactors, tritium is one of the by-products. It's very important that we protect our sources of drinking water.

I have been receiving quite a bit of advice on this issue. I want to share with the member that given the advice of the Drinking Water Advisory Council—their advice to me—I've referred this matter and asked for some additional scientific feedback from the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion.

I think it's very important, as the Minister of the Environment, that we ensure that we have standards that are the safest possible in the province of Ontario. But it's very important that those standards be rooted in science. I

know there is some debate on this issue, and as a result, that's why I've referred it to—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The minister has heard from the medical officer of health of the city of Toronto and the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council. The Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition wrote to the environment minister last September urging him to implement the Drinking Water Advisory Council recommendation to lower the allowable level of tritium in the water. They still have not received a response to their letter. In March, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission said that they have "no idea" why the Ontario government has still, after almost two years, taken no action on the council's recommendation. When will the McGuinty government finally act to protect Ontarians from cancer by reducing the allowable level of tritium in drinking water?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I do want to share with the good people of Ontario—because we take our safe drinking water so very, very seriously—that whether there's the current level or the proposed level in the province of Ontario, our water is below any of the proposed levels by any of the people who have recommended it. I do want to assure people that the drinking water in this province is indeed safe.

The question is, what is the appropriate level? There are two scientific issues that have to be resolved. One has to do with long-term exposure and the other has to do with if there is an incident. As a result, given that, I have decided to refer the matter and to seek the expert advice of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion so that I can ensure that the new standard in the province of Ontario is indeed rooted in science, which is a requirement of the province of Ontario and our ministry.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of the Environment as well. While countries around the world are dealing with the issues of climate change, we know that the most profound actions to help our environment happen in our own backyard. We all have a role to play by walking to school, biking to work or by taking transit wherever possible. In rural areas we can plan the reduction of the number of times we use our vehicles by piggybacking a number of errands into one trip.

Today, environmental organizations are outside Queen's Park to ask all of us in this House what we will do to protect the environment. I will ask for them: Will the minister come clean and step up to protect the environment?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to welcome our friends who have come to raise awareness of this.

Many times in this House I have said—and I think I'm going to have to correct the record—that the party opposite, the opposition, has a secret love affair with dirty coal. But yesterday, they professed their undying love for

dirty coal in the province of Ontario by telling the world that we will not be, under their government, interested in conservation or in renewable sources of energy but rather they'll go with cheap, even if it puts the lives of our lungs and of our little children at risk. That is the problem with having a love affair with dirty coal. On this side of the House, we are phasing out dirty coal because our children—

Interjection.

Speaker of the House: The member from Renfrew will withdraw the comment that he just made.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw.

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

DEFERRED VOTES

FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

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

Deferred vote 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 Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On May 3, Mr. Sousa moved second reading of Bill 181, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duncan, Dwight	Munro, Julia
Albanese, Laura	Dunlop, Garfield	Murdoch, Bill
Arnott, Ted	Elliott, Christine	Murray, Glen R.
Arthurs, Wayne	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Gerretsen, John	O'Toole, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Hampton, Howard	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bentley, Christopher	Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Hoskins, Eric	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Brotten, Laurel C.	Hudak, Tim	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Johnson, Rick	Sandals, Liz
Carroll, Aileen	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Shurman, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Craiton, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilson, Jim
DiNovo, Cheri	Miller, Paul	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Milloy, John	Yakabuski, John
Duguid, Brad	Mitchell, Carol	

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 83; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): So ordered.

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

The House recessed from 1154 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I would like to introduce to the House Paul Marai. Paul is a new school board trustee with the Halton Catholic District School Board in the region of Halton, and also a former staff member in my office. Welcome, Paul.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PAUL MARAI

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: It's with great pleasure that I rise in the House today to address some remarkable accomplishments of one of my former staff members, Paul Marai.

This past fall, 22-year-old Paul was successfully elected as a school board trustee in the Halton Catholic District School Board, making him one of the youngest elected officials in our province. Not only did Paul run a successful and victorious campaign, but since being elected he has been a tireless advocate for reversing the ban on gay-straight alliances implemented by the former board. Over the past several months, Paul has been speaking up for students, not only in Oakville and Halton communities, but across the province.

His input and attention have helped shape the debate on this critical issue in our province. Throughout all the meetings and discussions about GSA, Paul has brought his knowledge and his experience, and has consistently defended students. He has ensured there was someone advocating for what was best for students, and emphasized the importance for them to be feeling safe and accepted in their own school communities.

I want to congratulate Paul on his accomplishments. I am confident that this young man will continue to advocate and champion issues and to foray into areas that others deem unpopular. Congratulations, Paul.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Paul Miller: A while ago I received many cards from individuals, which I will now read.

"I've sent you this card to let you know I support the teams that care for the" hundreds of thousands of "residents served each year in Ontario's long-term-care homes. From nurses and personal support workers to housekeeping and laundry staff, to foodservice workers and maintenance people—each member of these teams ensures a caring and safe home. They deserve our support.

"These teams play an important role in the quality of life and well-being of some of Ontario's frailest elderly. They are the dedicated people who provide care and service to residents all day, every day. Yet these teams are threatened because government funding is not keeping pace with increasing resident care needs and regulatory demands.

"Please work to ensure there is appropriate funding to support the teams so they can continue to support Ontario's long-term-care residents. To learn more, please visit www.oltca.com/we-care."

As the needs of long-term-care residents are constantly changing, reflecting our population's changing activities, workplace stresses and family problems, their needs when they are at the long-term-care stage are different than in the past. We need to ensure that we have properly educated and trained support personal to care for them.

To ensure that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care gets this message, I will ask one of the pages to come forward to give these cards to the minister. Thank you.

PLASCO ENERGY GROUP

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I'm pleased to take this opportunity to speak about Plasco Energy Group, an exciting and innovative company in my city of Ottawa. Plasco is developing world-leading technology that converts municipal solid waste into green power through a process known as gasification. Through this revolutionary process, more than 98% of the waste used in gasification is diverted from landfill and converted into usable products.

Equally important to reducing waste, the process also results in a net energy gain, providing the sensible alternative generation that is so crucial to our 21st-century energy supply needs.

Plasco's technology reduces our dependence on fossil fuel generation, has no external emissions and is actually a net reducer of greenhouse gas emissions.

I want to specifically mention Rod Bryden, president and CEO of Plasco. Rod is an entrepreneur, philanthropist and a resident of Ottawa Centre. Those from Ottawa know Rod very well, as he has been involved in many business ventures and community endeavours in the city of Ottawa.

Plasco Energy Group represents the best of what the Ottawa technology sector has to offer the world when it comes to innovation and the exciting new green energy industry. Our government made a wise early investment in Plasco with a \$4-million loan in 2007 to support their groundbreaking work. Since then, Plasco has leveraged

\$350 million of investment and financing from the private sector, creating jobs and economic development in the city of Ottawa.

CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise in the House today to congratulate Christopher Perkins, a remarkable young archer from my riding of Leeds–Grenville. He's a young man who has perfection in his sights. The 18-year-old from the village of Athens was named male athlete of the month for March by the United States Sports Academy.

Winning this prestigious award put him in some pretty lofty company. The academy's female athlete of the month for March was none other than Caroline Wozniacki, the world's number-one-ranked tennis player.

Although Perkins was humble in reacting to the honour, it's hard to argue with the choice. He set a world junior and senior record by shooting an incredible 599 out of a possible 600 at the Canadian indoor archery championships in Caledon in March. That world record is a testament to his eagle eyes, steady hands and nerves of steel. Of the 60 arrows he shot that day, 59 landed in the bull's eye. One arrow just missed the centre ring but gave him enough to eclipse a record that has stood since 1999.

This brush with perfection is only the latest in a long list of accomplishments for Perkins, who won a gold medal at the Canada Winter Games in Halifax in February, when he posted a score of 595. As a student at Athens District High School, he won gold at the Ontario high school championships three years in a row. He has also represented Canada at many international competitions. I have no doubt he'll continue to bring plenty of gold back home to Athens.

On behalf of everyone in Leeds–Grenville, I want to congratulate Christopher and his parents, Spencer and Deanna.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

ÉDUCATION CATHOLIQUE

Hon. Aileen Carroll, P.C.: It is my pleasure to inform you that across Canada and in fact throughout the world, World Catholic Education Day is celebrated on June 2.

Catholic education has served parents and their children in most nations throughout the world for centuries. In Canada, Catholic education is an integral contributor to our Canadian identity and culture, serving the nation through faith-based leading and learning.

Catholic education has helped define Canadian society through its deeply rooted teachings of social justice, service to the community and ongoing promotion of respect and dignity of all persons. The presence of Catholic education is based on the values of peace, justice and respect—values that are inherent to our Canadian identity.

Accomplishments over the past two centuries of the Canadian Catholic school system, both English and French, have been an integral part of the growth and spirit of Canada.

J'étais engagée dans le monde de l'éducation catholique comme une étudiante dans ma province natale de la Nouvelle-Écosse. De plus, j'étais la présidente du conseil scolaire privé de Barrie qui a lutté pour la construction d'un lycée catholique.

Congratulations to all who are involved in Catholic education in our province and all the provinces in Canada as you join with colleagues throughout the world who are celebrating World Catholic Education Day on June 2, 2011.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Frank Klees: I rise to bring to the attention of the Minister of Transportation a resolution that was passed unanimously by Newmarket council this past Monday.

The resolution points out that gridlock is impacting not only residents but also businesses in this growing community. The major north-south arteries, especially Highways 404 and 400, are becoming almost impassable at certain times of the day. This has huge costs to business through loss of productivity, and it also impacts our quality of life.

I draw to the attention of the Minister of Transportation the following excerpt from the resolution:

“Whereas GO Transit falls under provincial jurisdiction and is a responsibility of Metrolinx;

1510

“And whereas Metrolinx is working on a MoveOntario 2020 initiative attempting to address gridlock in the GTA;

“Therefore be it resolved that the council of the town of Newmarket:

“Expresses formal support for more frequent GO train service between Newmarket and Union Station as a way to reduce gridlock and provide residents with a convenient public transportation option to downtown Toronto....”

The resolution goes on to call on Metrolinx to make more frequent GO train service a priority as soon as possible in the Metrolinx MoveOntario plan.

As the MPP for Newmarket–Aurora, I am registering my support for this motion, and I look forward to working with the Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx to make more frequent GO train service a priority in the MoveOntario plan.

CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION TRAINING

FORMATION EN RÉANIMATION CARDIORESPIRATOIRE

Mr. Phil McNeely: It was my privilege on May 6 to attend the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT)

Foundation High School CPR and defibrillator program launch at Louis Riel public school in Orléans, not far from my office. This school, by the way, was selected as one of the best in Ontario by the Fraser Institute.

La Fondation ACT est un chef de file dans l'instauration de l'enseignement obligatoire du programme de secourisme RCR au secondaire. Pour mettre en place un programme durable et autonome, la fondation s'appuie fortement sur les partenaires locaux pour fournir aux écoles les ressources nécessaires.

En septembre 2008, le gouvernement de l'Ontario a annoncé d'ailleurs une subvention de 1,4 million de dollars pour permettre à la Fondation ACT d'implanter un tel programme.

The launch on May 6 last week was to bring the high school CPR automated external defibrillator (AED) training program to Ottawa French high schools.

Le programme sera offert à 12 écoles secondaires provenant du Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est et du Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario.

More than 1,800 grade 9 students will now be trained in CPR and how to use the AED, an electronic device that administers an electric shock to restore heart rhythm in case of cardiac arrest. Using the AED along with CPR can improve cardiac arrest survival rates by up to 75% when used in the first few minutes, according to one of their partners, the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Once implemented in all high schools across Ontario, 155,000 grade 9 students will be trained in the life-saving skills of CPR and AED each year. It is an extraordinary initiative by the ACT foundation, and our youth will now be better equipped to help save lives.

FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Last Friday, May 6, I had the honour of attending a retirement function hosted by the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association. The event was held in Scarborough and celebrated the careers of over 50 firefighters who are retiring or have retired in the past year. It was remarkable to witness those in attendance, who reminisced about their achievements and the contributions they had made toward protecting our communities.

During this reception, I spoke with many firefighters, and one reminded me of the heroism of the brave men and women who were involved in the September 11, 2001, attacks that occurred in New York City. One firefighter mentioned to me that some of the firefighters involved were able to go up several storeys in the building, carrying with them gear that weighed over 50 pounds. They were not concerned for their own safety, but the safety of the people who were inside the building. This reminded me of the risks our firefighters endure every day when they are called to the scene of a fire.

On behalf of the government, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the firefighters who are retiring this

year for the years of public service and their dedication to ensuring the safety of our communities.

THUNDER BAY ECONOMY

Mr. Bill Mauro: Thunder Bay's unemployment rate has consistently outperformed the provincial and national averages, and here are some reasons why:

—\$30 million for infrastructure at Lakehead University and Con College;

—\$773 million for northern highways;

—a new \$200-million courthouse, 225 workers on site at peak;

—a new long-term-care home, a \$100-million project; and

—1,000 people working at our local Bombardier plant, an increase of 500 to 600 jobs and \$1.4 billion of government investment.

The economy is also diversifying:

—15 million government dollars establishing Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute, with 104 new full-time employees, expected to get to 150;

—Tornado Medical Systems just had their grand opening today, with 200 people expected by the end of 2013;

—RegenMed, a bone and tissue bank, 30 employees to be hired;

—AbiBow, a \$50-million cogen project, 56 permanent new jobs plus construction jobs;

—AbiBow sawmill, 50 new jobs, saving 160 more;

—Terrace Bay's mill has hired 340 workers back;

—Global Sticks and Oliver Paipoonge, hoping to hire up to 100, grand opening next week;

—Atikokan Renewable Fuels, 95 brand new jobs, wood allocation;

—Activation Labs, 120 new jobs; Osisko's Hammond Reef, 100 local residents working there plus 100 contractors;

—and Lac des Iles mine, 200 new workers.

The list goes on. I don't have time to get to it all; that's a partial list. Thunder Bay's economy is doing quite well.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Michael Prue: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bills, without amendment:

Bill Pr32, An Act to revive 1518186 Ontario Inc.

Bill Pr46, An Act to revive Faradale Farms Ltd.

Bill Pr47, An Act to revive Big A Amusements Ltd.

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

Report adopted.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

MOIS DE LA PRÉVENTION DE L'AGRESSION SEXUELLE

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I rise today to recognize May as Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

En mai et pendant toute l'année, nous devons toujours nous souvenir que chaque femme devrait et doit se sentir en sûreté et être en sécurité dans son foyer, dans sa communauté et dans son lieu de travail.

In May and throughout the entire year, we must always remember that every woman should and must feel safe and be safe in her home, community and workplace. Our daughters need to feel safe when they're at school, our mothers need to feel safe in their homes and our sisters and friends need to feel safe at work. That is why our government recently introduced Ontario's sexual violence action plan: Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives, a four-year strategy that will lay the groundwork for a future free of sexual violence.

To truly change attitudes, we need to start by raising awareness to prevent sexual violence from occurring in the first place. There are still far too many myths associated with sexual violence and sexual assault, so everyone needs to know the facts.

One in three women will experience sexual assault in her lifetime. The perpetrator, contrary to popular belief, is most often not a stranger. In reality, about 82% of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim—a friend, acquaintance or family member. Any form of sexual violence can have traumatic, long-lasting physical, emotional and psychological effects. That is why our sexual violence action plan directly focuses on improving supports for victims.

C'est pourquoi notre plan d'action contre la violence sexuelle met directement l'accent sur l'amélioration des soutiens offerts aux victimes.

Unfortunately, fewer than 10% of sexual assault victims report the crime to the police. A victim can be reluctant to come forward. She may feel shame or even think that she will not be believed. So we are taking action that reflects what we heard from many brave survivors who shared their stories, the front-line workers who gave valuable advice and those from the violence-against-women sector who guided our work during province-wide consultations last summer.

We heard about the critical services that sexual assault centres provide for survivors. For that reason, we have

increased funding to these centres by \$3 million over four years in support of their ongoing efforts to meet the unique needs of women in communities across Ontario.

On nous a aussi expliqué que les femmes pouvaient être confrontées à des obstacles linguistiques lorsqu'elles demandent de l'aide. Nous investissons donc plus de 3,7 millions de dollars sur quatre ans dans les services d'interprétation pour que les victimes et les survivantes puissent communiquer et être comprises dans leur langue en cas d'urgence.

We also heard that women may face language barriers when coming forward for help, so we're investing over \$3.7 million over four years in interpreter services so that victims and survivors can communicate and be understood in their language at a time of crisis.

1520

When sexual violence does occur, victims need sensitive and compassionate care that responds to their needs, so we are also investing in training programs for professionals across Ontario, such as community, health and justice workers, to ensure that victims receive the very best support.

Sexual Assault Prevention Month is an opportunity to raise awareness about this all-too-prevalent crime, to dispel the myths and encourage everyone to do their part to prevent sexual violence. It is also a time to reiterate that sexual violence in any form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in Ontario.

Le changement d'attitudes permettra de changer des vies. En nous élevant contre la violence sexuelle, nous ferons de l'Ontario un lieu plus sécuritaire pour toutes les femmes et leurs familles.

Changing attitudes will change lives. By speaking up against sexual violence, we will make Ontario a safer place for all women and their families.

FAMILY SERVICE DAY

JOURNÉE DES SERVICES À LA FAMILLE

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It's my honour to recognize the good work of family service organizations throughout Ontario during family service day at Queen's Park—and why don't we take just a moment to thank them for the good work they do in this House?

Notre gouvernement est fier de contribuer au financement d'un grand nombre de programmes de Services à la famille-Ontario.

Our government is proud to support many Family Service Ontario agencies by funding many of their programs. I want to take the opportunity to thank my colleague the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services, for the work that she and her ministry do in liaising with these agencies. Her ministry works very closely with these agencies to offer a variety of supports, including those dealing with violence against women and programs for young adults who have a developmental disability.

Je profite de l'occasion pour remercier ces organismes exceptionnels pour leur engagement à l'égard des

familles et des personnes seules qui font face, au quotidien, à des difficultés énormes.

It's an opportunity today to thank these organizations for their commitment to families and individuals who face very, very difficult challenges in their lives. Nearly 250,000 Ontario families and individuals benefit from supports such as relationship and financial counselling, substance abuse programs, services for people with disabilities, supports provided to victims of domestic violence and so many more. This is important work. It's important to families, it's important to communities, and that means that it's very important to us in government.

Family services play an integral role in bringing our programs to life in communities throughout Ontario. Its agencies provide valuable services during all times, but, in particular, during difficult times. Our government shares their commitment to improving the lives of Ontario families. My ministry recently introduced significant reforms to strengthen the family justice system and improve access to justice by making the system easier to use, less confrontational and more affordable.

Our ministry's partner assault response program is just an example of the way that we can assist families in difficult times. It's a component of our domestic violence court program and offers specialized counselling and educational services by community agencies to people who have assaulted their partners. These programs aim to enhance victim safety, hold offenders accountable for their behaviour and ensure that such behaviour doesn't continue to occur.

In addition to the services provided by Family Service Ontario agencies, our government has launched a number of different initiatives to prevent violence and abuse and support women and their families. Our new sexual violence action plan, which my colleague just spoke about, is a very important example, targeting sexual violence against women with a comprehensive strategy that will prevent sexual violence and improve supports for survivors.

A key component of that plan is public education, a recognition of the fact that if we want to eradicate, eliminate, sexual violence against families, against individuals, we must eradicate the attitudes that have been allowed to persist. An example of the work that's being done is our neighbours, friends and families campaign. It helps people close to a woman who might be abused recognize the signs of abuse and reach out to help. To educate the public on what to look for, we offer brochures and safety cards in 12 different languages. This successful campaign recognizes that family violence is a community problem which needs a community-wide solution.

We're also doing more to help women whose first language is not English. Our free English-language or language interpreter services program helps nearly 6,000 women each year in more than 60 languages. They can get services in health, law and social services areas. As part of our new action plan, we expanded access to these services. That means more people, for more reasons, will be able to get assistance. We're also supporting women's

counselling services that helped more than 55,000 women and more than 6,500 children last year.

We recently announced the new Family Court support worker program to help support victims of domestic violence during Family Court cases for separation and divorce, and we've reconfirmed our commitment to child and family justice in our recent budget.

An example of this is our expansion of family mediation and information services to all Ontario courts by the end of this summer, providing family law clients with information and making referrals to services to help families reach resolutions and move forward with their lives at a very, very difficult time. These programs and many others provide a continuum of support to families and individuals.

Building stronger, healthier communities and reducing the incidence of family violence is a collective responsibility. There's more work to be done. We need everyone's help, everyone's voice and everyone's action.

I invite us all, once again, to join me and say thank you to the family service organizations which, throughout Ontario, show such a deep commitment and provide such wonderful assistance to families throughout the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm very pleased to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to speak about Sexual Assault Prevention Month in this, the month of May. We strongly believe, as I know all members in this House do, that women have the right to feel and be safe in their home, their community and their workplace.

Sexual assault is a horrific crime. The victims of sexual assault often suffer and experience long-lasting physical, emotional and psychological effects and trauma. That is why it is so critical for us to realize that we must do everything we can to eradicate sexual assault and violence, and, of course, that very much means changing attitudes.

Thus, this month, we have the opportunity, all of us, to raise awareness about sexual violence and encourage everyone in this province to do their part to prevent it. It is a time where we can come together to find solutions to prevent violence and find better ways to support our victims and hold the perpetrators accountable.

Every woman in this province deserves to live without the fear of violence. Twenty eleven marks the 23rd year that Ontario has recognized Sexual Assault Prevention Month. Unfortunately, when we take a look at the studies, the problem is still too common and prevalent.

Each year in Ontario, over 7,000 people are sexually assaulted. The vast majority of them are women between the ages of 15 and 24. Even more disturbing is the immeasurable fear and torment that the victims live with. We know that only 10% of the assaults are reported to the authorities. This number is far too small, and it must

change. No longer should the victims of sexual assault feel frightened or ashamed. We need to be able to encourage and support them to come forward, share their experience and receive the support required for a successful recovery.

I'd like to commend the women who recently came to Queen's Park to raise awareness about sexual assault and help dispel the myths. Their message was clear, and it was irrefutable: Victims are not ever to be blamed. Sexual assault is a crime, and nothing excuses it.

On behalf of our caucus, I want to congratulate and thank everybody for their part in working to eliminate sexual assault in the province of Ontario.

1530

FAMILY SERVICE DAY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to respond to the minister's remarks on Family Service Ontario day.

Family Service Ontario represents 41 not-for-profit agencies across the province that provide many different services. I had the opportunity today to meet with Mark Creedon, the executive director of Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin, along with two members of their volunteer board of directors and representatives from the sistering program. It's too bad that I don't have more time to talk about the sistering program, which is based on a peer-support model. Women who are victims of domestic violence can find support from women who used to be victims. It gives them a friendly voice to talk to and someone who knows what they're going through. One woman shared her story with me about how Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin helped her through an abusive relationship and gave her the tools and access to the services she needed for her and her young daughter to succeed. The reality is that 87% of women who are dealing with abuse do not seek help through a shelter, which is why Family Service Ontario is so important in our communities.

I was pleased to join Family Service Ontario for their luncheon today and was really struck, as I was in my meeting, about how volunteer-oriented this organization is. In fact, for every paid staff member at Family Service Ontario, there are two volunteers working just as hard to make sure Ontario families are getting the supports and services they need.

Volunteers truly do make organizations like this one as successful as they are. The over 3,000 volunteers who take time out of their lives and away from their families to help those individuals get the services and support they need deserve our appreciation.

It is your dedication to your community that makes a huge difference in the lives of others.

I also want to thank the volunteer board of directors. I know what a huge time commitment serving on a board can be, and your time is appreciated.

Again, thank you to Family Service Ontario for all your hard work. Our communities value your presence

and, like some of the stories I heard today, many families have thrived because of your commitment.

SEXUAL ASSAULT
PREVENTION MONTH
FAMILY SERVICE DAY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It gives me great honour to rise on behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats on Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

I have the figures from the United States: 700,000 women a year in the United States are raped. In Canada, we can extrapolate. I couldn't find the figures for all of Canada. Let's assume 70,000, since we're about a tenth of the size. You heard the member from Kitchener–Waterloo talk about 7,000 in Ontario alone. These are horrendous numbers. This is a war on women; let us make no mistake about it.

We in the New Democrats thought that one of the first responses from the province of Ontario should be non-partisan, should be an all-party standing committee of women dealing with domestic violence. We put forward a motion years ago. It sits on the order paper still, gathering dust. Nothing has been done by this government about that.

Let me talk about what hasn't been done, because I'm tired of the platitudes. I'm tired of standing up here every year and listening to us talk about the issue when we know we're not doing enough about it. One of the things we're not doing enough about—and kudos to family services—is that we're not funding family services enough. We're not giving money to the front-line service providers that we should be doing.

Let me give an example of that. It's just around the corner, down on College. It's called Victim Services. They're a victim crisis response team—I would wager, if not the largest in Ontario, certainly one of the largest groups of volunteers plus staff members who go out 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and deal with 20,000 victims a year along with the police. And guess what? In 1990, they were funded \$286 per victim. You know what their funding was in 2010? Thirty-one dollars. That's how far it has gone down: from \$286 per victim in 1990 to \$31 today. That is shameful. It's unacceptable. Every year they have been here before this government talking about the flatline in their funding—every single year, with no response.

They deal with 35 different languages. They deal with 150 volunteers. I know their story because I've been working with them ever since I was elected. I imagine their story is not alone. I imagine that their story is replicated in family services of various sorts across Ontario. This is unacceptable.

Every year, I will stand up yet again and say this yet again until funding is actually provided to front-line service providers for victims of sexual assault and violence. Until the number goes from \$31 up a bit, I'll be here, or the ghost of me will be here, saying it again.

On a happy note, on a good note—I want to leave on a positive note—there is one initiative that we've managed to get together on in this House. It's called Ruth's Daughters of Canada. We had faith leaders from across the faith spectrum come to Queen's Park and sign on a document that said they were committed to eradicating domestic violence. Just about every faith was represented here, and the members from Etobicoke Centre and Whitby–Oshawa also signed on on behalf of their parties. So Ruth's Daughters of Canada, last Mother's Day, was launched in this place, and chapters are beginning in places of faith and worship across Ontario as we speak. So that happened.

If that can happen, why can't we have a standing committee that deals with this issue? If that can happen, why can't we have funding that really provides our front-line service workers with the tools they need to deal with this most intractable of problems?

Remember, it's not just in the past; this is also about our daughters and our granddaughters, as well as our mothers and our grandmothers. May it not continue for another generation. May we finally overcome our partisan differences in this place and actually get together and do something.

PETITIONS

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. John O'Toole: The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas agriculture makes an important contribution to the Ontario economy and deserves investment” and respect; and

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

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

“Whereas, if the McGuinty Liberals truly support farm families and wish to fight poverty, the Legislative Assembly ... should immediately pass MPP Bob Bailey's bill” today;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call ... Bob Bailey's private member's bill, Bill 78, the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, to committee immediately for consideration and then on to third reading and implementation without delay” before the election on October 6.

I urge the House to support this today for Bob Bailey.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

Mr. Kim Craiton: I'm pleased to introduce the following petition:

"Whereas the people of Ontario deserve and have the right to request the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care pay for the diagnostics required to identify and treat chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency for those MS patients plagued by this debilitating disease; and

"Whereas the diagnostics consisting of an MRI scan or Doppler image to be used to confirm constriction of the veins in the neck, and then, if warranted, the angioplasty procedure to dilate the veins in question. Currently, angioplasty is not an option for MS patients; and

"Whereas it should be the choice of the MS patient, on the advice of his or her physician, to have the procedure done in Ontario and not to have to travel to foreign countries to have the procedure; and

1540

"Whereas we understand that while Dr. Paolo Zamboni's findings are still in the early stages, we believe that by allowing MS patients the choice of undergoing angioplasty (which is performed safely on a daily basis in Ontario) it will allow patient studies to monitor the effectiveness of this treatment. Patients suffering from MS do not have the time to wait for clinical trials due to the possible progression of the disease. We would also request that the province of Ontario work diligently with the federal government to conduct studies on MS and its association with chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency across Canada, as there are approximately 75,000 Canadians living with this disabling disease;

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

"To provide funding to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to cover the costs of the MRI scan or Doppler image and the subsequent angioplasty, if necessary, for MS patients."

I'm proud to sign my signature in support of this.

SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS

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

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government is forcing Ontario municipalities to build solar-powered generation facilities without any local say or local approval; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government transferred decision-making power from elected municipal governments to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats, who are accountable to no one; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government has removed any kind of appeal process for municipalities or for people living in close proximity to these projects; and

"Whereas Tim Hudak, Jim Wilson and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party have committed to restoring local decision-making powers and to building renew-

able energy projects only in places where they are welcome, wanted and at prices Ontarians can afford;

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

"That the McGuinty government restore local decision-making powers for renewable energy projects and immediately stop forcing new solar developments on municipalities that have not approved and whose citizens do not want them in their community."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

KIDNEY DISEASE

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'm delighted today to have a petition from Ken Sharp. Mr. Sharp has been a dialysis survivor for 30-plus years: one of the longest in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, Canada, draw the attention of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to the following:

"Whereas kidney disease is a huge and growing problem in Canada; and

"Whereas real progress is being made in various ways of preventing and coping with kidney disease, in particular the development of a bio-artificial kidney;

"We, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make research funding available for the explicit purpose of conducting bio-artificial kidney research as an extension to the research being successfully conducted at several centres in the United States."

I agree with this petition and give it to page Jonathan.

DOG OWNERSHIP

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

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

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

"Whereas 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 any related acts, and instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

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

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I have a petition here from residents of the Guelph and Erin areas.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario’s economy, and strong, prosperous farms mean a strong, prosperous Ontario; and

“Whereas the establishment of a risk management program was the single most important action the provincial government could have done to help ensure the economic success of Ontario’s non-supply-managed commodities; and

“Whereas agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility, and yet the federal government has refused to act and come to the table with their support;

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

“We applaud the Ontario government’s support of risk management programs and 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.”

DOG OWNERSHIP

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition 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 agree with this petition.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. Bill Mauro: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“We, the undersigned, express our concern regarding continued violence against women by their partners who are not supervised or monitored after being charged with domestic assault. Statistics show that retaliatory or continued violence against women by accused partners remains or escalates after charges are laid.

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

“That domestic assault offenders be ordered to attend a partner assault response ... program as part of their bail process. This program monitors the offender’s ongoing risk to the partner, offers him education and provides help to the victim.”

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

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

“Whereas the proposed closure of the Sarnia Jail will impact 76 employees and result in a loss of over \$6 million to the local Sarnia–Lambton community; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government states that the Sarnia Jail is underutilized while in fact it is currently at 105% capacity; and

“Whereas there are no costs currently associated with transporting inmates from the Sarnia Jail to the Sarnia courthouse, and transporting inmates from Windsor to Sarnia will greatly increase costs, costs which may become a burden to the city of Sarnia and thus local taxpayers; and

“Whereas the mayor, local OPP, the Sarnia police chief, the RCMP, aboriginal police, First Nations ... and the Canadian border services were not consulted prior to the Sarnia Jail closure, and if closed, Sarnia would become the busiest border crossing in Ontario without a jail;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the McGuinty Liberal government immediately conduct a public review of the Sarnia Jail and make that cost-benefit analysis available...”

I agree with this and will send this and will send this down with Jonathan, and I’ll affix my signature.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition addressed 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 will sign this petition and send it with Rachel.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas the Brockville and area community has for years demonstrated its support for Brockville General

Hospital by raising millions of dollars in funds and volunteering thousands of hours of time; and

“Whereas Brockville General Hospital is a major employer and an essential part of the current and future economic and social fabric of our community; and

“Whereas community hospitals must offer a full range of services, including surgeries, to be viable; and

“Whereas a proposal to remove surgical services from Brockville General Hospital has been condemned in the community and is undermining ongoing efforts to recruit new health care professionals;

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

“That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care demand the South East Local Health Integration Network remove any option to eliminate the surgical department at Brockville General Hospital from its review of health care services in the region.”

I agree with the petition, will affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Melanie.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Toby Barrett: A petition: We’re now up to 2,000 names that have come in.

“Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values;

1550

“Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

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

“Revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines.”

I agree with the petition and sign it.

SPEED LIMITS

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current speed limit as posted through the village of Humphrey in the township of Seguin is 70 kilometres per hour;

“Whereas Highway 141 passes through the village, consisting of an elementary school, fire hall, municipal office and works department yard, a community centre, including library and arena, as well as a newly developed 25-unit subdivision;

“Whereas the posted speed limit in the village of Rosseau, 15 kilometres east of Humphrey, is 50 kilometres per hour, does not have a school on the highway but has been deemed to be worthy of a reduced speed limit;

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

“That the government of Ontario reduce the posted speed limit within the boundaries of the village of Humphrey to 50 kilometres per hour.”

I support this petition and shall sign it.

PARAMEDICS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition. I’ve signed it and I present it to page Melanie.

MATTHEWS HOUSE HOSPICE

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

“Whereas the number of clients served by Matthews House Hospice has doubled in less than three years, while funding provided by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care through the Central LHIN remains substantially unchanged; and

“Whereas Matthews House Hospice is the lowest-funded hospice in the Central LHIN and among the lowest-funded in the province, serving as many clients or more than others receiving substantially more money; and

“Whereas, in February 2010, Matthews House Hospice was promised a short-term and a long-term solution to its underfunding by the Central LHIN and that the long-term solution has not materialized; and

“Whereas, in January, Matthews House Hospice was told by the Central LHIN that any adjustment would have to come from the ministry, while two months later the ministry informed Matthews House Hospice that it would have to work with the Central LHIN to solve its funding issues;

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

“That Premier McGuinty instruct the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to appoint someone with

authority to meet with the board representatives of Matthews House Hospice to sort out how they can get a just resolution for the people of south Simcoe needing hospice care, a resolution that ensures that their promise of a long-term solution is kept, giving them base funding equal to that of other hospices in Central LHIN.”

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

OPPOSITION DAY

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I move that, in 2003, Premier Dalton McGuinty signed a pledge not to raise taxes on Ontario families before forcing them to pay higher personal, corporate, income and payroll taxes. He brought in the largest personal income tax increase in provincial history with the health tax and the largest sales tax increase with the HST. He also increased the tax burden on Ontario families through tire taxes, eco taxes, electronic taxes, the diamond tax, hidden hydro taxes, destination marketing taxes and higher beer, wine and spirits taxes. Therefore, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls on Premier Dalton McGuinty not to create any new taxes, including a carbon tax, or hike the HST that Ontario families pay. This is addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. MacLeod has moved opposition day number 5. Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I want to thank my colleague the member for Nepean–Carleton, the Ontario PC critic for revenue and government accountability, for bringing this important motion forward here today. My colleague, thank you very much; strong leadership, well done.

This opposition day standing in the name of the member from Nepean–Carleton comes directly from Ontario families, from the families that she speaks with, that I speak with as I travel across the province, that the Ontario PC caucus speaks with each day.

From conversations at Tim Hortons, the local playground, the lineup at the grocery store and through our haveyoursayontario.ca survey, the message is clear. After almost eight years of the McGuinty Liberals, Ontario families need relief. They need a Premier who will give them a chance to catch up and not one who sees families as his own personal ATM. And they need that relief because, for too long, Ontario families have been forced to bear the burden of Premier McGuinty’s inability to get his spending under control, to get control over his pet projects and the increased taxes that come about as a result.

There is a choice to be made and it really is a matter of simple arithmetic: Either our spending must be restrained to meet our revenues or our taxes must be raised to pay for all this Liberal spending. And sadly, Ontario families know all too well what Premier McGuinty’s choice will be. Former Canadian Taxpayers Federation director

Kevin Gaudet—who, I want to say, is one of our outstanding Ontario PC candidates, running in Pickering–Scarborough East—joined us here at Queen’s Park today to remind all of us about the kind of choices that Premier McGuinty makes.

Mr. Gaudet brought a pledge to Queen’s Park, one that was signed on September 11, 2003, just prior to the 2003 election. It was called the taxpayer protection promise and it said that if he formed the government, Premier McGuinty would not raise taxes without the consent of Ontario voters. We all remember very well the picture of Premier McGuinty signing that pledge, taking that oath, swearing up and down that he would not increase taxes on Ontario families—and then we know what happened next. He broke his promise. He increased taxes on Ontario families. We know he’ll do it again, and that’s why we need change here in the province of Ontario.

As soon as he had the keys to the Premier’s office in his hands, Premier McGuinty brought in the health tax—the so-called health tax—the largest increase in taxes on income in Ontario’s history. It took \$3 billion each and every year out of the pockets of Ontario families.

And then we saw it again. Just before the 2007 election, guess what happened?

Mr. John Yakabuski: He promised not to raise them again, I’ll betcha.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The member from Renfrew is exactly right; he was paying close attention to what was happening in 2007. We saw this movie before in 2003, and in 2007 Premier McGuinty said once again that he would not raise taxes on Ontario families. But what happened? After the election he broke his promise again and brought in the HST tax grab, netting another \$3 billion from hard-working Ontario families. And to make matters worse, on that very same day, July 1, 2010—Canada Day—Premier McGuinty tried to use his HST to cover up a new tax in our province. He tried to sneak in under the shadow of the HST an eco-tax on TVs, alarm clocks and more than 9,000 items that Ontario families use every day.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He got caught with that one.

Mr. Tim Hudak: He did get caught. The Ontario PCs forced Premier McGuinty to backtrack on some of those items. They’re still there, and we will fight his tax increases each and every step of the way.

1600

So now what do we see? After swearing not to increase taxes when elected in 2003 and 2007, Ontario families now are faced with increased taxes through tire taxes, eco taxes, electronics taxes, the diamond tax, the hidden hydro tax, higher beer, wine and spirit taxes—the list goes on and on. But even with all the tax increases, even with all the new, hidden Liberal fees, Ontario finds itself with nearly a \$17-billion deficit.

Let me put our deficit and debt problem into perspective. It took 23 Premiers 136 years to accumulate Ontario’s first \$148 billion in debt, and the McGuinty Liberals will single-handedly double that debt in their eight years in office. Do you know what that means?

They're passing that burden on to our children, on to our grandchildren.

What do we see today? Before the 2011 election, the Liberals and Premier McGuinty are making promises all over again. They're promising they're not going to increase taxes; they're promising they're not going to increase the HST. Their new slogan: "The Liberals won't raise taxes; this time we really, really, really, really mean it."

Ontario families don't want pledges; they don't want promises. They don't want them from the Liberals because they believe that Premier McGuinty simply will not keep his word.

Mr. John Yakabuski: They want relief.

Mr. Tim Hudak: They want relief, and they want a guarantee. When it comes to taxes, there is only one guarantee that Premier McGuinty will give them: He will raise their taxes. He can't help it. It's what he always does. But, friends, the Ontario PCs have a different approach: We will not.

Instead of raising taxes for most while lavishing special breaks for the favoured few, the Ontario PCs will offer a plan to cut taxes for families right across the board. Instead of runaway spending and secret side deals with the big public sector unions that they try to hide until after the election, jeopardizing government services for future generations, an Ontario PC government will make government live within its means. Instead of more bureaucracy, more red tape, more pet projects, we will invest in health care first. Instead of chasing business out of the province, we will invite business in and create an environment that nurtures the businesses born here in Ontario.

It all starts with today's vote. Sadly, today's vote, like Premier McGuinty's pledge, isn't binding. But thankfully, there is a binding vote coming up, and it's on October 6. Ontario families know the only way to change the way the Premier treats them is to change the government in our province and bring in an Ontario PC government. Those same families—the ones we hear at parks, in grocery store lineups, at our children's hockey and baseball games—know there is only one way to get the Premier to give them the respect they deserve and the relief that they need; they know the only government that can give them tax relief, a chance to catch up, is an Ontario PC government. That's why, when votes really count, on October 6, Ontario families will vote for change.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: This is an interesting motion from the member from the Conservative caucus, Ms. MacLeod. I simply want to focus on a couple of areas of it.

First, I want to focus on the HST. Second, as mentioned in the motion, I want to focus on the hidden hydro taxes; and third, as my Conservative colleagues often mention when they refer to smart meters as tax meters, I want to deal with that for a while.

One of the ways that people across Ontario increasingly discover that they're paying more taxes is when they look at their hydro bill. People have started to ask, "Why is my hydro bill skyrocketing?" I think people deserve an answer, because over the past six or seven years you've watched your hydro bill skyrocket. Many people have seen hydro bill increases of \$125 a month or \$1,500 a year. Imagine a tax increase of \$1,500 a year. That's what people are experiencing, only it comes on the hydro bill.

Because hydroelectricity is a necessity for us to live, people deserve to know what is going on and what can be done about it. You deserve to know what is going on and what can be done about it.

The first issue to address is the harmonized sales tax, the HST. Adding the HST to our hydro bill caused real pain for all of us, but especially for low- and middle-income families and seniors trying to make ends meet on fixed-income pensions. If your current hydro bill is \$200 per month, with the HST it becomes \$226 a month. This amounts to an extra \$312 a year just on HST. Many people simply do not have the extra \$312 a year for HST on the hydro bill.

What can be done? New Democrats believe we must take the HST off the hydro bill and the heating bill. Necessities of life like electricity and heating for our homes should not be subject to the HST. It is just wrong.

The next issue that I think needs to be addressed the Conservative caucus calls the tax meters—the tax machines. I call them the not-so-smart meters. One of the biggest and costliest mistakes the McGuinty Liberals made was to spend a lot of your money—\$1.5 billion so far—on what Liberals call smart meters.

Well, it turns out they are not-so-smart meters, because tests so far have shown that they do not give accurate readings and don't help people reduce their electricity usage, and they have cost over \$1.5 billion to install, with a cost likely to hit \$2 billion by 2012. You are already paying for the \$1.5 billion on your hydro bill, and you will pay a lot more on your hydro bill before this costly experiment is over.

What can be done? Well, the best way to help people use less energy in their homes is to provide low-interest loans so that we can install high-efficiency fridges, stoves and freezers and then let people pay down the loans by how much we save on our monthly hydro bills. That's exactly what the government of Manitoba does through Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart strategy. I'd urge people to actually go to the Manitoba Hydro website, and they can read about this. It's a strategy that actually helps people use less electricity, thereby saving them money.

One of the ways that people are paying huge taxes on their hydro bill, but it really is hidden, is the privatization of our hydro system that has happened. Ontario's hydroelectricity system used to operate on a not-for-profit basis to provide hydro to people at cost, not cost plus profit plus fee plus commissions, which is what goes on now. Both the former Conservative and the current Liberal governments in Ontario have moved to privatize more

and more of our hydroelectricity system with the result that the cost of the system is skyrocketing.

Just one of these privatized hydro companies racked up profits of \$560 million in 2010, and you pay for the \$560 million in profits on your hydro bill every month. I'm told that the chief executive of that company takes in a total salary and compensation of over \$2 million a year, and you pay for that on your hydro bill now.

1610

But even worse, many of these new private hydro companies under the McGuinty Liberals' bizarre hydro-electricity scheme have been paid hundreds of millions of dollars for electricity that wasn't delivered to you, the consumer. Some other private hydro companies were paid \$146 million for electricity that was purchased in the United States but not delivered to consumers in Ontario.

Altogether, \$360 million of your money was paid out to private hydro companies for electricity that was not delivered to you, the hydro consumer. Now that's what I call a very effective tax: \$360 million, and the people who paid it got nothing for it. You paid that \$360 million on your hydro bill even though you got nothing for it.

What can be done? Both Manitoba and Quebec have rejected the privatized hydro scheme that the Conservatives and Liberals have foisted on the people of Ontario. In these provinces, hydro bills are a lot more affordable and private hydro companies aren't paid millions of dollars for electricity that is never delivered to you, the consumer. We in Ontario should reject the privatized hydro scheme too. If people in Manitoba and Quebec can have not-for-profit hydro systems that deliver electricity at cost without all the fees, commissions, profits and hidden taxes attached, we can do it in Ontario too.

Something else has happened under both the Conservatives and the McGuinty Liberals. It's what I call an "exploding bureaucracy." Along with the privatization of our hydroelectricity system came an explosion of new bureaucracies. There was one provider of electricity in Ontario 10 years ago: Ontario Hydro. The former Conservative government and now the McGuinty Liberals have created—get this—eight bureaucracies and several private companies, and those bureaucracies and private companies have budgets in the billions of dollars, which you pay for on your monthly hydro bill.

I just want to name these new bureaucracies: (1) Ontario Power Generation; (2) Hydro One; (3) the Independent Electricity System Operator; (4) the Ontario Energy Board; (5) the Ontario Power Authority; (6) the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp.; (7) the Electrical Safety Authority; and (8) the smart meter entity.

Imagine this for a minute: Other provinces, Manitoba and Quebec, deliver electricity at cost to industry, businesses and homes, and they have at most two organizations. In Manitoba you have Manitoba Hydro, which produces and delivers the electricity, and you have the Manitoba public utilities commission, which makes sure that Manitoba Hydro is following the rules. In Ontario, though, the Conservatives and the Liberals have left us with eight bureaucracies, and these bureaucracies all have budgets in the billions of dollars.

I would simply say, "What can be done?" Well, Manitoba has one company which generates and distributes electricity, Manitoba Hydro, and one body that holds them accountable, the Manitoba public utilities commission. If Manitoba can run their hydroelectricity system with only two organizations, why does Ontario have eight different bloated bureaucracies?

But the bureaucracies aren't alone. With them came exploding executive salaries. Not only have the McGuinty Liberals and the Conservatives before them created the huge new bureaucracies, they have created huge salaries and bonuses for the executives at the top as well. As a comparison, the head of Manitoba Hydro, which provides electricity to all of Manitoba on a not-for-profit basis, gets paid \$375,000 annually. Now, if you add up the eight bureaucracies in Ontario and then add up the executive salaries: at Ontario Power Generation, the top five executives get paid \$4-million-plus; at Hydro One, the top six executives, \$3-million-plus; the Ontario Power Authority top five executives, \$2 million; the Independent Electricity System Operator top six executives, \$2.5 million; the Ontario Energy Board top eight executives, \$2 million; the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., the chief executive officer is at \$560,000; and so far the government refuses to tell us how much the head of the so-called smart meter entity is paid. But if you just add up the numbers I've given you so far, you pay, for all these exploding executive salaries, on your monthly hydro bill more than \$14 million. That's what the Conservatives and the McGuinty Liberals have given us. That's the public hydro bureaucracy. If you then add up what the chief executive officers and other executive folks in the private hydro companies are getting paid, I have no doubt it's probably another \$14 million.

Boy, this is a really effective tax machine that's going on, using Ontario's hydro system to siphon money away from ordinary people into the pockets of executives with bloated salaries and bloated compensation packages.

What can be done? Well, I simply say that if Manitoba can pay the head of Manitoba Hydro \$375,000 annually, why are we paying over \$14 million annually to the executives of the bloated hydro bureaucracies in Ontario?

One of the hidden taxes in all of this system are the lucrative subsidies for green energy. We all agree that it is good for the environment to generate more of our electricity from natural resources like water power, wind power and solar power, but the reality is, the McGuinty Liberals are following a very expensive path of private wind power, private solar power and increasingly private water power, and so far, we can calculate that this will add over \$500 million a year to the cost of hydro-electricity in Ontario.

Now, in contrast to the McGuinty Liberals, American states are bringing in wind power too, and other provinces, like Manitoba, but at a much lower cost than the McGuinty Liberals in Ontario. Some comparisons: Texas pays six cents a kilowatt hour for wind power and Manitoba pays less than six cents a kilowatt hour for wind power. The McGuinty Liberals in Ontario pay over

13 cents a kilowatt hour for wind power. So the question is, if Texas and Manitoba can develop wind power for six cents a kilowatt hour or less, why are the McGuinty Liberals forcing people to pay over 13 cents a kilowatt hour? My, this is a very effective tax machine indeed.

In this debate, people deserve to know where New Democrats stand, what New Democrats stand for. What I've given you are just five reasons why your hydro bill has skyrocketed over the last six or seven years. There are certainly other factors that are also worthy of discussion, but these five show that there are better hydro-electricity choices and options for the people of Ontario than those the Conservatives and the McGuinty Liberals offer.

1620

New Democrats believe, for example, that northern Ontario should have its own hydroelectricity company, owned by us—the people—run on a not-for-profit basis, like Manitoba Hydro or Hydro Quebec, and it should generate electricity, it should transmit electricity and it should distribute electricity. It should deliver hydro-electricity at cost to our homes, businesses and industries so that we can sustain good-paying jobs, our communities and our families. If the people of Manitoba and Quebec can do it—and they can—we can too.

I've referenced a lot of reports and a lot of studies in my comments, and sometimes people who are watching want to know where you got this. If people want to know where I got some of the stats and some of the figures, I invite them to get in touch with me or my constituency office, and I'd be happy to provide them with detailed references where they can find this for themselves.

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: I thank the opposition for bringing this motion forward today. Unfortunately, with only 40 minutes per party to speak to this, we have five or six members who are chomping at the bit to get at this. That leaves me only about eight minutes.

I'm going to do something today that I haven't done hardly at all in the almost eight years that I've been here. Usually, I like to use my words, make my remarks. Rarely do I find a letter that I'll read from when I'm speaking in the Legislature, but I have one here that I'm going to use today. I think it sums up incredibly well—and I'm speaking primarily to my constituents in Thunder Bay–Atikokan, because this letter is written by a northerner and he's speaking about the HST. The opposition day motion today focuses on many things, but primarily on the HST.

It uses language that is not my words. Some of it's a little stronger than I might use, but it's language that is contained in a letter that was published in a periodical. It's from a magazine that's called Northern Ontario Business magazine, and it's written by an economist by the name of David Robinson. He works at the University of Laurentian in Sudbury. He's very interested in northern issues. He speaks about the HST. He wrote this letter about nine months ago. It goes on for a while; I'm going to highlight some of the things he had to say.

"I genuinely like politicians. The ones I know are all smart people with good people skills. Some of them even buy me lunch.

"It bothers me when a politician ... pushes a policy that I know is dumb. I absolutely cringe when the provincial Conservative leader Tim Hudak and provincial NDP leader Andrea Horwath talk about the ... HST.

"As an economist, I know that the HST is a good idea. The ... PST is out of date, costly to operate, badly designed and it penalizes jobs in Ontario....

"Let me be clear about this: The vast majority of economists support combining the federal and provincial sales taxes." To my Conservative friends across the way, as they know, Stephen Harper, who has a majority federally, supports the HST, but maybe they'll explain that to us somewhere along the line.

"How can reorganizing sales taxes make such a difference? The provincial sales tax falls on inputs for businesses as well as sales to consumers." He goes on to explain in detail, but that's not what I'm going to focus on here today.

He says the following: "Their confusion"—he's talking about Hudak and he's talking about Horwath; especially Horwath as someone who likes to think she's the champion of the north—"will hurt northern Ontario. The total value of mining supply and service sector output is \$5.6 billion. There are 500 companies employing 23,000 people.... The HST makes them more competitive. The PST hurts small businesses even more than big ones....

"Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec have already seen the light." In other words, they've been doing this for years.

Then he asks, "So why don't Tim"—he means Hudak—"and Andrea"—he means Horwath—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, I want to remind you that you can't say inadvertently what you can't say—

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm quoting. I'm quoting, sir.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): That doesn't matter. You can't say indirectly what you can't say directly—there's what I was looking for.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I appreciate that. Thank you, Speaker.

He wants to know: Why don't the two leaders of the Conservative Party and the NDP "want to fix the Ontario's lunatic PST? Are they ignorant of the way taxes work? Are they lying to get votes? It is hard to tell. We can be 100% sure that if either of them forms the government, they won't go back to the PST.

"When the NDP fights the HST, they tell themselves they are defending the poor. They are wrong. Canada's best leftish think tank"—leftish, meaning NDP—"is the Centre for Policy Alternatives. It found that the HST reforms will slightly increase the income for the poor." That's a left-leaning think tank. "It will certainly improve their job prospects.

"The part of the NDP message that people will remember is that paying taxes is bad. In her rush to say something that is popular, Horwath is reinforcing—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I remind the member again to please insert “leader of the third party” or something like that.

Mr. Bill Mauro: “In her rush to say something that is popular,” the leader of the NDP “is reinforcing the anti-government, anti-tax rhetoric of the Conservatives. She might as well join the Republicans....”

“What makes” the Leader of the Opposition’s “position pathetic is that the HST is good for small business.” The Leader of the Opposition “likes small business, doesn’t he?”

This is an interesting conclusion to his letter: “What a strange situation. We have leaders on the left”—the leader of the NDP—“and the right”—the leader of the Conservatives—“promoting the same policies. Both of them are ignoring the advice of professional economists. Neither of them seems to have a clue about how the tax system works. Both of them are undermining northern Ontario’s future for a very few votes in the short run. This is reactionary populism at its worst.

“I said at the beginning that I like politicians. I would like this pair a lot better if they would get a bit of professional advice.”

We know the HST has presented a wonderful political opportunity for the members of both of the opposition parties. The NDP response is predictable, but the Conservative one less so. I would go on to say that their credibility with a lot of their core constituency has been affected by their position on this particular policy, and I think that will bear some fruit as we go forward.

Also, it’s important to mention the federal Conservative government and Prime Minister Harper—they have a majority. They support the HST. They passed legislation federally supporting the HST. They transferred \$4.3 billion to Ontario to help us implement the HST. That’s the federal Conservative government. If there’s anybody who doesn’t like tax increases, I think most people would think it’s Stephen Harper. But he voted on and passed legislation to implement the HST in Ontario and transferred money to allow to us do it.

The Toronto Star, the Toronto Sun, the National Post, the Globe and Mail—they’ve all written editorials supporting the implementation of the HST. The chamber of commerce in my neck of the woods has asked for this to happen for years and years. And here’s the best part: Poverty groups, food banks, seniors’ groups—none of them, not the poverty groups, not the food banks, and not the seniors’ groups, are marching on the front lawns of Queen’s Park opposed to the implementation of the HST, because they know that the full realm, the full breadth of the tax reform policies that we’ve brought in does not adversely affect those groups. They know that.

Four provinces, 130 countries—the member that spoke just before me forgot to mention about the 10% Ontario clean energy benefit as well.

I’ve used probably more of the time than I should. I apologize to my other members for that. My time is up. I think it’s obvious what’s going on here. As was said by the previous speaker, if others want to know where they

can find this letter that I just quoted from, they can contact my constituency office. I’d be happy to share that information with them.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I’m pleased to join in the debate on this motion. I want to congratulate the member for Nepean–Carleton, my friend Lisa MacLeod, for putting it forward today. I think this is an extremely timely debate. Our leader, Tim Hudak, who spoke as our leadoff speaker, really touched, I think, the issues here in the province of Ontario. I’m going to use my time to talk about some local examples, but I support this motion and the intent of this motion. Again, I want to applaud my colleague Lisa MacLeod for bringing it forward.

1630

You don’t have to search too many places to find the impact that Dalton McGuinty and this government have placed on Ontarians. You can take a dart and throw it against a map of Ontario, and anywhere it lands you’re going to hear the same feelings I hear in my riding: those concerns about relief. They’re telling our members—they have to be telling the members opposite—that enough is enough; the hits to the pocketbook, whether it be the HST, eco taxes, some of the hidden taxes on hydro bills, the list goes on and on. That’s why I think it’s so important that we’re debating this motion from the member for Nepean–Carleton today.

I realize that we’re asking a leopard to change its spots, and in our case we know that it’s impossible. This Premier is who he is. He and his government are hard-wired to tax and spend; it’s in their DNA. He has ignored our party’s pleas in the past to give Ontario families a break. But maybe, just maybe, he’ll listen to the debate today and recognize that we in the Ontario PC caucus want to give a voice to those Ontario families that are struggling to make ends meet.

What I’m saying, Premier, is do it for them. Stand here and look Ontarians in the eye and tell them you won’t create any new taxes, you won’t spring a carbon tax to them or hike the HST. That’s what we want here. Our leader, Tim Hudak of the PC Party, has pledged to bring relief to the family budget. Why won’t the members on the other side of the House? Why won’t the government stand up? You won’t because I don’t think you can. You just can’t seem to bring your mind to listen, like members of our caucus, to what Ontario families are saying.

In preparing some notes today, I’m reminded of a time when the member from Nepean–Carleton and I met with Sam Crosby-Bouwhuis, who is the owner of the Bread of Life Dance Theatre in Brockville. At the time, she was absorbing a staggering \$1,500 a month for the cost of the HST to prevent passing it on to her 200 students. We heard from the parents that day that they couldn’t believe the government was putting forward this HST and that it was affecting those people.

Our leader, Tim Hudak, mentioned that famous Canada Day last year, when people got the double whammy

of not only the HST but also the eco fees, which were slid under the carpet. My two constituency assistants, Pauline Connolly and Lynn Campbell, worked for my predecessor, now Senator Runciman, for 15 years, and they couldn't imagine the amount of calls. It was by far the busiest day they ever had in a constituency office for complaints because of what this government tried to pull: the double whammy on Canada Day. I'm glad that our leader, Tim Hudak, brought that up.

As well, I introduced my own resolution calling on the McGuinty government to scrap its hidden hydro tax, which the government defeated, and I spoke about Purcell's Freshmart in Mallorytown, owned by Mike and Dana Purcell. They gave me their hydro bill. It was \$4,113.93 a month, but only \$1,158 was actually electricity. All the other money, over \$2,000, was an assortment of fees and taxes, including \$470 in HST. I know that every family business is having difficulty, especially when they have those types of taxes added.

But it's not just businesses. I want to give you one instance of a couple of grandparents raising their two grandchildren in the north Leeds area of my riding. They quote in an email that one summer month they only used \$1.50 of hydro, but their bill was over \$150 because of those extra fees and charges. It's not me saying that; it's not a PC MPP saying that. It's my constituents reading their bills to me.

As well, we talk about the eco fees. I'm reminded of an email I received from John Loscher and Diane Griffin of Brockville, who wrote to tell me about their experience with the eco tax. They just did like most Ontarians. They went to a store, purchased a can of paint like every other Ontarian, and they had to dig a little deeper because of the eco tax. But guess what? When they went to return that unused paint can back to Stewardship Ontario, they hadn't yet set up a recycling program in Brockville. Unbelievable. More money out of their pockets; nothing back for them in return.

So I'm proud to speak on this bill today, I'm proud to support this, and in the few moments as I wrap up, I think what we're not looking for, as our leader said, is another meaningless pledge by this Premier that, "We really, really mean it this time. We're not going to raise your taxes." People deserve better, and I think that's why we in the PC Party know that families need the relief, and we're quite prepared to do it now, and we're quite prepared to do it on October 6 as well.

Our fundamental principle is to respect hard-working Ontario families by lowering taxes and being accountable for every penny of their taxes we spend as a government. So I'm pleased to join in the debate in the few moments that I have, pleased to be able to provide some comments, and I hope that all members opposite will think long and hard before they vote on this motion today.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's good to have the opportunity to speak to the motion made by the member from Nepean. I've got to tell you, just when you think you're making friends—

Mr. Steve Clark: Come on, Rosie. Come on.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Because we've been making friends for such a long time in the last many, many years, and then you introduce bills like this and you begin to sever our relationship. And it feels bad, I have to say. Then I have to tell the real story.

I want to say to the Tories that you guys have a lot of good friends on the other side. You shouldn't beat them up so much. You are so close, you dare not say it out loud. In fact, the Liberals tried desperately to prove, by any kind of evidence, whether it's factually based or not, that they are different from you, and of course, you want to do the same with motions like this to show how different you are from them. But really, you are so close, so close that it's just hard to separate you, really.

How do I know this? There are a couple of examples, and I think of Mr. Harper and Mr. McGuinty on this HST. You've got to love them, right? Now, I know you're a different party provincially; I understand; you're independent, even. I know that from time to time you have different political ideas, particularly on the HST. But Conservatives on the whole, I would say, including your former leader, Mr. Tory—whom most of you have disowned, I understand; it appears, but I could be wrong—and Mr. Harper and the Minister of Finance federally, seem to like the HST, because they think as Conservatives. They make the argument that introducing the HST, the harmonized sales tax, is good for business.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: He was here.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, yeah. They've all been around. And on the HST, the Liberals and the federal Conservatives—and there are no exceptions that I'm aware of—have joined hands strongly. It's hard to deny because it has happened. So rather than denying it so strongly, embrace it and say, "We are like Tories. We think like Tories. We believe in the same ideas." Say it with feeling, but don't pretend you're different, for God's sake. It's a bit annoying when you do that. I just thought I would point it out. If you think I'm wrong, please say it in the next round.

1640

On the corporate tax cuts, you guys are very similar. I don't know whether you want to admit this or not, but Liberals, you've been cutting corporate taxes, have you not? Yes, yes.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Personal income tax.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Even, yes. You're so proud of cutting income taxes, too. And the Tories are fond of the same thing, are they not?

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no. Listen carefully. Do you remember when Mike Harris was in power? He cut corporate taxes a lot. Remember? Okay. They did it, and Tim was there, but he was—I know who's got the power. It doesn't really matter. I don't blame Tim; it's not his problem. But on the whole issue of corporate taxes and cutting corporate taxes, they did it and you're doing it. You're saying that they did it a lot and you're doing it less. But combined, together, you have been cutting

corporate taxes as if it were a feast, as if you enjoy it. With due respect, of course, some of you haven't looked at the facts around this whole issue, because both of you claim that reducing tax cuts is good for the economy and is good for jobs. Is that not correct? Is that not correct, John?

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I understand that. I just want you to nod your head if what I'm saying is correct, because I don't want to say any untruths; I want to state the facts.

We say that you two political entities are very much the same and in sync with each other. Would that some of you from time to time admit that. It's just that you struggle so much to say, "Oh no, they're different," and "Oh no, Liberals are different." But my point is that when you cut corporate taxes—they've done it since 1995, God bless them, and you continue doing it in your term, God bless—it means you don't have as much money left in the till to be able to do the things you want to do in education and health care, which, by the way, is where you claim you made extraordinary historical differences. How do you do that with less money?

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no. The HST just came into play. You've been cutting corporate taxes before this, and they've been cutting them for a long time, but you claim that even though they cut corporate taxes and income tax and you don't have that same level of funding that you might have a long time ago, you've been able to do extraordinary things since you've been in power, even though you still have a \$17-billion deficit. Even though you lowered income taxes, you still claim you're able to do so much more, and all I want to say is—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No. They say you want to raise taxes.

But the point is—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They say you want to raise taxes.

But here's the point—because we've said it: We said we would eliminate those corporate tax cuts, absolutely. We make no bones about that. We've been very clear. And you know why, John.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Why?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We need the money. We need the pecunia to do all the good thing that you want to do—where you say you're leading on education and health care with less money yet. You guys are able to do incredible alchemy; you're able to do so much, unlike ever before, with so little in the till. How you do that, I don't get it. You guys are good. In fact, I often say that some of you are really, really good to be able to have this rare ability to accomplish something that, in my mind, is extraordinarily difficult without money. How can you do it without money? Will you just simply say it and it comes true? Liberals, you guys are so, so good that you're able to make it happen. I've got to hand it to you guys. You guys are really, really good.

I want to show you something—not show you, because I can't. I want to just quote something. We have recently seen some data from Stats Canada—which Liberals like; I know you guys respect Stats Canada—which, along with a number of other reports, suggest that there is little connection between lower corporate taxes and new job-creating investments. I don't know whether some of you have had the chance to see this, but you might want to read it, because it will be instructive in terms of the claims you make, the claims these fine Tories make, versus the facts that Stats Canada makes reference to. Since 1999, Ontario has provided more than \$20 billion in corporate tax cuts, without the job growth and economic growth predicted by business groups and, dare I say, conservative economists, sometimes referred to as right-wing.

Economists prefer—some of the ones whom I respect, at least—direct public investment in education and research, and the renewal of infrastructure as more effective than the HST and broad-based corporate tax cuts in boosting productivity, stimulating economic growth and creating jobs.

I know that the corporate sector doesn't like to hear that, because they like the money. They like the corporate tax cuts. They like to take from—I was about to say "us" but I make more than 90% of the population, which makes less than I do. They like to take from the 90% of the public that earns so very little so they can have more by way of cash money—profits—and do not produce the promised jobs that they told you they would produce—that you claimed, as Liberals and Tories, you would produce. The facts say that the money that we give them, that we steal from those who are poorer than us, is not producing the jobs that the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan says we're producing by way of the corporate tax cuts and by way of the HST. They're not being produced.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Now, John—Giovanni, in Italian—I want to say that I was referring to—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I don't want to feel left out of this conversation now—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You're quite right.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): —so please direct it through the Chair.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You're part of this; don't you worry. I include all of you, whether you're there or there. And by the way, I'm including them too, even though I don't see them as well.

I was referring to Stats Canada. I don't make these things up.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. Let me get to—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order. Let's get back to the debate.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Let me get to that one, because I think that you will be surprised, Minister of the Environment, with some of these other stats that I will refer to. And you know, Minister of the Environment,

that a whole lot of people are squeezed today, more than ever. They've got tremendous debt, you will admit. They can barely pay the bills on hydro. They can barely pay the gas bills at the pump. They can barely pay the increased insurance rates that they're getting. Home heating is really becoming a weight for a whole lot of people who earn modest incomes. You know they're hurting.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Just a couple of more things.

Corporate profits increased 7.9% last quarter to \$66 million.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Thank God.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: "Thank God," you say, Minister. You're quite right. And that's good news for the CEOs who earn good dollars and the shareholders. Those who have a whole lot of money are doing well.

But it raises serious questions about the economic usefulness of McGuinty's multi-billion-dollar corporate tax cuts, because Ontario's record on post-recession job creation is not as strong as that of other provinces, like Manitoba, that have put a pause on further corporate tax cuts while their provincial budgets are in deficit. Ontario remains nearly 16,000 jobs below its pre-recession peak, while Manitoba has gained 15,000 jobs since the date the recession took hold.

1650

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You've got to look at these numbers, Minister of the Environment. If you don't do that, you're not being fair to yourself and to the people you represent. If the money didn't go to create the jobs, where did it go, Giovanni? The attached table tells the story. Profits have increased significantly, CEOs have been awarded significant compensation increases, dividends for shareholders have been boosted, God bless, but the hiring spree has not materialized, Giovanni.

Here's the latest quarterly summary of the province of Ontario's big eight financial institutions: Scotiabank, quarterly profit, \$1.2 billion, CEO pay, \$10.6 million, up 10%; Royal Bank, \$1.8 billion in quarterly profit, \$11 million in CEO pay, God bless, up 6%; TD Bank, \$1.5 billion in profits and \$11.3 million in salaries, God bless; Bank of Montreal, \$776-million profit and CEO pay of \$9.5 million. You get the point, right? It's a long list. You might have seen it; I don't know.

I wanted to share some numbers with you just to tell you that when you give those corporate tax cuts, some of these fine institutions I alluded to—CIBC, Sun Life, Manulife and Great-West Life, God bless—are doing well with their money, they're doing really well, and they're taking a whole lot of cash to go with that; it's cash money just put on the side for a rainy day. And that hiring spree is not materializing, Giovanni; it's not there.

Here's what another economist has to say. Economist Toby Sanger has analyzed how corporate tax reductions are distributed in the population, and has found that the effect is profoundly regressive. In his presentation to the standing committee, he also noted that it's households, not the corporate sector, suffering from a financial crunch:

"Despite record corporate profits, rates of business investment and productivity have been largely stagnant in Ontario and in Canada during the past decade." That's under your rule and the Tories.

"There's a lot of focus on public deficits, but it's also important to look at the deficits of the household sector and the balances of the corporate sector. There's a complete reversal in this about 10 years ago. Low wage growth and rising housing prices led to massive and unprecedented deficits for households, starting about a decade ago. Meanwhile high corporate profits, cuts in business and corporate taxes, and low business investment led to unprecedented corporate surpluses.... A lot of the excess profits went into financial speculative investments, mergers and acquisitions, share buybacks and major excess cash reserves....

"As we all know now, the debt of Canadian households has steadily increased and is now at a record rate of personal disposable income. By some measures, these are higher than rates in the United States....

"Meanwhile, corporate debt ratios have kept on falling, even right through the recession. So once again, the corporate sector has great balance sheets and often lots of excess cash, but they aren't investing in the economy."

That's why we've been saying to you Liberals and Tories that you can't just give our money away to the corporations, to the financial institutions. You just can't do that. We need that money. Our government—yours, while you're in charge—needs that money so that we could be sure the money is there for long-term care, for seniors who desperately need home care as you urge them to stay at home, as you kick them out of hospitals and threaten to have them pay a fee unless they leave as quickly as possible. You need the money. You can't just give it away, Giovanni. We need to hold on to it, and both you and the Tories have been doing the same for the last—good God—15 years. Since 2000, the combined federal-Ontario corporate tax rate will have been reduced from 44% to 25%, yet business investment has deteriorated since then. In fact, rather than investing in productivity, i.e., machinery and equipment and creating jobs, corporations have been accumulating cash and similar liquid assets at an increasing rate. According to Stats Canada, corporate holdings of cash and similar assets reached nearly half a trillion dollars by the third quarter of 2010. Since the beginning of the recession, businesses added \$83 billion to cash holdings.

No-strings-attached corporate tax cuts will only boost already astronomical cash levels. We need to find a different way to do business around here. We need to make sure that we make life affordable to the majority of working men and women in Ontario. Both Liberals and Tories: You have not been doing that. Your corporate taxes and your high, deregulated, privatized hydro rates are killing everyone. As Paul Kahnert from the Ontario Electricity Coalition—the former chair—said: "The real reason for hydro bill shock is the addition of profits to generators, profits to distributors, profits to retailers,

dividends to investors, commissions to commodities brokers and smart meter charges. The creation of the Ontario Energy Board, the Ontario Power Authority, the Independent Electricity System Operator ... is also to blame. Smart meters and time-of-use pricing is just a cover for a massive rate hike and is the means to funnel profits into all these organizations.

"Tim Hudak's Conservative Party brought in deregulation and privatization under ... Harris. McGuinty's Liberals kept most of the Conservatives' legislation," killing most Ontarians and just pushing a lot of industry out of this province, sending them to Manitoba and Quebec. You guys are killing us. You guys are killing jobs. Both the Tories and yourselves are so close, and you dare not say how close you are, but between the two of you, you're killing jobs. While we agree with the Tories that the HST is harmful, particularly to those who are middle income, we disagree with Tories on how wrong it is and why it's wrong. We can't support this.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I just want to take a moment to remind members that the Ontario Legislature internship program reception is going on in rooms 228 and 230. We encourage you to support the interns.

Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted to stand up and speak against this motion for many different reasons, because whatever it says in this motion was the opposite way. I'll give you an example: They say that it's a higher personal tax. As a matter of fact, our personal tax went down, and the average Ontarian receives \$355 per year. Also, 90,000 low-income Ontarians now no longer pay a personal income tax. Nine out of 10 taxpayers are now paying less income tax. So whatever was being said there was incorrect.

Also, we're talking about corporate tax. I love the member from Trinity-Spadina when he talks about the corporate tax. As our Minister of the Environment mentioned, we do it, but in moderation, to attract more companies to come to Ontario. I had the chance to attend a meeting in my riding of London-Fanshawe. There's a huge company coming to London. The first thing they ask us is, "The corporate tax: How much would it be in Ontario? How much is the municipal tax?" Do we have a sustainable hydro supply system? Do we have a water supply system? Do we have a place they can build on? When a company comes, first they read—taxation, hydro supply, water supply—all the necessities, and the skilled workers—if they're able to work in the province of Ontario.

The opposition party mentioned the electronic fee and the eco fee and all these fees. I want to say that those are not taxes, to start with, because when you say "taxes," it means the government collects the money and it goes back to the coffers of the government. It's not true, because it's a fee to manage the electronic waste, which I support. This law was introduced, passed and implemented by the Conservative Party in 2002, which we support. I think it's our obligation not to allow electronic

waste, hazardous waste, to go to landfills. It has to be managed in a certain way. That's why the fee was implemented: to manage those hazardous wastes.

1700

We talked about many different things. We talked about hydro. I'm proud to be a part of a government who introduced a Green Energy Act.

Last Friday, in my riding of London-Fanshawe, a company called Kaco—it's a German solar company—came to announce the opening of a production facility in London, Ontario. This facility will build an inverter to convert solar energy to electricity. The president of that company said, "I'm delighted to be here in Ontario. I'm delighted to be in London. I wish Ontario had that law, that Green Energy Act, longer than two years, because I went and opened a head office in Los Angeles, in the United States. But now I'm seriously thinking of moving to Ontario" because we have better laws in Ontario. We encourage companies to produce solar systems, wind-mills and many different ways to produce green energy in the province of Ontario.

So all these elements are convincing many different companies, many different factories, to come to Ontario and open because we have all the elements and all the infrastructure they need. We have the good taxation system. We have a skilled workforce in the province of Ontario. We have the acts to allow them to open factories and companies in the province of Ontario. All those elements exist in Ontario.

When we started talking about HST, I was one of the people who was concerned. But as a matter of fact, when I heard what the HST can do for small business people, what money it can save them, how many companies, because of the HST, are coming to Ontario and opening—Mr. Speaker, I have a brother. He is a small business owner in the city of London. You know what? I went and asked him, "What do you think about the HST?" He said, "I was scared at the beginning. I was scared. But do you know what happened? After the implementation, I think I'm saving more money than before because there were so many different things I wasn't able to claim in the past that I can now claim." Instead of filing two taxes, PST and GST, now we're filing one tax, which saves the business community more than \$500 million a year. It's a lot of money, and also it's an incentive for them, to help them out.

The member from the third party mentioned hydro. He talked a lot about hydro, and he speaks all the time about it. As a matter of fact, when the people across Ontario receive a 10% discount on their bill, I think that's an incredible achievement to support the people of Ontario. When the low-income and seniors get another incentive to support them in difficult times, it's a great achievement, because we think about all the segments of our society. We think about low-income, seniors, the business community, about low and high income; all together, they create Ontario. Ontario cannot run by itself. Ontario is comprised of many people: business people, low-income people, vulnerable, strong, able, disabled.

All of us have to work together to maintain the economy in the province of Ontario.

As I mentioned, I look at the motion brought by the member from Nepean–Carleton and I see that whatever she said was totally the opposite. Higher personal tax: As a matter of fact, Ontario has lower personal taxes. Corporate tax: Of course, the corporations have lower taxes than before. Also, the fee she was talking about as a tax is not correct. It's a fee managed by Stewardship Ontario, which was introduced by the Conservatives, which we maintain because we think it's the right thing to do. All that's being done and said in this motion does not reflect the reality of the circumstances in the province of Ontario.

So I see a lot of companies coming to Ontario as a result of the HST, as a result of the harmonization of the taxation, because they can save more money and they can open more, and small businesses can claim something they never thought they could claim. If you have a coffee shop, for instance, all the paper cups, paper, detergent materials, all the stuff you use in order to serve the coffee—you couldn't claim the PST before. Now you can claim it. You can save more money. You can pass on the savings to your customers, the consumers.

As a matter of fact, many small businesses who were scared before now think it's important for them to keep the HST, because it's fewer headaches, less bureaucracy, and it saves them a lot of money. In the meantime, as my colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan mentioned a few minutes ago, all the experts in the province of Ontario, all the economists have said and are saying that the HST is an incredible achievement. It's something we cannot afford to lose.

Also, I was surprised when the opposition parties talked about the HST as something strange. As a matter of fact, in many different provinces across Canada they've had the HST for many years. Also, the leader of the federal government, a Conservative, who's the Prime Minister of Canada right now, and his finance minister are great supporters of the HST. So I don't understand why the conflict, why the confusion between what's going on in Ottawa and what goes on in this place.

It's important to support our movement as a government and also not to support this motion—because I'm not supporting it for whatever I said at the beginning.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak.

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Let me start by reading a quote: "I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise, if my party is elected as the next government, that I will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters and will not run deficits. I promise to abide by the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act." Dalton McGuinty's taxpayer protection pledge, signed on September 11, 2003.

Well, isn't it a sad day in this province when we're here to call the government to account and remind them

about the broken promises? As my colleagues have already mentioned, the Premier doesn't exactly have a good record when it comes to making promises and keeping those promises. This is a Premier who waited not even a year after being elected in 2003 to implement the Ontario health tax, which is collected through Ontarians' personal income tax returns. Not only did Mr. McGuinty retract his commitment to not raise taxes, but he also tried to fool Ontarians by indicating that the tax was really a fee, not a tax, and would go completely towards health care.

We know that that isn't the case. Today, all we know is that the so-called health tax goes into the general revenue fund. This government refuses to show where that money goes from there, and they have yet to put the collected health taxes into a separate fund whereby Ontarians can really track where this money is going.

Let me refresh everyone's memory. Although the McGuinty government stretched the truth to give the appearance that every dollar raised by the health tax would be spent on health care, the health tax was spent on programs, including sewer projects and Ministry of Tourism and recreation ads to encourage exercise. Since being called out on this embarrassing claim, the government no longer lists specific programs that benefit from the health tax.

This is a clear admission that every cent of the so-called health tax is most certainly not being spent on health care. If this government had nothing to hide, the so-called health tax wouldn't be going to the general revenue fund; it would be going to a separate fund where Ontario families could see exactly where their hard-earned dollars are being spent.

That was Mr. McGuinty's 2003 broken promise. So let's move ahead to the 2007 election, where we heard no mention of the Premier's plan to implement HST. There was nothing in the platform. The HST has added an additional 8%, and this is charged to 17% of items that were never charged before. This has been particularly difficult for some of the most vulnerable citizens, like seniors on a fixed income. They are being charged an additional 8% on services like snow removal, landscaping, hydro, purchase of vitamins, personal services, and this list goes on.

In addition, Ontarians across the province are watching their hydro bills slowly but surely escalate, and that's thanks to this government's failed energy experiments.

1710

The HST bill was a bill that the McGuinty Liberals rushed through the Legislature with minimal debate and without the opportunity for province-wide public consultation and review. I've said it before, and I'm going say it again right now: I found this absolutely appalling, and totally disrespectful of the Ontario families that are paying the bill. This is a government that likes to boast about being transparent, and then time and time again, they push through their secret deals, energy experiments and tax increases with as little input of information and as little input from the public as possible.

The HST wasn't the only increase on July 1, 2010. The government also slipped in their secret eco tax. That happened on July 1 also. The implementation of the program was an abject failure. It was such a disaster, in fact, that the McGuinty Liberals had to backtrack and cancel it within weeks of the initial implementation. This Premier actually thought that he could sneak in an eco tax without Ontario families noticing. However, the plan drastically backfired when some manufacturers chose to pass on the cost of doing business to the consumers, identifying the cost as a separate eco fee. Shockingly, a leaked cabinet document documented that the Premier's colleagues warned him as early as 2008 that this tax scheme would lead to higher taxes and public backlash.

Well, that didn't stop him. In March, we saw this government's final budget, a budget that shows almost \$17 billion in deficit and an astronomical \$257-billion debt. We ask ourselves: With all this additional revenue that the government has collected, why are we still swimming in a sea of red? I'll tell you what it's called. It's called a serious spending problem. For the past eight years, we have seen Mr. McGuinty increase government spending by 70%—70%—at a time when the Ontario economy only grew by 9%. It doesn't take a mathematician to see that this is unsustainable.

Even when the McGuinty government's record-breaking tax increases—like the HST, which was the largest sales tax increase in the history of our province, and the Ontario health tax, the largest personal income tax increase in our history—brought in billions of additional revenue, we're still swimming deep in deficit and debt. So today we're calling on the Premier not to create any more new taxes. To be clear to the members opposite, that includes no new carbon tax and no hike in the HST.

Ontario families have had enough. They cannot keep up with this government's constant cost increases. Ontario families deserve better. They deserve to work hard and to see the results at the end of the day, not to feel like they're working harder than ever and writing bigger and bigger cheques to Premier McGuinty.

I strongly encourage the members opposite to listen carefully today to what we are saying in this opposition day motion. We have listened to Ontario families. We have listened to their message, and their message is clear. "No more taxes. Give us some relief," is what they are saying. It would behoove the Premier and his members to listen the same.

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

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I'm pleased to be able to join in this afternoon's debate. I'm sort of checking the clock. I know there are a number of members who would like the opportunity, so I just want to make sure I don't over-extend my stay on my feet.

This may be among the last opportunities I'm going to have, after having served 29 years in elected office, eight of those years here and 21 years at the municipal level, so I want to use the bit of time really to talk about what I see

my constituents being able to value in the investment they make in their governments.

Now, I can appreciate and understand the other side. I can appreciate the official opposition's position that they don't like diamond taxes, because they don't think that mining should be taxed when it's making many, many billions of dollars out of our resources. And I can appreciate the fact that they don't like corporate taxes, because they think that corporate taxes should be still lower and lower. And I can appreciate that they don't like personal taxes or income taxes or payroll taxes. They'll make a long litany of taxes they don't like, and there's a constituency that will agree with them.

My constituency is somewhat different. You know, I can play to, "I don't like income tax," or "I don't like a tax on the alcohol I buy." But the reality is that my constituents understand that there's a cost to a civil society and a cost to the services we have in our community. I want to speak to some of those services in my community, my riding, and the services abutting my riding, that serve the 130,000 or so people I have the honour to represent. The things we do in our constituency do cost money.

The Rouge Valley Health System Ajax and Pickering site was approved for redevelopment, and it wasn't all that long ago that we opened the new emergency centre, with hundreds of people there using and appreciating the investment we made in health care in our local community. They appreciate the long-term and complex care beds that exist at that site. They appreciate and use the new birthing centre at the Centenary site of the Rouge Valley Health System.

Many of my constituents will get cancer treatment at the McLaughlin cancer care centre in Oshawa, which is part of the Lakeridge Health system. That centre didn't exist eight years ago. It's there now, and my constituents who need it are getting cancer treatment closer to home. My constituents who need dialysis will appreciate the fact that we have reopened the Whitby hospital just recently, and that hospital is providing a considerable amount of care for dialysis patients.

My constituents will also appreciate the opportunity that young people have in our communities to go to the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I give credit to the former government—the members opposite—because they started that university. The reality is, though, that we have enhanced investment in post-secondary education, and in that university in particular. I'm going to be there in the not-too-distant future, next month, and have the opportunity to participate in the official opening of the Automotive Centre of Excellence at that university.

The University of Toronto Scarborough campus has a brand new academic building about to open, the largest facility at that campus since 1967. Hundreds, thousands, and over the years, tens of thousands of students from my riding will have the opportunity to attend that university campus—young people in my riding. Their parents are looking forward to the opportunity of their children

having the quality of education they might otherwise have to travel for.

When the Pan Am Games arrive here in 2015, there's going to be a brand new aquatics facility at that campus. It's going to be state of the art, and it's going to be there for generations to come.

Those are investments we're making not only today but for our children and our grandchildren. As an elected representative in this place, having served in elected office for 29 years, I'm proud of those investments. And if those investments mean that I have to pay a tax on the bottle of wine I buy, or a mining company has to pay a tax on the diamonds they take out of the ground, or a corporation has to pay taxes on the profits they're making, or I have to pay a tax on the income I earn, I accept and am proud of that fact because of what we're providing in our community.

1720

Durham College in Whitby and Centennial College in Scarborough have new additions to the facilities. I can drive along the 401 and I can see the new library going up at Centennial College. I drive the 401 through Whitby and into Oshawa and I can see the growth in Durham College and those communities.

I recently had the opportunity to participate in the ribbon-cutting for a newly rebuilt, expanded, enhanced and current GO Transit station in our community. As I drive along the 401 right now through the riding, I'll see signs that are up on the highway: "Construction occurring one kilometre ahead," and there's a new pedestrian bridge connecting the city of Pickering's Town Centre with the GO station, the first of its kind along the 401 and the GO system.

I'm proud of the fact that young people, those entering into their early learning kindergarten years, can attend school full day to give them the best start possible in their education. These things don't happen without public investments of a variety of sorts. You haven't heard much in this place in the last few days about the Ontario child benefit. All of those families in Ontario on modest incomes now have \$1,100 per year per child to help them raise those children, to provide them with the quality of life that they should have. It's the cost of a civil and progressive society.

I'm just going to end by speaking very briefly to Grandview Children's Centre. Grandview Children's Centre exists in Oshawa. It's one of a number of children's treatment centres across Ontario. We made significant investments in those on an annual basis. A couple of years ago, a couple of budgets back, there was an infusion in one budget year of over \$10 million to those centres, and I can tell you that the staff and the families and the children in those centres are benefiting from that type of investment. I want to see Grandview Children's Centre grow. I want to see them have the opportunity to relocate into a new facility that they've been planning for a number of years, when the resources are available to them. But unless we treat our responsibility as one to ensure that we find the resources and

allocate the resources to priorities that are important, those things aren't going to happen.

I'm not going to be supporting this motion. I don't think that income taxes are a bad thing. I don't think that corporate taxes are a bad thing. I don't think that sin taxes are a bad thing. I don't think that diamond taxes are a bad thing. There has to be a balance, but I don't agree with the opposition. I don't agree that our focus should be on driving down taxation to the lowest common denominator. That can only do one thing in the end, and that's hurt the quality of public services and the very people I've had the honour and privilege to represent in this place for eight years and in elected office for 29 years.

I'm hoping that the member, whoever it may be, who succeeds me in a subsequent government to this current Parliament will continue to make the investments that will make my community the kind of place it is today and will continue to have it grow in a progressive fashion and respect the fact that we want to develop the best possible environment for our children and our grandchildren in this province and will continue to support a civil society here in Ontario.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I get the very strong impression that people in Ontario are beginning to understand a number of things. It has been eight years now of this present government and, given the track record, people do understand that Mr. McGuinty is not to be trusted when it comes to promises of no new taxes, promises of no tax increases. Given that kind of track record, they have come to realize that Mr. McGuinty, as well, is not to be believed when it comes to these kinds of promises: the promises about no new taxes, the promises about no increases in taxes.

Again, what are people to believe? We all recall the taxpayer protection pledge. Mr. McGuinty signed that pledge with great fanfare and then tore it up as soon as he could. Again, putting a signature on something like that—it turns out it really wasn't worth the paper it was written on.

Of course, we all remember what appeared to be a heartfelt television commercial—this would be, what, at least eight years ago—where the present Premier shilled for votes by saying, "I won't cut your taxes, but I won't raise them either."

For these reasons, that's why two weeks ago I called out the Premier for promising, in his first election, no new taxes and then bringing in the largest income tax increase in the history of Ontario.

Look at the last election. The Premier, on your behalf, people sitting across the aisle here, in the last election—again, a promise of no new taxes. He brought in the largest sales tax increase in the history of Ontario.

Mr. John Yakabuski: HST.

Mr. Toby Barrett: My prediction—again, as Mr. Yakabuski has indicated, the HST. The people opposite

are going to try and win this coming election. Dalton McGuinty is promising no new taxes, promising not to raise taxes. I predict a three-peat.

Now, it really seems clear to me as well that if the fellows and gals opposite were able to convince the electorate that they really mean it this time—no new taxes—they could turn around, for example, and come up with something brand new, like a carbon tax. That could occur as quickly as you could say Stéphane Dion.

I think I'll send out a Twitter later this afternoon. I was just saying, I think to Mr. Yakabuski, that it costs me about \$40 to fill up my truck, but that's just the tax. I wonder what McGuinty's carbon tax is going to cost me. I know that at least one member opposite has mused about a carbon tax.

For some of his failures, even Michael Ignatieff understood, and I'll quote Iggy: "You can't win elections if you're adding to the input costs of a farmer putting diesel into his tractor or you're adding to the input costs of a fisherman putting diesel into his fishing boat or a trucker transporting goods." Now, Mr. Ignatieff may not be an expert on winning elections, given the recent history, but he does understand that hard-working families—and how many times did he cross the dominion of Canada?—are in no mood to be paying out more of their already dwindling resources.

He also stated, "We took the carbon tax to the public and the public didn't think it was such a good idea.... I'm trying to get myself elected here and if the public, after mature consideration think that's the dumbest thing they've ever heard then I've got to listen." That comes from Iggy. Again, is this government listening to that kind of an argument?

Of course, a carbon tax would obviously add to the projected costs of the present government policy with respect to cap and trade. That was only, what, a little over a year ago. We remember cap and trade. It was odd. It was a local, a provincial response to a global issue. It was legislation that quickly earned the moniker "cap and trade jobs to China."

We recall the green headlines, the fanfare, that did accompany the signing of the cap and trade legislation and the signing of the WCI, the Western Climate Initiative, the trading agreement with certain states and provinces. I've noticed that this province isn't signing any agreements with Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania or Illinois, some of the larger industrial states—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Ohio.

1730

Mr. Toby Barrett: Ohio, if I didn't mention Ohio.

I still continue to get a blank stare when I say to people that Ontario has signed a cap-and-trade for carbon dioxide with Utah. Now, many people find that confusing, to hear the words "Utah" and "climate change" in the same sentence, and they indicate to me—I had this said once: "Well, signing this kind of an agreement around carbon dioxide emissions with Utah makes about as much sense as signing an agreement with Arizona." Then

I have to explain to them that, well, McGuinty signed an agreement with Arizona as well.

So, despite pushing the ill-conceived cap-and-trade bill that went through the Legislature in 2009, we now hear that Ontario has signalled that it would not meet the January 1 Western Climate Initiative start-up date. I'm sure that Arnold is a little disappointed in Dalton over that one, and we've got some chatter from the environment minister trying to justify that one.

The Minister of Research and Innovation is here today. Maybe I could read this quote: "It is time for all of us to start to get comfortable with two words: carbon tax. Without it, all these dreams of a green tomorrow are hallucinations."

I don't think now is the time for a carbon tax.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Let me start off where my friend left off, which is, if he actually read the whole report, which I don't think he's probably even seen the cover of, it was a very strong argument that there should be no provincial carbon taxes in Canada, period. It also said that we should not have a taxing system different than the US. Well, what do we have, Mr. Speaker? We have a party that wants to have a different taxing system than the US. It can't even agree with its own national government.

Never in the history of this Legislature has there been a more economically incompetent opposition than that. They should be ashamed, because we just elected a federal government that introduced, in the Mulroney tradition, a change qualitatively in consumption taxes. Knowing we had a higher dollar, that we were hugely dependent on US exports, we took with the federal Conservative Party \$8.5 billion of the cost of doing business in Ontario. We worked with the federal Conservative Party to remove taxes on imported parts. That resulted last year in a 3.8% GDP growth.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The member for Trinity-Spadina, who doesn't seem to understand this—when they were in power, this province lost 1,000 jobs a week; that's 1,000 jobs a week. Now they want to tear up the green FIT program, the feed-in tariff program.

We have in the last four years emerged in Ontario as the third-largest clean tech cluster. That is 90,000 jobs—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Glen, Glen.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I listened to you. You can listen for a second.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I don't interrupt you, sir.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I do not interrupt you. Ninety thousand jobs—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I only call order three times and then I go to the member for Trinity-Spadina and ask for order. Thank you.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Ninety thousand jobs since the recession, a 114% increase, 3.8% GDP growth, our fastest uplift in productivity.

I speak to the senators in Michigan. One of my dearest friends is the deputy leader of the Senate in New York state: a 20% cut in health care and education, because they're trying to do what those folks opposite—the only solution you have is to close our hospitals. In my constituency, when you were in power less than 10 years ago, you closed Wellesley hospital, you closed Central hospital. You took transit money away from low-income kids on ODSP. In Regent Park, dropout rates went from 16% to 68%. That's what you offer: bankrupt economic policies, incoherent fiscal policies, and shoving the burden on the poor and closing hospitals. We've seen it before.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to speak to this resolution, this PC opposition day motion that I put forward and that our leader, Tim Hudak, spoke to earlier in today's session.

We heard a lot of hot air. We might have put a carbon tax on that a few minutes ago and we probably could have looked after some of the deficit and debt that we have in this province. I truly don't know how to remark on what I just witnessed, but that was quite a display.

The reality is, had he been in this chamber from 2003 to 2007, he would have known that his Premier, Dalton McGuinty, signed a pledge that said he would not raise taxes. I quote: "I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise, if my party is elected as the next government, that I will: Not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters and will not run deficits. I promise to abide by the Taxpayer...." That didn't happen.

In fact, I was not a member at the time, but my federal colleague John Baird did sit in this chamber as the MPP for Nepean–Carleton at the time, and he was here that day when they put forward that first budget, when that health tax was brought in under the guise of a premium. We later found out that John Baird was right: It is a tax.

Fast-forward to a few years later. I became the MPP in 2006, and at the time Dalton McGuinty had not only raised taxes, he had run up record spending.

He told the Toronto Star on September 23, 2007, just before the next election, "We will not have to raise taxes, because we're in charge. We know exactly where we are."

He clearly got lost along the way or didn't have a road map for success, because right after that election we started talking about something called a \$3.5-billion greedy HST tax grab. And that wasn't enough. He increased taxation on a whole host of items in Ontario. We have tire taxes, eco taxes, electronic taxes, the diamond tax, hidden hydro taxes, destination marketing taxes and higher beer, wine and spirits taxes.

I have to tell you, it's becoming so much more difficult to afford to live in Ontario today. The number

one issue we hear about in our communities is the price of hydro. It is the HST on gasoline and their hydro bill. It is all these hidden fees and taxes that Dalton McGuinty has rung up. During the entire time he has been Premier, he has doubled our debt. He has increased public spending by 70% over that time. We have lost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario. Hydro rates are up. Taxes are up. And unfortunately, the folks back home are having a difficult time paying the bills.

It's what we get. If our friends opposite paid attention anymore to the communities that they represent, they would hear from the people who sent them here. They would hear from the seniors who can't afford it any longer because they're on a fixed income. They would hear from the young families on the soccer fields and in the schoolyards who are saying enough is enough is enough. All of this has occurred at the exact same time that this government took Canada's economic engine, the powerhouse of Confederation, from first to worst in economic growth, and has now made us rely on handouts from the federal government. For the first time in our history, under Dalton McGuinty's tax-and-spend government agenda, this province is now a have-not province. They've done it through their massive tax increases. They've done it through their exorbitant spending and wasteful management of our economy. They've driven the jobs not only out of town but out of the province.

Let me say this as somebody who, like many members of this Legislature, was not born in this great province: Many of us came to this province, whether it was from another country or from another province, because it was the strongest place to live and the greatest province of our nation. It was the best place to find a job, to raise a family, to grow old. It was the best place to come because you knew you had strength on your side and a talent pool. You knew opportunity was everywhere. Sadly—this is what frustrates me the most about this government—they took power eight years ago and they squandered that opportunity. They have run this province into the ground. It is time for a change, and on October 6, I can assure you, the Ontario PC caucus, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, will provide that change.

1740

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: This simplistic, slogan-laden resolution attempts to suggest that Ontarians are paying more taxes since 2003, but the allegation cannot hold water. In simple terms, it's wrong.

Let's start with what is accurate and what can be verified. Mr. and Mrs. Ontario, your personal taxes are lower now than they were on the last day of the last Conservative government in Ontario. Your personal and income taxes are not merely lower than our neighbouring provinces; they are lower than they are in any of the surrounding Great Lakes states or midwestern states. Your business, corporate and payroll taxes are also lower in Ontario and lowered by a Liberal government, and they're lower than they are in our neighbouring provinces or in the Great Lakes or midwestern states.

What is not said in this resolution is the key to why this Legislature should vote it down. It does not admit that Ontario's Cold War-relic tax system was expensive, obsolete, inefficient, cumbersome, duplicative and, in the 21st century, downright stupid. Who in the world still has any anything like the type of system that we have abandoned, that provincial sales tax? Who in the world has anything except a modern value-added sales tax system? Well, sub-Saharan Africa is one of those places, Burma is one of those places, Greenland is one of those places, and the other one is the United States of America. And the United States of America continues to hemorrhage its national wealth abroad to nations who would act against them.

So where is Ontario? Have we only recovered 20% of our recession jobs the way the United States has, or even 50% as the United Kingdom has? No, we've done better than that. We in Ontario are once again employing Ontarians at the same rate as before the recent recession. We have recovered all of our recession job losses. It's the very first made-in-Ontario economic recovery in our province's history. And why? Because this Ontario government, this Ontario Liberal government, has done something that PC governments from Leslie Frost through Ernie Eves never did: We had the courage, the fortitude, the backbone and, may I say, the common sense to change the way that we levy taxes.

As a result, Ontario seniors, Ontario families, Ontario students and Ontario businesses all know that once you've bought all the things that you normally buy, paid all the bills that you normally pay, filed your taxes and collected your refunds and tax credits, 93% of you have a little more money in your pocket. And that 93% are the low- and middle-income Ontarians, the seniors on fixed incomes, the single moms, the small businesses, the salt of the soil—Mr. and Mrs. Ontario, that's you.

Many of those people are like many of us here: the generation born between 1946 and 1966, the baby boomers. The first of us are now 65 years old, and in the upcoming 15 years, we will collectively consume two thirds of our lifetime health care resources. We're Liberals. We believe in paying as you go. This resolution comes from Conservatives. They don't believe in paying as you go. They borrow, and they don't believe in our generation. They criticize the one measure that helped Ontario renew, build and rebuild 110 hospitals, hire 3,000 new doctors, hire 11,000 nurses and get for Ontarians the shortest wait times in Canada.

They criticize the Ontario health care premium. The PCs opposed it then and would repeal it today. How would they pay for us, the baby boomers, at the moment we need that system as we age? They have no plan. They closed 28 hospitals on their watch. How many would they close or sell to the private insurance companies today, or in the years to come?

A one-point cut in the HST does not come for free. It comes at the cost of any of the following: a 20% cut in hospital funding; the firing of 48,000 nurses; firing 38,000 elementary school teachers; or a structural, permanent deficit of an additional \$3.25 billion per year.

Or is this resolution code language for wholesale private health care, private health care that costs between 10 and 20 times what you pay now in your health care premium? That takes a \$350 health care premium and turns it into a \$7,000 private US-style health tax. Ontario baby boomers will have modern facilities that they need as they age, ready when they need them because their government, their Liberal government, had the courage to make changes, build for the future and pay for it within our means.

As more and more merchants pass through the HST savings, through their "we will pay all your taxes" sales, Ontarians are seeing the price of goods and services decline or remain lower than they are in other parts of Canada. Lower corporate taxes and the ability to pay just one tax under one set of rules to one level of government all mean more profit, more opportunity and more jobs in Ontario. That is our made-in-Ontario economic recovery, and that's why the PC Party has flip-flopped and would not go back to the old provincial sales tax.

Ontarians and their government have an ongoing dialogue over what programs and services constitute good government, and we reached a consensus on how we're going to pay for it. Our party inherited a hidden \$5.5-billion structural deficit and we paid it down ahead of schedule. We balanced the budget, ran a surplus, helped municipalities renew their infrastructure and paid down debt, and we'll do it again in the province's made-in-Ontario recovery.

This resolution would, if enacted, plunge our beautiful province back into a vicious cycle of debt, borrowing, privatization, crisis, cuts, closures and firings. Ontarians said a resounding no to that in 2003 and repeated the same resounding no in 2007. We have the resources we need to move forward in the 21st century, and Ontario will reject this slogan-filled attempt to haul our province backwards to the 19th century.

And in the fall, when we reconvene, Ontarians will continue to be responsibly governed by a fiscally prudent—

Interjections: Nine, eight, seven—

Mr. Bob Delaney: —forward-looking Liberal majority government. Thank you very much.

Interjections: Four, three, two, one.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): You've proved one thing: You can count, with help.

Interjections: Backwards.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Backwards; that's good.

Ms. MacLeod has moved opposition day number 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1749 to 1759.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All those in favour, please stand one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Clark, Steve
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine

Hardeman, Ernie
Hudak, Tim
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
Munro, Julia

O'Toole, John
Savoline, Joyce
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Yakabuski, John

Brotten, Laurel C.
Brown, Michael A.
Carroll, Aileen
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Delaney, Bob
Duguid, Brad

Leal, Jeff
Mangat, Amrit
Marchese, Rosario
Matthews, Deborah
McNeely, Phil
Milloy, John
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.

Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Smith, Monique
Sorbara, Greg
Sousa, Charles
Van Bommel, Maria
Wilkinson, John
Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia
Albanese, Laura
Arthurs, Wayne
Balkissoon, Bas
Bentley, Christopher
Bradley, James J.

Duncan, Dwight
Gravelle, Michael
Hoy, Pat
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Johnson, Rick

Naqvi, Yasir
Oraziotti, David
Phillips, Gerry
Ramal, Khalil
Rinaldi, Lou
Ruprecht, Tony

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 15; the nays are 42.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): It being past 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until Thursday, May 12, at 9 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1802.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Oakville Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldeep (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

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

**STANDING 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**

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

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

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

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

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

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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

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

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

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

Chair / Président: Shafiq 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
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 11 May 2011 / Mercredi 11 mai 2011

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act, 2011, Bill 186, Ms. Aggelonitis / Loi de 2011 appuyant la stratégie Ontario sans fumée par la réduction du tabac de contrebande, projet de loi 186, Mme Aggelonitis

Mr. Toby Barrett	5865
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	5867
Mr. Phil McNeely	5868
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	5868
Mr. Gilles Bisson	5868
Mr. Toby Barrett	5869
Mr. Gilles Bisson	5869
Mr. Bob Delaney	5872
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	5872
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	5873
Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde	5873
Mr. Gilles Bisson	5873
Ms. Helena Jaczek	5874
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	5875

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer	5875
Mr. Rick Johnson	5875
Mrs. Julia Munro	5875
Hon. Rick Bartolucci	5875
Mr. Ted Chudleigh	5875
Mr. Gilles Bisson	5875
Ms. Helena Jaczek	5875
Mr. Steve Clark	5875
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5875
Mrs. Christine Elliott	5875
Mr. Howard Hampton	5875
Hon. Monique M. Smith	5876
Mr. Jeff Leal	5876
Mr. David Caplan	5876
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar	5876
Mr. Bob Delaney	5876
Mr. Garfield Dunlop	5876
Mr. Bill Mauro	5876
Hon. Brad Duguid	5876
Hon. James J. Bradley	5876
Hon. John Wilkinson	5876

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	5876
Mr. Lou Rinaldi	5876
Hon. Michael Gravelle	5876
Mr. Bas Balkissoon	5876
Mr. Tony Ruprecht	5876
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters)	5876

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Taxation

Mr. Tim Hudak	5876
Hon. Dwight Duncan	5877

Taxation

Mr. Tim Hudak	5877
Hon. Dwight Duncan	5878

Freedom of information

Ms. Andrea Horwath	5879
Hon. Dwight Duncan	5879

Gasoline prices

Ms. Andrea Horwath	5879
Hon. Dwight Duncan	5879

Government contracts

Mr. John Yakabuski	5880
Hon. Brad Duguid	5880

Nurse practitioners

Mme France Gélinas	5881
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5881

Renewable energy

Mrs. Liz Sandals	5881
Hon. Sandra Pupatello	5881

Energy policies

Mr. Peter Shurman	5882
Hon. Brad Duguid	5882

Northern Ontario development

Mr. Gilles Bisson	5882
Hon. Michael Gravelle	5883

Family services

Mr. Bruce Crozier	5883
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	5883
Hon. Christopher Bentley	5884

Correctional facilities

Mr. Robert Bailey	5884
Hon. James J. Bradley	5884

Continued on inside back cover

Continued from back cover

Long-term care

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5884
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5885

Immigrant services

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	5885
Hon. Eric Hoskins	5885

Highway construction

Mrs. Julia Munro.....	5885
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	5885

Water quality

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5886
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	5886

Environmental protection

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel	5886
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	5886

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Fire Protection and Prevention Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 181, Mr. Sousa / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie, projet de loi 181, M. Sousa

Second reading agreed to	5887
--------------------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mrs. Joyce Savoline	5887
---------------------------	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Paul Marai

Mrs. Joyce Savoline	5887
---------------------------	------

Long-term care

Mr. Paul Miller.....	5887
----------------------	------

Plasco Energy Group

Mr. Yasir Naqvi	5888
-----------------------	------

Christopher Perkins

Mr. Steve Clark.....	5888
----------------------	------

Catholic education / Éducation catholique

Hon. Aileen Carroll, P.C.....	5888
-------------------------------	------

Public transit

Mr. Frank Klees	5889
-----------------------	------

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation training / Formation en réanimation cardiorespiratoire

Mr. Phil McNeely	5889
------------------------	------

Firefighters

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	5889
--------------------------------	------

Thunder Bay economy

Mr. Bill Mauro	5890
----------------------	------

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills

Mr. Michael Prue	5890
Report adopted	5890

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Sexual Assault Prevention Month / Mois de la prévention de l'agression sexuelle

Hon. Laurel C. Broten	5890
-----------------------------	------

Family service day / Journée des services à la famille

Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	5891
-------------------------------	------

Sexual Assault Prevention Month

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer	5892
-----------------------------	------

Family service day

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	5892
-----------------------	------

Sexual Assault Prevention Month / Family service day

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	5893
-----------------------	------

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Assistance to farmers

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5893
-----------------------	------

Multiple sclerosis treatment

Mr. Kim Craitor	5894
-----------------------	------

Solar energy projects

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	5894
---------------------	------

Kidney disease

Mr. Jeff Leal.....	5894
--------------------	------

Dog ownership

Mrs. Julia Munro	5894
------------------------	------

Assistance to farmers

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	5894
-----------------------	------

Dog ownership

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5895
-------------------------	------

Domestic violence

Mr. Bill Mauro	5895
----------------------	------

Correctional facility

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	5895
------------------------	------

Paramedics

Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5895
----------------------	------

Hospital services

Mr. Steve Clark..... 5895

Wind turbines

Mr. Toby Barrett..... 5896

Speed limits

Mr. Norm Miller 5896

Paramedics

Mr. Rick Johnson..... 5896

Matthews House Hospice

Mr. Jim Wilson..... 5896

OPPOSITION DAY / JOUR DE L'OPPOSITION

Taxation

Ms. Lisa MacLeod..... 5897

Mr. Tim Hudak 5897

Mr. Howard Hampton..... 5898

Mr. Bill Mauro..... 5900

Mr. Steve Clark..... 5901

Mr. Rosario Marchese 5902

Mr. Khalil Ramal 5905

Mrs. Joyce Savoline..... 5906

Mr. Wayne Arthurs..... 5907

Mr. Toby Barrett..... 5908

Hon. Glen R. Murray 5909

Ms. Lisa MacLeod..... 5910

Mr. Bob Delaney 5910

Motion negatived..... 5912