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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 29 November 2011**

**Mardi 29 novembre 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 29 novembre 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION  
TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT  
POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT  
AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

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

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to say a few words on the record about this important bill. I'd also like to note that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa Centre, who of course is also the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. I'll be asking him to take the bulk of the time.

I'll simply put on the record that this is a very important bill which responds to a pledge that was made during the campaign to help those seniors who want to live in their homes and family members who want to support them, as well as, of course, brings forward much-needed stimulus to the economy, to the construction centre and the renovation centre. It's a bill that I know will find great support on all sides of this House.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, with that I'm going to turn the floor over to my colleague the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, who, I know, wants to get into greater detail. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak, and thanks to the House leader for his comments and for sharing his time with me.

Speaker, I don't think I have yet officially had the chance to congratulate you on your election as the Speaker. I look forward to working with you and really appreciate all of the dignity and the decorum you're bringing to this House. All the best to you, in this whole term, the four years that we'll be here serving the people of Ontario.

I'm really pleased to stand here today in the House on the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, which was tabled by my colleague the Honourable Dwight Duncan, the Minister of Finance. This proposed new act contains amendments to the Taxation Act, 2007, and would implement an innovative new tax credit that would help Ontario's seniors, relieve pressures on the health care system and boost economic growth. I think these are three really important issues that we have to pay attention to and put our mind to. We need to, of course, continue to help our seniors so they can continue to live in their own homes. We need to make sure that we find innovative ways to relieve pressures on our health care system, in light of the aging demographics. In these tough economic times, as we're coming out of a recession, there's a lot of instability and uncertainty that exists across the globe. We need to find smart policies that will boost economic growth. This bill achieves these three things: It helps our seniors, it relieves pressures on our health care system, and it boosts our economy and will help create jobs.

Bill 2 reconfirms our government's focus on building a stronger, more competitive economy and creating jobs. It also provided an update on Ontario's economic performance for 2011. The update, Speaker, admittedly, was sobering, but not without hope, because in spite of global economic uncertainty, Ontario has experienced moderate economic growth for most of the last two years. As we hear in the news almost daily, many other places around the world remain subject to much greater volatility. There's not a single day that you can turn on the news in the evening and not hear about the economic challenges in Iceland, Ireland, Greece, Spain, most recently in Germany and France, Hungary—and the list seems to keep going on and on.

The European economy continues to present new challenges, while growth in the United States, Ontario's largest trading partner, remains weak and unstable—something that is extremely alarming for us. The impact of continuing global economic uncertainty on Ontario families remains a concern. As a result of global pressures, the provincial economy will continue to face enormous challenges. After all, Speaker, our economy is very

much tied in with the global economy. We have to pay attention to what's happening around the globe, and of course it has a significant impact here at home, in Ontario.

The era of slower growth in much of the world is going to be with us for an extended period. This means that for the foreseeable future, modest economic growth will be the new normal here in Ontario, as elsewhere, and we have seen glimmers of this already. Over the last eight months, the global economy has seen a widespread downward shift in projections for growth. When the 2011 budget was published this past March, the average private sector forecast for Ontario's real GDP growth was 2.6% for the year. More recent projections are forecasting growth of just 2%. Mr. Speaker, this rate of growth is undeniably lower than what Ontario enjoyed even as recently as four years ago. But I would like to point out that as of the second quarter of 2011, Ontario's real GDP was just 0.1% below the pre-recession level—just 0.1%. So in many ways, Ontario has largely recovered from the recent global recession.

But building a stronger, more competitive economy is about more than improving forecasts and GDP numbers. It's about helping people get good, high-paying jobs—a point which I think all members of this House will agree with.

Since the low point of the recession in May 2009, employment in Ontario has increased by almost 267,000 net new jobs. This is equal to nearly half of all new jobs created in Canada from coast to coast. Half of the new jobs created in Canada took place right here in Ontario, and the majority of the new jobs created over the past two years have been good-quality, high-paying, full-time jobs. Full-time employment rose by 237,900 jobs over this period while part-time employment increased by 28,900 jobs. As of October 2011, employment was 10,000 jobs above the pre-recession peak in September 2008. I think it's an important distinction to make—the kind of recovery we've been able to make from one of the most devastating global recessions we experienced in 2008-09. The province's unemployment rate has also fallen from a peak of 9.4% during the recession to 8.1%.

**0910**

So far this year, Ontario has created 128,400 net new jobs, which account for more than 45% of all jobs created in Canada. These are all positive economic signs, because building an economy that creates good jobs also supports strong schools and hospitals.

You know, Speaker, as I'm in my community, and I'm sure other members will share the same experiences, when we were talking to our constituents, especially during the election, as we were out in our communities knocking on doors, the issues around jobs was the number one topic of discussion. People wanted to know about what we can all do to create new jobs. There is a high level of anxiety and uncertainty that exists in the global economy; of course, that is then reflected in our communities as well. Even though people may have good-paying jobs, they are still concerned about whether their

jobs will stay there tomorrow, and whether their quality of life will continue to improve.

So our job, of course, on their behalf, is to ensure that we continue to have a laser-focused vision on the jobs agenda to make sure that we do not move away from creating new jobs. Therefore, we have to support policies and measures that will have the effect of creating new jobs, not measures that will be neutral in terms of job creation, because we cannot at this time afford to support programs or measures that will not result in any net new jobs in our economy.

Speaker, in order to protect these and other public services so valuable to Ontario families, our finances must be put on a long-term sustainable path. In the face of many years of more modest economic growth, the way governments of all political stripes over the last generation have accumulated debt simply cannot continue.

That is why, despite lower private sector projections for economic growth, we are ensuring that Ontario remains on track to meet the fiscal targets projected in the 2011 budget and the first quarter Ontario finances. These fiscal targets include a \$16-billion deficit in 2011-12 and steadily declining deficits of \$15.2 billion in 2012-13 and \$13.3 billion in 2013-14.

Providing world-class public services while balancing the budget in a time of slow economic growth will be a challenge, but it's a challenge we are facing head on. To meet these goals, the government set a target in the 2011 budget of holding growth in overall program spending to 1.4%. That was outlined in the 2011 budget. The Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services is expected to recommend that the target for spending growth be 1%.

The government will consider this and other advice as we prepare the 2012 budget. Any new spending will be paid for through offsetting savings in other areas or through reform of public service delivery. Ministries will be directed to develop and deliver on plans to live within what is affordable given the low rate of economic growth.

Speaker, the McGuinty government has established a record of meeting its targets. We will meet the challenge of lower economic growth through long-term fundamental reforms to the way government works. We will build on our government's track record of reforms to education, health care, taxes and the electricity system. We will focus more than ever on how to get the best value and the best services for Ontario families.

What we will not do, Speaker: We will not take a slash-and-burn approach to the public services so dearly valued by Ontarians. Past experience has shown here in Ontario, as well as elsewhere around the world, that deep, arbitrary across-the-board cuts simply do not work. Slashing and burning key social programs does not deliver true fiscal sustainability. In fact, it creates real hardships for Ontarians. Such drastic cuts would unravel the progress Ontarians have made in improving schools and hospitals and preparing Ontario for the economy of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, meeting the challenge of extended modest economic growth demands a government that is open

to change and innovation, the kind of innovation that Ontarians display time and again. The proposed new healthy homes renovation tax credit is a strong example of this type of innovation. With this proposed new credit, we are clearly demonstrating how our government can develop measures that will assist Ontario families while also supporting the provincial economy. As I mentioned at the outset, our aim through this bill is to help our seniors, to take pressures off our health care system, and of course to boost economic growth. We are trying to meet all three of those objectives through Bill 2.

With this proposed new credit, we are clearly demonstrating our commitment to meet those three goals, because not only would our proposed new credit help seniors stay in their homes longer, but it would benefit all taxpayers by relieving pressures on long-term-care home costs, while also helping to support jobs in the home renovation sector, one of the largest-growing sectors in our economy across the province.

If passed, the proposed healthy homes renovation tax credit would be a new permanent, refundable personal income tax credit to help seniors with the cost of home modifications to make their homes safer and more accessible. The proposed tax credit would cover 15% of up to \$10,000 in eligible alterations to the Ontario principal residence of a senior. This credit would help seniors renovate their homes to improve accessibility, mobility and safety. By improving accessibility, mobility and safety, the credit would help more seniors stay in their homes for longer periods of time.

Mr. Speaker, here is how the healthy homes renovations tax credit would work: Effective October 1, 2011, senior homeowners and tenants 65 years of age or older, as well as people who share a home with a senior relative, would be allowed to claim a refundable tax credit of up to \$1,500 for expenses on permanent modifications to the home. Expenses would be eligible only to the extent that they improve accessibility or help a senior to be more functional or mobile at home. Some examples of proposed eligible expenses, and this is by no means a complete list, include certain renovations that would permit first-floor occupancy or secondary suites. Wheelchair ramps, stair and wheelchair lifts and elevators to help seniors get into and out of their homes more easily would also qualify. The credit would apply to items that would make bathrooms safer, including bath lifts, walk-in bathtubs and wheel-in showers, grab bars, related reinforcements around the toilet, bathtub and shower, and non-slip bathroom flooring—things that are crucial to ensure that seniors continue to live in their homes in a safe environment.

Seniors often need modifications that would help with accessibility inside the home, such as installing handrails in corridors, widening passage doors, adding swing-clear hinges on doors to widen doorways and door locks that are easy to operate.

#### 0920

Kitchens can present challenges to seniors with mobility issues. So the tax credit would help with renovations

relocating taps to the front or side of a sink for easier access, installing hands-free taps, lowering existing countertops or cupboards or installing adjustable countertops and cupboards, and adding touch-and-release drawers and cupboards that pull out fully. This is functional stuff that just makes it easier for a senior to live in their home, just stuff that is common sense.

Poor lighting can be a hazard for seniors. So the tax credit would apply to additional light fixtures throughout the home and exterior entrances, as well as motion-activated lighting.

Because permanent renovations may not always be the best option, the tax credit will help with modular or movable versions of certain permanent fixtures such as modular ramps and non-fixed bath lifts. These are just a few examples. The rules of eligibility are set out clearly in the legislation.

About two weeks ago, I had the chance to visit a business in my community in Ottawa called Conval-Aid. It's owned by a brother-sister team, Stuart and Merrill Ed. They happen to live in my riding; I know them quite well. It's a family-owned business. It is a business that was, I think, started by their father about 30 or 40 years ago. They provide exactly the kind of things I was just outlining. It's a nice sort of showroom outlet. They have walkers and more accessible toilets, walk-in bathtubs, showers, chairlifts—I got to experience how a chairlift works—things that seniors can need and use. In talking to Stuart and Merrill about this healthy homes renovation tax credit, they were excited that it's going to really help seniors, because they're getting more and more seniors coming in and talking to them and expressing their desire of continuing to live in their own home, a home that has been their sanctuary for 30, 40 or 50 years, sometimes even more, a home that they bought when they were young. They've raised their children in their home. But now, as they're getting older and their mobility is getting limited, it's not easy for them to continue to live at home.

I think every single member can tell a story or two of seniors in their own riding—if you ask them if they would like to continue to live in their own home or move to a smaller place or move to long-term care, the answer will be a resounding “No, I want to live in my own home.” That's where the seniors are independent, where they continue to live with dignity, where they know their neighbours, where their families are comfortable. They love having their grandchildren come to the same home where they raised their parents. This is where they want to live.

I often joke—I don't know if my dad would like the fact that I'm about to mention his age; my father is 76 years old. He lives with my mother in a beautiful home in Oakville. He loves his home. If I ever mentioned that he should downsize or maybe consider getting a condo or something, I think I wouldn't be invited for Christmas this holiday season—because he loves his garden; he loves the fact that the grandkids, my brother's two boys, live not too far from where they live, and they get to babysit them and play with them. But the reality is even

though my father is in pretty good shape, he's getting older. Every time I see him, I see a marked difference in his mobility, in just normal interaction with physical things. That's just a factor. When I was talking to him about this healthy homes renovation tax credit, he was quite excited. He actually said, "You know what? This is going to help, because I do feel now, I think, the need that I should put some support railings in the bathroom just for getting in and out of the bathtub, or maybe reinforce the railings going up to the staircase, or better lighting because of weakening vision." You know, things like that—and, I mean, these are just the very basic things that we could identify that he may need, but as he's getting older, those needs may grow. A tax credit of \$1,500, which is administered in a very simple fashion—where you incur the expense, you keep the receipt and you then apply for the renovation tax credit when you're filing your income tax return and you get a cheque back from the government—is very attractive to him. It encourages him to make those changes that he needs.

Now, yes, the tax credit is not for 100% of the cost; of course not. But it is a significant help and relief to a senior like my father. I think again, like I said, we can all share personal stories or stories of our constituents who have the same issues. When I went to see Stuart and Merrill at their business, Conval-Aid, I never had been before. I'd heard about it. I wanted to see from firsthand experience what kind of products we're talking about. I was quite surprised by the kind of technology that is now available, by how much easier it has become to make homes accessible for seniors.

A lot of these things did not exist before. You know, if you just take modular ramps as an example: Let's say you do not own your home, you rent it, but you need to put a ramp. Of course, you're not going to incur that expense of building a permanent ramp. You can get something which is not permanent—it's modular—which you can actually take with you. Those types of things are covered in this legislation. That tax credit will apply. And relatively speaking, these are not that expensive.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the things that caught my attention was the stair lifts, and I wanted to try one to see how it worked. I think there's a YouTube video out there, because somebody recorded it and put it on the Internet. But I wanted to see how that particular device worked, and I was quite relieved to see how smooth, safe and secure a stair lift was, how slowly it moves. And for a senior, that would be a huge, huge relief: that if you live in a two-storey house, if you don't live in a bungalow, all of a sudden you can go to the second floor of your house by installing this thing.

I asked them, "What's the cost of a stair lift?" It's about \$4,500 with installation. I went, "Okay, so 15% off \$4,500." That's a decent relief for a senior who is considering. So I kind of told them and reminded them to remind their customers that if this legislation passes—and you know, we have to say that—the customers, the seniors who are coming in or the relatives who are coming in to buy these things and getting them installed

should keep those receipts from October 1 onwards, because if the legislation passes, it will apply retroactively and they will be able to apply for the tax credit. I'm going to speak to that later.

The other point, going back to the earlier sort of objective that I was talking about—the three points behind this legislation, which is to help our seniors, relieve pressures off our long-term care and to boost the economy—is that a business like Conval-Aid is a small family business. It's privately owned. You know, Mr. Ed and Mrs. Ed started that business and now they've passed it on to their son and daughter, Stuart and Merrill. It's a business that has been in Ottawa for a long time. It's a competitive business, especially in light of an aging demographic, because there are other companies—large multinationals—who are involved too. But I was really happy to see that it's going to directly help businesses like that in our economy. They have a very significant employment force. They work with a lot of contractors who install these products and who help seniors get adjusted and get comfortable with these different types of technologies or products. That is another very significant element because, as Stuart said to me, this is definitely going to help. This is going to just encourage more seniors to consider modifying their homes and making it more accessible. It's just another great support.

#### 0930

In terms of job creation and in terms of helping our economy, clearly a very direct example that I can give you from my community in Ottawa: A business like Conval-Aid is going to significantly benefit from it.

Speaker, I'm going to talk a little bit more about some of the other features of this bill, because I think they're important. So expenses which would not be eligible in this bill, if this passes, are if their primary purpose is to increase the value of the home, such as plumbing, roof repair and landscaping. Those are the types of things that are not included in this bill. Again, the idea is to make your home more accessible, more living-friendly for a senior, and that's what we're trying to achieve through this bill.

To claim the tax credit, seniors or their family members would have to get receipts from suppliers and contractors, as I was mentioning earlier, helping to ensure that these amounts are reported by vendors for tax purposes. The tax credit will be calculated as 15% of up to \$10,000 in total eligible expenses for a senior's principal residence in Ontario for a calendar year, for a maximum credit of \$1,500 each year. Seniors would claim the tax credit on their personal income tax returns. Like they do at the end of the year, they will just claim it in a very simple way.

Here are a few examples of how the tax credit, if passed, will help Ontario seniors. These are some, I think, common examples that you and I and those who are listening at home can relate to. Take Sally and Joe, who are a retired couple in their late 60s, who own a home in Aurora. Joe's difficulty getting upstairs has meant the couple needed to install a stair lift—the kind I

tried the other day—so that he can access the second storey of the house. Sally and Joe paid their provider \$6,000 for the purchase and installation of the stair lift. They would keep their receipt and claim \$6,000 on their 2012 tax return to receive a credit of \$900. And they will actually get a cheque for \$900 back from the Ontario government.

Or take Anita, who lives with her 75-year-old mother in a rented apartment in Toronto. Anita paid \$500 to have grab bars permanently installed in her bathroom to make it safer for her mother to get in and out of the bath. Anita will keep her receipt and claim \$500 on her 2012 tax return to receive a credit of \$75.

For the 2012 tax year only, the \$10,000 maximum would apply to expenses paid or payable from October 1, 2011, to December 31, 2012. For 2013 and all subsequent years, the maximum will apply to expenses paid or payable from January 1 to December 31 of the year. So that's just a slight thing, an important thing, that I wanted to mention.

We are proposing that this tax credit be refundable and that there be no income testing for eligibility, which means seniors at all income levels could qualify for this tax credit.

Now, Speaker, the key is—and I really do want to stress this, because this is an important point; and those watching this at home, remember this please and pass this along—that if the legislation is passed and this tax credit is put into place, you need to keep your receipts. That's a very important thing. You need the receipts to claim for the tax credit. You won't be able to claim this tax credit if you don't have the receipts. So if the legislation passes, the intention is that this will apply as of October 1, 2011, and so we need to make sure that you keep the receipts for the work, for the purchases you made, for what you paid to the contractor in terms of installation, so that you can submit that with your tax return. That's a very important point and something that I really want our seniors to know.

Now, the proposed tax credit is projected to cost the province about \$60 million in 2011-12. This amount will be offset by savings in business support programs and tax-related expenditures as well as uncommitted capital spending. This means that every dollar spent in this new program would be saved from reduced spending in other areas. This is part of our plan to continue to support Ontarians while prudently managing the province's finances.

Mr. Speaker, helping seniors stay healthy and independent at home becomes increasingly important as Ontario's population ages. Not only does it help seniors live with dignity, but aging at home also helps relieve cost pressures on Ontario's public services. Providing care to a senior in their own home or in their family's home costs taxpayers less than providing services in a long-term-care home.

Senior after senior after senior who I've met and continue to meet in my riding of Ottawa Centre tells me that they want to live in their home. They don't want to live anywhere but in their own home. They want help. They

want assistance in ensuring that they continue to live in a comfortable fashion.

I spoke about this proposed tax credit during the campaign again and again, and I always got very positive feedback from seniors, because they said, "This is tangible. This is real. This is going to really have an impact. I can see the result of this tax credit." We talk a lot about different kinds of tax credits, and they're somewhere out there; we just really don't know what it means because you don't see anything tangible in return. This is one of those tax credits where a senior sees a real benefit, because they will see an improvement in their bathroom. They will see how that bathroom has become accessible for them.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** People in Alexandria want it, too.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm sure people in Alexandria will definitely want this. People in Peterborough, I think, will be very supportive of this. I'm sure in every community across this province, all 107 ridings—I can assure you that if this legislation passes, you will see support by seniors, and you will see that the seniors will use it, because it's going to result in a better quality of life for them. It's going to ensure that they continue to live in their own home with dignity so that their grandkids can continue to visit them in their own home. It's something very, very important, something that I think we have spoken to seniors about again and again and something that I urge all members to support.

Regardless of how you look at the numbers, there is no doubt that Ontario's aging population will bring significant fiscal challenges. Ontario's senior population is expected to more than double over the next 25 years, from approximately 1.8 million seniors in 2010 to 4.1 million by 2036. That's a very significant increase in our senior population in the province of Ontario. By 2017, for the first time, seniors will account for a larger share of the population than children 14 and under.

Speaker, our government is well aware of this reality and will continue to work hard to ensure that Ontario's seniors have access to quality programs and services that enable them to live safe, healthy, independent lives. Premier McGuinty has summarized our goal best: "By helping seniors remain in their own home, we're helping elderly people today, and we're taking steps to deal with the aging of our population that's going to happen in the future. It's important that we begin preparing now so that we can ensure the baby boom generation are the healthiest, most active and most engaged generation of seniors in our history."

In addition, the reality is that offering affordable solutions and alternatives that help seniors to stay at home as long as possible frees up health resources for patients in other care settings. That's in large part why, in 2007, our government launched the Aging at Home strategy to promote the health of seniors by encouraging an independent lifestyle in their own homes. We have invested \$1.1 billion over four years in this strategy, with the goal of providing a continuum of community-based services for seniors and their caregivers to allow them to stay healthy and live independently and with dignity in their homes.

**0940**

I can give you example after example after example, Speaker, of how the Aging at Home strategy is working in my community. The one example I give you is that of a community called Rochester Towers, an Ottawa Community Housing tower. It's a seniors-only residence in my riding in Ottawa Centre. You've got a very mixed population, and this is what's so unique about Rochester Towers. You've got a community which is pretty much 50-50: 50% Chinese-speaking seniors and 50% non-Chinese-speaking seniors. I've been going to this building for years, before I even ran for office, and did a lot of community and voluntary work. I always found some challenges in that building. People were not happy. People felt unhappy. Always, you'd find an ambulance parked in front of the building.

We brought in Aging at Home. I think it was in about 2008-09 that we brought in Aging at Home in that building, providing services in the language that a senior speaks, so, English, French, Mandarin and Cantonese; four languages, because those were the four languages spoken by the seniors. Now you go into this building—every time I go there now, I have not seen an ambulance, number one, which is a big sign, because seniors are getting care right there in their building. Every time I go there, some sort of festivity, some event, be it Christmas, Chinese New Year, you name it, the Moon Festival, is being done. Seniors are singing; they're dancing. They're having English classes. All kinds of activities take place, and you can see a remarkable difference in their health and their positive attitude as they live in that building.

The other big difference I've seen is the relationship between those seniors who are of Chinese heritage and those who are not. In the past, they did not communicate with each other; in the past, they did not get along with each other. Now you see that they get along and they actually share each other's activities. So this is a great example. This is something that I'm very, very proud of and will continue to promote in my community.

Speaker, when our seniors get health supports in their communities, they can avoid unneeded hospital visits, as was the case in Rochester Towers in my riding of Ottawa Centre, and live more active and independent lives. The proposed new healthy homes renovation tax credit will build on this strategy.

I mentioned earlier that we have three important goals in introducing this new tax credit at this time. Not only will this proposed tax credit help seniors live longer in their own homes and relieve cost pressures on Ontario's health care system, but it will support jobs for businesses in the renovation sector. If passed by this Legislature, the tax credit is expected to support about \$800 million of home renovation activity and around 10,500 jobs throughout the Ontario economy each and every year. It would help build on the more than 128,000 net new jobs that have been created in Ontario so far in 2011 and on the almost half a million net new jobs—485,400, to be precise—that have been created in our province since October 2003.

Speaker, home renovations help create jobs while investing in the accessibility of existing homes for the future, and the home renovation sector is a valuable one. In the GTA alone, nearly \$10 billion has been spent on renovations this year. The proposed healthy homes renovation tax credit will provide a further boost to this sector of the economy. And because the proposed new credit would not be claimed without a proper receipt, it would help combat the underground economy. That's why I keep stressing that it's very important for seniors to keep their receipts in order to take advantage of this tax credit, if it's passed.

In conclusion, I urge the Legislature to support this bill for three important reasons: (1) to help seniors continue to live independently; (2) to relieve cost pressures on the health care system; and (3) to support jobs and Ontario's economy. I am confident that these goals are shared by each and every member in this House.

Speaker, over the last several years, Ontarians have made tremendous accomplishments by working together. In 2008, when the global economic turmoil first hit, the McGuinty government took early action to support those who needed help the most. In today's economic environment, we will continue to make smart, innovative investments to encourage economic growth and job creation.

The proposed new healthy homes renovation tax credit is only the latest example of the kind of innovative approach that has helped our province weather the recent global recession. That's why I'm asking for all members' support in passing this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much to the member for Ottawa Centre. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'd like to address the member's comments with regard to job creation as well as remind him that since the election, this province has lost 75,000 private sector jobs. That equates to 100 jobs per hour.

He also was talking about that the government will not take a slash-and-burn approach to the public sector. We want to suggest that the member and his government consider a public sector wage freeze.

My concern, when he talked about innovation, is the fact that past performance is in fact an indication of future performance: tax; spend.

He talked about the healthy home tax credit helping seniors, providing a \$1,500 tax rebate. The emphasis was continually on \$1,500. My concern is, in order to obtain that \$1,500, seniors must spend \$10,000. My math tells me: 15%. I understand that, but my concern, to the member, is that many seniors cannot afford \$10,000 in order to obtain a \$1,500 credit.

Don't get me wrong, Member. I am in favour of helping seniors, especially since one day I will be one. The reality is, though, very few can afford \$10,000 of spending in order to get a \$1,500 tax credit.

This won't create new jobs. In fact, it will only create new projects for existing companies who will receive those phone calls from seniors wanting work done.

In theory, the healthy home tax credit is a positive move in the right direction, but in reality it's a feel-good.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just want to say to the member—because it's a bit of a trend that we see developing around here in regard to the governing Liberals—that it would almost seem as if they didn't notice there was a thing called an election, because as I listen to the speeches, it's much the same as what we heard before the election, insofar that they're still on the same track but don't recognize that this in fact is a minority Parliament.

I would have hoped that somewhere within this speech, the member would have talked about how he is able to reach across the aisles and work with the opposition parties so that together we can build a tax credit that works for seniors. What I hear is much of the same. What I heard is that they've got all the ideas and they think they've got all the votes.

I don't want to say for one second that we're trying to be obstructionist here, because that's not the point. We very much want to work with this government in order to do the things that are right with the public, but it's got to be a two-way street. What I would hope to hear from members as we go forward in debates—this was the throne speech, but he used it, and rightfully so, because the rules allow it, to talk about the seniors' tax credit—is soliciting ideas from the opposition about how we can work this together.

I can tell you that we, as New Democrats, are interested in this idea; we think there's some value to it. We believe that there are some things that we might be able to do together with the Conservatives and the Liberals in order to make this a stronger program that doesn't necessarily cost more money but is more effective for the people that it's aimed to. Those are, I think, what we need to remember as we look forward to what this new Parliament is all about. It isn't business as usual. It isn't about a majority government on the other side, or a minor—what do they call it?—a major minority, as the Premier called it. This is a minority Parliament, and it means to say that all of us in this House are going to have to change the way that we do things. I, in the opposition, am going to have to change the way that I do things. I can't just criticize; I also have to propose, because that's the responsibility I've been given by virtue of the numbers in the House. The government, on the other side, has to listen and has to be willing to work with the opposition so that we do what we were charged to do, and that is to work for the people who sent us here.

0950

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. You're certainly looking resplendent this morning in your attire. I know you'll do a wonderful job in that position.

I did listen carefully to my colleagues the government House leader and the member from Ottawa Centre. This bill will go to committee, and we do look forward—for example, my good friend the member from Durham, who

has always been a strong advocate for seniors in his riding, will have some good ideas to possibly amend this bill. The previous speaker, the member from Timmins—James Bay, indicated that he'll have some ideas to amend this bill.

In my own riding of Peterborough, I had the opportunity to visit two businesses. I'd like to talk about Vance Robbins this morning. Vance coached my son, Braden, in baseball, and he's the owner of Anden bed and bath on Lansdowne Street West in Peterborough. He's really a good small business operator. He knows that since combining the two levels of tax reporting he's saving money, and he looks forward to the opportunity to sell the new walk-in baths and showers for seniors in my community.

Just last Saturday Karan and I had the opportunity to see our old friend Gus; Gus owns Gus's Kitchen and Bath on Erskine Avenue in Peterborough. I was in to see Gus—we're looking at buying a new sink and some other things. Karan recently got appointed as principal so she has a few extra bucks now, so there will be the opportunity to look at these things and do some renovations. But there was a senior that walked in to Gus's, and I could see that she had some mobility issues, and she was looking at the opportunity to buy one of these new walk-in showers. I said to her, "You should make that decision, because we're bringing in the new healthy homes renovation tax credit. It's retroactive to October 1, so this will be the opportunity to retrofit your home so you can stay in it longer."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very, very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I certainly will not be in a position to support the renovation tax credit. When you look at the math alone on this program, the percentage of people that it will affect is incredibly minute. When you look at the percentage of seniors in Ontario over the age of 65 and you look at the percentage of those needing accessibility installations in their homes and you remove the percentage of those who either cannot find the \$10,000 or would spend it either way, you're left with this tiny margin in the middle. That has to leave less than 1% of the population that will be affected versus HST-off-of-home-heating; that program is better for all Ontario families. There's no paperwork. It leaves money in their pocket immediately. The biggest threat to seniors is the soaring energy bill, thanks to things like the FIT program in Ontario and the green energy plan. The FIT program and the green energy plan have caused our hydro bills to soar; that is the real area in Ontario that needs to be fixed.

Our party has three priorities: We're looking for private sector job creation; we're looking to rein in government spending; and we're looking for relief for families. The HST-off-of-home-heating plan brings relief for families. That's the program that we will support because it recognizes not the slight wedge of less than 1% of the population; taking the HST off home heating brings relief to all families in Ontario, and that's why we will be supporting that program. That's why I cannot support the renovation tax credit that gets to so few people in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I now return to the member for Ottawa Centre, who has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to thank the members from Chatham–Kent–Essex, Timmins–James Bay, Peterborough and Nipissing for their comments.

Helping seniors is not a partisan issue. It is not an issue that divides on the lines of Liberals and Conservatives or New Democrats. It is not an issue that should be all divvied up into how the numbers of seats in this House will accomplish it. It is our duty and responsibility to help seniors.

I really hope that the comments of the member from Nipissing are not reflective of the views of all the members of the Conservative Party, because if that's the case, I think the seniors from the riding of Nipissing are being let down. But if all those members are against this tax credit for our seniors, they're all being let down, because it is our responsibility to ensure that we help seniors so they can continue to live in their homes.

You have heard this again and again and again: Seniors want to ensure that they have means to live in their own homes. They should not be living in an institution like a long-term-care facility. The only way we can ensure that, Speaker, is by supporting Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, which is going to be a real support, a real relief for seniors, not to mention the boost to the economy, because it is going to create jobs. I ask you to go ask the renovation sector their views about this bill, how it's going to help them go and work in a senior's home, install those devices so that seniors continue to live in their homes. That is the way. That's the smart policy that we need to support and I really hope, Speaker, that the Conservative Party is not aligned with the views of the member from Nipissing and that they will support this bill when it comes to the vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Thornhill has moved the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. John Milloy:** No further business, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 0957 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I would like to introduce today some very special guests, the family of page Theodore Giesen: his mother, Jennifer; father, George;

and sisters Emily and Sarah Giesen. Please, everyone, wish them a warm welcome to the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you, and welcome.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Speaker, the food and beverage processing industry is a major economic driver in our province. This morning, I am pleased to introduce Craig Richardson, the president of the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors—welcome, Craig—and Jane Graham, the executive director. Welcome, Jane.

Along with fellow representatives from the alliance, they will be meeting today with MPPs to talk about some of the major issues affecting the industry in Ontario, and I encourage all of my colleagues to attend the reception this evening and sample some of the wonderful food.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** This morning, I met with a number of people in the music industry. They are here today, and there will be a reception later on—two of them are in my riding: Graham Henderson, CEO, Music Canada; Steve Kane, CEO, Warner Music; Deane Cameron, CEO, EMI Music; Randy Lennox, CEO, Universal Music; and Shane Carter, CEO, Sony Music.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** The guests from Music Canada have not arrived yet, but I still want to introduce them; Steve Kane from Warner Music Canada Co.; Deane Cameron, EMI Music Canada; Randy Lennox, Universal Music Canada Inc.; Shane Carter, Sony Music Entertainment Canada Inc.; Graham Henderson and Amy Terrill, Music Canada; and Erika Mozes from Crestview.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions? There being none, it's now time for oral questions.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I would like to draw your attention to, I think, a violation of standing order 19 of this House: "Except as provided in standing order 107, no member of the House shall bring any stranger into any part of the House appropriated to the members of the House while the House, or the Committee of the Whole House, is meeting." Today we have the Premier here, which is obviously a stranger to the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** First of all, that is not appropriate, and the member does know better and I would expect it not to happen again. Furthermore, I would hope that is not setting the tone for the question period.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No other comments are necessary, thank you.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, sadly, your so-called jobs plan has been a failure. We've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs; we've

lost 75,000 full-time private sector jobs since the last election alone.

The Ontario PC caucus has brought forward a good idea to create 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades, jobs for aspiring electricians, carpenters, welders and HVAC operators. Premier, will you support our plan to modernize our apprenticeship system and open up 200,000 good jobs for skilled tradesmen in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, first of all I want to thank the honourable member for his question.

I just want to introduce a little bit of clarity with respect to where we are in terms of jobs. Ontario has created 267,000 new jobs since the recession. Overwhelmingly, those jobs are full-time, and furthermore, overwhelmingly those full-time jobs pay more than the average Ontario wage. So in fact, we are moving in the right direction.

I had the opportunity to speak in person with my honourable colleague about where we're going on trades. I remain open to any proposals that he might want to put forward in this regard. But I do want to say that I think we have some common ground in terms of ensuring that young people and families in Ontario see trades as a real and viable opportunity. They are an important part of our plan to increase the level of post-secondary education for all our students.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, the problem, Premier, is that too many young people see the trades as a real and viable opportunity in Alberta, in Saskatchewan, in Manitoba and in British Columbia. The Premier knows full well that seven other provinces have modernized their apprenticeship system. They have lower ratios of journeymen to apprentices than the province of Ontario does. You seem to embrace a 1970s-era system, Premier.

So you say you're open to ideas. Then let me ask you directly: Will you support our call and the call of the apprentices joining us here today to move to a one-to-one ratio and create 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I've heard my honourable colleague on this before. He will know that we have changed ratios, as a government, eight times so far. They didn't change them once when they were in government.

But we're actually trying to move beyond that, so we've created a new College of Trades. What I wanted to do is a couple of things: first of all, inspire confidence in families and young people that trades are a real, viable option for them, and secondly, I want the college to take on that responsibility and to establish those ratios. I want the college for apprentices to take on the same kinds of responsibilities that the colleges for doctors, teachers, architects, lawyers and the like do.

So our preference is to turn this over to a thoughtful college that takes on that responsibility to decide specifically on the ratios that are appropriate for the industry here in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Come on, Premier. I mean, nobody really believes that. Basically, your College of Trades, five out of the eight potential members of the board are union bosses or former union bosses. It hands over these decisions to the special interests.

Quite frankly, Premier, this is a gross abdication of a responsibility that the Premier of the province should have: to actually take our system out of the 1970s and bring it into the 21st century, to move to a one-to-one ratio like seven other provinces that have moved in that direction and to actually create 200,000 jobs for young people who want to be electricians, who want to be plumbers, who want to be HVAC operators and who want to be welders in the province of Ontario.

Premier, will you at least say that you support the notion of modernizing our system and moving to a one-to-one ratio, just like they have in other provinces?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, I'm putting my faith in the college, and I would recommend to my honourable colleague that he do the same. I know he's quick to dismiss it as being unworthy of public confidence, but I don't see it that way.

The college is made up of trade boards. Those trade boards are composed of equal numbers of members selected as employee representatives and an employer. They're also made up of divisional boards. The divisional board is made up of two employers and two employees. And then there's a board of governors, which is made up of 21 members, 16 of those coming from the divisional boards, which are, again, equally made up.

So we've worked really hard to ensure that the new college is, in fact, fair and objective when it comes to the decision-making that they're going to undertake, including the decision with respect to ratios. I'd ask my honourable colleague to give the college a chance—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

1040

#### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: Premier, nobody believes that. The employer groups, for example, the Heavy Construction Association of Toronto, Merit Ontario, the Ontario Electrical League, the Ontario General Contractors Association, the Ontario Road Builders' Association, the sewer and water main association, Progressive Contractors, residential contractor councils—all of these employer groups who want to hire the young people who have joined us in the assembly today—see your College of Trades as blocking job creation. They oppose your College of Trades. Nobody actually believes you.

Well, I guess one person, Pat Dillon, the head of the Working Families Coalition, likes this College of Trades. He can pull the strings. But you stand with Pat Dillon; we stand with the young people. We stand with the people who want to get jobs in the trades. We want to stand with the young electricians.

Premier, if employers don't have any faith in your College of Trades, why should young people who are looking to put their skills to work in the province of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the only person that can't—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Minister?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It takes a certain amount of gall for the Leader of the Opposition, who in years one, two and three of the Conservative government gutted the system, cut apprenticeship funding by 74%—the reason we have deficits today is because the previous government left it in rack and ruin.

We have a fair and balanced system. I've been out across the province meeting with business leaders and labour leaders. I've met with the College of Trades. The Leader of the Opposition should consider that business people there are concerned about—what they don't want is what they're proposing. They don't want government micromanaging the trades. We're asking industry, labour and colleges to be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Ironically, when this minister was the mayor of Winnipeg, in Manitoba, in the time period he references, do you know what the ratio was in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker? One to one. So it's the old goose and gander.

Seven provinces have modernized their systems. They have created jobs for young people, jobs for those who are retraining. I asked the apprentices here today how many of them have seen their friends hightail it out to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC to get jobs in the trades. Everyone raised their hands.

I ask the minister to look behind me, look above me at the 50 or so young people who want to be apprentices in the province of Ontario. Look them in the eye and tell them that you oppose a one-to-one ratio that will give them job opportunities in the province of Ontario. Can you do that?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I don't know how simplistic the leader of the official opposition can be. We have over 150 trades in Ontario. Each of them has different ratio requirements. The business leaders, the educators, the labourers and the people in the trades themselves do not want a one-size-fits-all because the trades are radically different. Small businesses need different things from that.

It is the Leader of the Opposition who should look up into the galleries and explain why we're committed—right now, 120,000 people are in apprenticeships. When you were in government, your performance was less than

50% of that. All the talk and the rhetoric is lovely, but you couldn't bake the bread. You—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The minister's argument holds no water. In the other provinces, in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, they have electricians, they have plumbers, they have welders, and they have HVAC operators. They have those trades. Correct me if I'm wrong, but they've moved to modernize their system; they've moved to one-to-one ratios. And, Minister, you're absolutely darn right: I'll look these folks in the eye like you did earlier today to say I'm going to fight for them. I'm going to fight for them each and every day. I want to see that talent here in the province of Ontario. I want to see those 200,000 jobs.

So I ask the member who spent time in Manitoba and saw this work; I ask the minister: If it's good enough for seven other provinces, why are you stuck in the 1970s and telling these young people to head out west to find a good job? I want to see them here in Ontario.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** You know, Mr. Speaker, when I was mayor of Winnipeg—and to this day, if you talk to my predecessor, you'll find the flow of talent isn't that way; it's this way, quite frankly.

Second of all, 28,000 apprenticeships: That's twice as many people today getting into apprenticeships as when you were in government—two to one. The College of Trades is going to increase that. We are looking at three to one over your record, or four to one. But this is typical: There isn't a plan. You basically couldn't string two sentences together.

I have got two reports—the Whitaker report. Why don't you read it? You know, literacy is a good thing. Read the Whitaker report and read the Thomson report. There are three years of research working with business, labour and colleges to design a system that is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Two years ago, with much, much fanfare, the government released a report claiming that corporate tax cuts and the HST were going to create 591,000 jobs. So my question to the Premier is: It's been two years; can he provide a progress report for us on that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Well, Speaker, you know, I'm pleased to take the question from my honourable colleague the leader of the third party. I said just a moment ago that we have created 267,000 new jobs since the recession—more than half the new jobs in Canada.

I would also draw my honourable colleague's attention to a couple of independent assessments of our competitiveness at this point in our history. Foreign Direct Investment, a very reputable authority in the UK, has said that we are now the second most preferred

destination for foreign investment in all of North America, after California. Furthermore, just a couple of months ago now, Forbes magazine in the US, a very prestigious business magazine, said that Canada has now become the preferred destination in the world for foreign investment, and the number one reason for that change—we jumped from fifth spot to first spot—is because of the tax reforms that we made in Ontario. So, Speaker, I say to my honourable colleague, they are in fact working.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, in July 2010 the government started slashing corporate tax rates and hit families with the HST, but employment levels since that time really have not changed all that much. Most jobs, in fact, that were created were created before the HST was implemented. On top of that, the fall economic statement revises employment projections down by as much as 40%. Does the Premier really think his plan is working?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, my honourable colleague will know that there is global economic uncertainty, and that it is centred in Europe, the world's largest trading bloc, and the United States, the world's largest economy. Of course, the consequences of that are being felt by us here in Ontario. It is slowing down the rate at which we grow our economy and it is making it more difficult for us to create jobs.

In addition to our tax reforms and our continuing investment in developing the skills of our workforce, just yesterday in London, together with the Minister of Energy, we announced our new southwestern Ontario development fund. I'm asking my honourable colleague to support that. It's a proven winner. We've tested this in eastern Ontario. If \$50 million would generate close to half a billion dollars in private sector investment and some 12,000 jobs, we want to do the same for southwestern Ontario and I ask my colleague to support that measure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, for two years the government has insisted that corporate tax giveaways and unfair sales tax were going to create jobs, and for two years we've seen exactly the opposite happening in this province. Now, when the government is considering reckless cuts to balance the books, why won't the Premier instead put the brakes on reckless tax giveaways and start looking at tax credits that actually help the companies that are creating jobs?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I'm pleased to engage my honourable colleague in this debate, and I know that we will over the course of time and leading up to the budget. But there is a practical, pragmatic provision and initiative that we have just introduced.

We want to do something that is specific to southwestern Ontario. It's the creation of a new development fund. It's modeled on the fund that we put in place in eastern Ontario. On the basis of that experience, Speaker,

we found that about 50 million tax dollars have leveraged about a half a billion dollars in private sector investment and created about 12,000 jobs. We want to use that as a model and create something very similar to benefit southwestern Ontario. I'm going to need my colleague's support in order to pursue that initiative and I ask her for that support.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my next question is also to the Premier. Yesterday, your Minister of Economic Development shrugged off a growing list of companies that have taken public money but haven't followed through on job creation. He said, "[T]he majority of those companies create jobs."

Does the Premier agree with his minister's new standard that as long as some companies are creating jobs, the rest can take the money and run?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I'm not prepared to accept that as in fact what the minister is saying. But I can say that we're not prepared to throw up our hands and allow the evolution of globalization to play itself out unhindered in the province of Ontario.

One of the things that we have learned in our travels abroad is that those jurisdictions which are most successful and most competitive are those where people have come together—and that is the private sector, labour and government—and put their shoulders collectively to the wheel in a strategic and intelligent way. So that's what we're doing here in Ontario.

For example, in our Green Energy Act, that is something that we are doing together in the province of Ontario. We have decided that there is an exciting opportunity. We're working hard together to pursue that. So far we've created 20,000 jobs. We are clearly the leader in North America when it comes to pursuing clean energy technology, and that's a good example of government and people working together to pursue an exciting opportunity.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Leader, supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, no company should be able to take public money and then leave its employees high and dry. Last summer, the province promised a \$2.5-million grant to St. Catharines-based Silicon Knights, and they said that they would create around 90 jobs and sustain another 100 jobs. But Speaker, this company is cutting its workforce down to 35 people.

Now, I want to know from the Premier if this government is planning on moving ahead with these grants and, if so, are there going to be job guarantees that are part of that contract?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, I want to assure my honourable colleague that we are looking at this very closely. There was one instalment of funds provided, but we're now obviously in discussions before any further money flows.

But I just want to let her know about a place that I visited yesterday. It's called Digital Extremes. They're in London. They're in the same line of work, computer games, Speaker. We gave them two and a half million dollars and we asked that they meet a certain job target within five years. They met it in six months, Speaker. They've grown by 70% in the last 18 months. I know my colleagues opposite would be especially interested in learning that 22% of their growing workforce comes from outside the province. In fact, I met a young woman there who is from Scotland, who found out about this business here and came to work there.

So I want to assure my honourable colleague that we're being very careful in terms of how we provide this kind of support—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the province patted itself on the back for a series of multi-million-dollar grants to Global Sticks in Thunder Bay. That company closed its doors last week, although they claim that they can reopen again if they get another \$2 million from the province.

The question is this: What kind of job guarantees did the government extract when it handed that company millions of dollars?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** In all of these investments, Mr. Speaker, there are accountability mechanisms where dollars are often clawed back when these companies go through difficult circumstances. I think, though, what Ontario workers want to know is, is the leader of the NDP suggesting we shouldn't be making these investments? There's always going to be an element of risk when these investments are made.

We're dealing with the private sector during tough global economic times. Is she opposed to the \$8.6 billion we've leveraged overall from these economic development initiatives? Is she opposed to the 12,100 new jobs that have been created as a result of these investments or the 19,300 jobs that have been protected as a result of these investments?

Mr. Speaker, I think that's what Ontario workers need to know.

#### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question today is for the Premier. If you look in the gallery today, you will see students from the CLAC pre-apprenticeship training facility in Cambridge and the Pre-Apprenticeship Training Institute in Toronto. Welcome, guys and girls.

They came here today because your refusal to modernize our apprenticeship system means that when they graduate, they can't get a job. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 37% of Ontario's small businesses say that a shortage of skilled labour is

the main constraint on growing their business. The students here today have those skills.

The Ontario PC caucus has the plan to put them to work and create skilled trades for Ontario's future. Why are you standing in their way?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I think we want to acknowledge first, Mr. Speaker, the incredible effort that these students are involved in, pursuing a critical series of opportunities in the private sector, and we want to commend them for that.

But you know, actions are more important than words. Right now, there are 120,000 people just like them in Ontario pursuing trades. That's twice as many as under the party opposite when it was in government, when there were only 60,000 people.

I want to acknowledge that we're not doing enough yet, even though we're doing twice as well as the previous government. They should also take the time, because they're students, to read the Thomson report and the Whitaker report, and they'll understand therein what has been—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Minister, by the time question period ends today, Ontario will have lost another 100 jobs. Ontario is facing a jobs crisis. The time for action, we believe, is now. We've already wasted 54 days without a single new idea coming from this party.

The Ontario PC caucus has put a good idea on the table, creating 200,000 skilled trade jobs by modernizing our apprenticeship system. If you are really serious about your pledge to work together with the opposition to create good private sector jobs, why are you standing in the way of creating these jobs?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We're doing a lot of other things to support these students. We have the most generous tax credits in Canada right now to assist employers in hiring apprentices.

Not only did the party opposite in power cut within the first three years apprenticeship funding by 74%, and people like those in the gallery were thrown out of opportunities, they also raised tuition by 67% and cut half a billion dollars from training, colleges and universities—the biggest cuts. You delivered less opportunities and diminished opportunities.

Right now in this recession, it is our economy in North America that's attracting more capital. It is our economy that is building jobs. The opposition can only count jobs lost; they're not counting jobs created.

Through the College of Trades, Mr. Speaker—unlike the party there, we don't believe government knows anything. So we've—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question?

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Speaker, this question is to the Minister of the Environment. Ontarians want the government to protect—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The member from Pembroke will come to order—the second time, please.

Member?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Thank you.

Ontarians want the government to protect our lakes, our rivers and air, but today the Environmental Commissioner reports that the Ministries of the Environment and Natural Resources face a crisis of capacity. While they've been given more responsibility to deal with increasing threats to the environment, their budgets have been cut by 45% and 22% respectively since the 1990s.

Will the McGuinty government heed the commissioner's call to rebuild these ministries or will a clean environment be another casualty of upcoming cuts?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, I know that the member probably forgot to mention this, and I forgive him for it, but he will be aware that since our government took office we have in fact increased the Ministry of the Environment budget by some 42%.

I welcome the report of the Environmental Commissioner. It's excellent. As the new minister, I have an opportunity to look at all of his recommendations. I have a great deal of respect for the commissioner.

I know that you forgot, as well, to mention some of the good things that he said about the government of Ontario. I forgive you. He said that he commends MOE for developing a source protection strategy. He says that the ministry has built early, multi-stage notice and consultation into the source protection planning process. He lauds the ministry on its new publicly accessible approvals database. He says that we're developing new, more stringent limits—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Mr. Speaker, to the environment minister: The Environmental Commissioner said there is a "culture of inaction and procrastination" on issues like climate change and waste diversion. The Ministries of the Environment and Natural Resources simply are not able to properly monitor and enforce landfilling, incineration, waste hauling and other polluting activities.

Will the minister assure Ontarians that the capacity of these ministries will not be further undermined by upcoming cuts, or is the environment one of the areas slated for a 30% slash in funding?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I should mention, as well—I forgot to mention this—that the Ministry of the Environment, since our government took office, has hired some 39 new water inspectors.

I want to tell the member that if you're looking at initiatives that are extremely important for the environment, you know that despite the fact that some of your members were unfortunately opposed to this, we are eliminating the use of coal for the production of electrical power in the province of Ontario. The former member for Kenora–Rainy River will be listening to this, I know, at this particular point in time.

We have also developed the green energy plan, which is accentuating the need for and the implementation of more benign ways of producing electrical power in this province of Ontario. We have the source protection act, which we're being lauded for internationally, and I want to commend our people in our homes who are using that blue box program in a very exemplary manner.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question?

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you very much, Speaker. This question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Minister, people in western Mississauga neighbourhoods such as Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville understand the importance of our publicly funded universal health care system. As originally conceived, health care funding was a shared responsibility with the federal government. The province and the federal government each paid 50% of health care costs. Today, the federal government pays only 23% of our health care funding. That's less than a quarter.

Minister, please tell us what Ontario is doing to stand up for our health care system and ensure its sustainability for future generations.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for this very important question. Ontarians have tasked this government with the challenge of making sure that our health care system is strong for generations to come.

Ontarians realize that they need strong leadership, leadership that will stand up to the federal government on behalf of the people who need health care, so our government is pressing for a new 10-year health accord with the federal government that will establish priorities, accountability and clear goals. We are working with the other provinces to make that a reality, and we're pushing the federal government to commit to an accord that goes well beyond the two years that they have already committed to.

This long-term health accord is important not just for the people of Ontario but for the people across this country.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Well, thank you very much, Minister. We have an aging population here in Ontario, and seniors are making up an increasing proportion of our total population across Canada. For every senior alive today, there will be two seniors when most of the baby boom generation are ourselves seniors.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.

I've already mentioned to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke about the inside voice. I am now saying it must be.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you, Speaker.

Minister, I'm sure some of the discussions on renewing the health accord have focused on meeting the needs of our growing senior population and a new 10-year health accord with the government of Canada. I know Ontario is also seeking health care reforms designed to meet the needs of our seniors.

Will the minister please tell the House what our province is doing to help Ontario's senior population?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, there is no question that all provinces and territories need to work together to make sure that we're giving seniors the best possible care and options that allow them to stay in their own homes as long as possible.

The seniors I talk to tell me that, given a choice, home is where they want to be—in their neighbourhoods and in their communities. I'm proud to talk about a program called Home First, which is having a remarkable impact on the ability of seniors to come back home. When seniors are in hospital, what used to happen is that often they would be on track to go into long-term care. Now, under Home First, they're coming home. They're getting intensive supports to keep them in their own homes. What we're finding is that people are actually getting healthier, and they are certainly happier being in their own home.

So that's what this government is doing, and I'd ask the members from the opposite parties to join us—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier: 11 days ago, the Toronto Star again revealed that physical, emotional and sexual abuse remains rampant throughout Ontario nursing homes. Your government had an opportunity to address this issue one year ago following a similar report when I introduced a motion at the social policy committee calling for an immediate investigation into living conditions in nursing homes. However, your Liberal members on the committee defeated the motion and blocked the investigation.

Why has it taken your government more than a year and yet another front-page Toronto Star story detailing shocking abuse before you finally agreed to an investigation?

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, there is absolutely no question that when people go into long-term care, they should be entitled to—their loved ones should have confidence that they will receive the best possible care and certainly not be subject to any form of abuse.

We have come a long, long way in the eight years that we have been in government, and I think you may recall—I'm sure members in this House recall—that then-parliamentary assistant Monique Smith travelled the province and investigated problems within our long-term-care homes. As a result, we have made significant improvements to care in long-term care. We have new legislation. We have new inspection processes. And it is as a result of that change that these incidents are now coming to light.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Mr. Speaker, again, through you to the minister: Minister, your government was made aware of the issue one year ago. Your committee members voted down an investigation at that time.

In 2003, the former Minister of Health wept copiously over photos showing abuse. He promised a revolution in nursing care and that he would fix it. Now, the current minister has promised to fix it following yet another front-page Toronto Star story.

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I ask you, Minister: In order to ensure and restore confidence, in order to ensure high quality and transparency of care as well as a safe environment for our seniors in nursing homes, the task force work must begin immediately. Can you tell this House when it will begin and when the recommendations will come back to this House for action?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, when I read the stories in the Toronto Star that the member opposite is referring to, I did call, immediately, a summit meeting of different people who have an interest in long-term care. They came with the idea that they establish a task force. That work is under way now.

I do want to say, Speaker, that what is really important is that there is a culture change in long-term care and that there needs to be a culture change so that anyone who suspects abuse of any type should report that immediately. And I am just going to use this opportunity to tell the people of Ontario that if ever they suspect abuse in long-term care, please call the long-term-care action line: 1-866-876-7658. Call immediately. We need to know when abuse is taking place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### YOUTH SERVICES

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

The government of Ontario is the primary parent for over 8,000 children in Ontario. Over the last two Fridays, a group of these youths organized hearings here at Queen's Park to share their experiences. I listened to their heartbreaks, their dreams and recommendations. Like all young people, they just want to succeed, but right now, extended care management is the only system of support available to them, and it cuts them off at the age of 21.

Will the Minister of Children and Youth listen to our children and finally modernize extended care maintenance?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, thank you. First I'd like to congratulate the member from Hamilton Mountain on her election, and also being appointed critic to this important ministry.

I want to say that absolutely, I am prepared to listen to this community of young people. In fact, I was proud—quite humbled, to be honest—to attend both days of hearings here at Queen's Park, last Friday and the Friday before. And I have to tell you that the presentations by these youth—and in fact the hearings themselves, of course, although catalyzed by the provincial advocate, an advocate that we appointed and made independent—were in fact organized by youth in care and youth who had recently come out of care as crown wards and former crown wards. The presentations and the stories that I heard were both heartbreaking, in many cases, but also incredibly inspiring.

I look forward to the report coming out in the spring.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Last May, Ontario New Democrats proposed extending the age of support to the kids in care from 21 to 25. This would allow these young people to finish post-secondary education, enter the workplace, find stability and break the cycle of dependency. For years, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, the youth themselves, children's aid and child welfare agencies have all recommended extending this support, yet the McGuinty Liberals have ignored these proposals.

Speaker, will the minister finally do the right thing, work with the NDP and ensure that the youth in care have the tools they need to succeed?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, first of all, that I am very much looking forward to working closely with my critic from the third party, and I look forward to getting good ideas in terms of how we can further reduce the challenges that our crown wards and those exiting care face. I was certainly inspired by these extremely courageous and brave individuals.

But I also want to say that we have made historic improvements and quite remarkable changes very recently with the Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act which, as the member opposite knows, was proclaimed this past September and, along with other reforms, makes it easier for prospective parents to adopt these individuals. They also allow wards who exit the system voluntarily at age 16 or 17 to return to the children's aid society. This is a new change that we implemented—to be eligible for financial and other supports until the age of 21, including the important extended care maintenance support.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** My question today is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. My riding of Scarborough Southwest is a diverse riding made

up of many different income brackets, including lower-income tenants who pay rent. Given the current economic times we're living in, many tenants are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet.

I believe very strongly in making sure Ontarians have access to safe, affordable housing. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that tenants in Ontario do not suffer from unjustified rent increases like the ones we had in the 1990s under both PC and NDP governments.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: How is this government protecting tenants in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to thank the member for the question and for his work with tenants in Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Speaker, since we were elected in 2003, we have shown a very strong commitment to protecting tenants across Ontario. In fact, our government made changes to the way rental increases are calculated when we re-instituted real rent control after years of policies that were hurting tenants. We established strong rent controls to keep rents affordable for tenants.

Our rent increase guideline is based on the Ontario consumer price index for all goods and services, and it's averaged over the 12-month period ending in May of the previous year. As a result, our government has afforded tenants across the province the lowest year-over-year increases of any government in recent memory. Our average year-over-year has been 1.9%. The PC Party: When they were in office, their average year-over-year was 2.9%. The NDP: When they were in office, the year-over-year average was 4.8%.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm happy to hear about this government's commitment to controlling the rate of rent increase year over year. If there are further questions, tenants can contact the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Having said that, I know that in 2012 the guideline increase is set at 3.1%. Minister, I fear this amount is quite high, especially for the most vulnerable among us. Given our incredible record of preventing out-of-control annual rent increases, I am hopeful that this government will once again show true leadership and ensure that future increases at this level can be avoided.

Mr. Speaker, again, through you to the minister: What could be done to make sure rents stay affordable for Ontario families?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to thank the member for his concern, and I know it's shared by everyone in the province. All of the members heard from constituents that, yes, the rent increase guideline for the next year is 0.7%, but the next year is 3.1%—let me correct that: The rent increase for this year was 0.7%, and for next year it's 3.1%.

I think that the legislation, as it's written, worked well in a pre-recession period. As I said, we've had the lowest year-over-year average of any government. But I think what we need to recognize is that that process reflects the changes in the economy today.

I think it's time that we have to revisit the legislation so that the future increases are in line with what's actually happening in people's day-to-day lives, in the real world for tenants.

I look forward to hearing constructive suggestions and comments from all sides of the House on this topic. In the meantime, we're going to move ahead to address this important issue for—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, my question is for the Premier. During this past election, a number of Liberal members made statements that your government intends to stop the Highland Companies from opening a quarry in Melancthon township.

Can the Premier please explain how you plan to prevent this quarry from being approved?

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

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, our government believes that it's critical to manage the resources of the province in an appropriate fashion.

The Highland quarry is currently being put through an environmental assessment. I recognize that that is somewhat unusual in the private sector. I can't recall any of the previous governments doing this. I'm not being critical of them; I don't recall them doing it.

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But this is going through a full environmental assessment. It's designated, even as a private sector initiative, for that full environmental assessment. That means, first of all, that they would have to justify the need. Second, they would have to look at all aspects of the proposal that's put forward. It allows for maximum input from the people from the area.

I want to commend all of my colleagues in the Legislature who have felt that this is most appropriate to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Oh, Speaker, many, many words; not a lot of action.

The Highland Companies, in fact, will submit what they want the terms of reference to be for the environmental assessment, and no EA has begun. The public wants to be part of that process, needs that consultation. The people are rightfully concerned that the water resources and the water tables will be affected because of this application.

Minister, we are looking for assurances. We need assurances from you that this application will go under a full environmental assessment that includes public consultation. Can you commit today to involving the public in the terms of reference and set that as part of your environmental assessment review?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I want to repeat to the member that I know this is unusual. In the past, it was not

done. When there was a request from time to time for private sector designation, that was resisted by previous governments. Our government has, in fact, indicated that it will engage in a full environmental assessment. That commitment has been given. When the assessment commences, we'll be seeking information on all aspects of this from the public. Many of my colleagues have asked for this.

We recognize that for a number of years in the province of Ontario, you simply bulldozed through the proposals that were there, and there was no environmental assessment designation. We have committed to that and a full public consultation. We invite the public to make its representations.

Unlike what used to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Cliffs Natural Resources in northern Ontario's Ring of Fire have said that they want to ship chromite overseas to refineries. Will the government allow our natural resources to be shipped to China when they should be processed here in Ontario, providing work for Ontario workers?

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

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The Cliffs project provides an opportunity for incredible job creation not only in northern Ontario but across Ontario. The potential of mining chromite is enormous.

We on this side of the House want to ensure that that development moves very, very smoothly and moves very, very quickly, because the economic impact is immense. It's immense not only for residents of Ontario; it's immense for the definition of Ontario as the leading mining jurisdiction across the world.

We will ensure that we get the process correct. We will engage our First Nations communities. We will ensure that we engage the mining communities, that we engage industry. We will ensure that we maximize the potential of job creation for Ontario with the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Premier said that he is committed to leading-edge jobs in the Ring of Fire; that's what the Premier said. Processing chromite for the Ring of Fire would create good-paying, value-added jobs in northern Ontario.

It's time for the Premier to stand up for those leading-edge jobs for northerners. Is the Premier going to allow good, leading-edge processing jobs to leave Ontario or not?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Let me reinforce what I said. I'm glad that the leader of the third party understands the importance of this, because what we won't do is what the NDP would do. They would build walls around Ontario.

They would ensure that people like workers in northern Ontario at the Xstrata smelting and processing plant would lose jobs, with their philosophy and their policy.

We're not going to do that. We're going to ensure that we maximize the potential of the Ring of Fire. We're going to ensure that we maximize the job creation for northern Ontarians and all Ontarians. We're going to ensure that we maximize the definition of Ontario, because our priority is job creation, protection of health care and education.

## TOURISM

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Minister, a Statistics Canada report indicates international border crossing was down 0.1% in September and was down 2.1% from January to September compared to the year before.

As the member representing Windsor West, home of the busiest international crossing, these numbers are of particular concern to me, as it has a direct impact on our community. At such a volatile state of our economic recovery, we cannot afford for one of our economic drivers to slow down. We need to ensure that an industry which supports over 330,000 jobs annually thrives.

Speaker, through you to the minister: What are you and this government doing to encourage and attract visitors from other countries around the world?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Speaker, first and foremost, congratulations on your election. As well, I want to congratulate the honourable member from Windsor West on her election.

Speaker, the guests from Music Canada who I introduced earlier have arrived; they're over there. Welcome.

Our government is committed to promoting tourism and supporting the sector. The reason is quite simple: because we understand that tourism brings investments and creates jobs. This is why, since 2003, we have invested \$830 million in our tourism agencies to make Ontario a premier tourism destination.

Our plan is quite simple: Over the next several years the international spotlight will be on Ontario as we host the 2012 NHL All-Star Game, World Pride in 2014—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Again, my question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Minister, small businesses are the lifeline of Ontario's economy, especially in a city like Windsor. Hundreds of our local restaurants and small businesses rely on the revenue from our tourists.

With the current passport requirements and our dollar near parity, it is increasingly more difficult for our neighbours from the south to pay us a visit. Generally, we see a traffic flow of 13,000 vehicles travel through the Detroit-Windsor tunnel daily, and we want to ensure that the number keeps increasing.

Speaker, again, through you to the minister: What is your plan to help tourism-related businesses in Windsor and across Ontario prosper as we recover from these tough economic times?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** We have a clear plan to build on the strength of the tourism industry in Ontario. Yes, the US border crossings are down, but overseas visits are up. Allow me to give you some examples here. During the first nine months of 2011, visits from India were up 11%, from Brazil, up 8%; visits from China were up—not 4%, not 14%, but a whopping and fantastic 41%. We only expect these numbers to keep increasing. For example, we expect visitors from China to grow to about 200,000 by 2014.

We will continue our efforts in the US market and, at the same time, strengthen our efforts in attracting overseas tourists.

## RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the minister responsible for the alcohol and gaming corporation. We have a job crisis here in Ontario, and last week your heavy-handed regulations forced the shutdown on an innovative home delivery partnership between Beau's brewery and Operation Come Home in eastern Ontario. Your heavy-handedness cost jobs and fundraising opportunities for homeless youth. Your own members have called for your government to cut the red tape that excludes Ontario microbreweries from offering home delivery of their products.

Will you do the right thing? Will you restore common sense and will you scrap that archaic law that killed jobs for Ottawa's homeless?

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**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Thank you very much, Speaker. First of all, let me congratulate you on your re-election as well. And I'd like to also congratulate the member from Ottawa South and the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, who have been very proactive in this particular situation. If it hadn't been for them, Speaker, this issue would not have come to the foreground.

Yes, we are dealing with it and we are working out the situation as quickly as possible, because we think it's the right thing to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Well, "as quickly as possible" is not right now.

The minister himself is from eastern Ontario, and I can see the headlines in the Ottawa Citizen tomorrow if he does the right thing: "Local Boy Does Good."

But let's give them the go-ahead today. Let's get them back and running so that we can get the jobs back. You're in charge; you just have to tell your staff over here to let the bureaucrats know that the change is coming so that we can get that program up and running again. Why the delay?

I want to know, will you instruct your officials to do just that, change the archaic law that is preventing Operation Come Home and Beau's from getting the job done today? You can be the Christmas hero in Ottawa if you just say, "Yes, we'll do it today. We'll save this eastern Ontario operation."

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'm flattered that that member would think that I could be a Christmas hero to her.

We are working on the situation as we speak and we hope to have it resolved as soon as possible. We know this is a great charity, we know this is a great brewery as well, and we want to make sure that we—you know, you may just want to remember that it was your government that put in this law many, many years ago.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Yes, yes.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** And it will be our government, Speaker, within about 48 or 72 hours of finding out about the situation, that is going to correct something that they created many, many years ago.

#### CONSERVATION

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. In September, the former minister from Hamilton Mountain again said that the ecologically sensitive Eramosa karst feeder lands would likely be donated or transferred, for a nominal fee, to the Hamilton Conservation Authority. The main Eramosa karst lands, a rare geological formation of caves and sinkholes, were transferred to the Hamilton Conservation Authority for a nominal fee of \$2.

Can this minister tell us why the Eramosa karst feeder lands have not yet been transferred to the Hamilton Conservation Authority for a similar nominal fee?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Thank you very much for the question. Certainly I was very active on the file and was very pleased to be able to meet the needs and the requests of the Hamilton area with respect to this very important, sensitive land.

On the other hand, I am not current on the issue right now, and I will undertake to look into it for him to see whether or not our commitments are met or are not being met. I will also, incidentally, be very pleased to meet with the member to discuss this privately.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you, Minister. I appreciate that.

Speaker, in September, the Ontario Realty Corp. told the Hamilton Conservation Authority to buy the feeder lands, which provide water to the delicate limestone karst, at market value, which works out to be approximately \$800,000.

Can the minister tell us when and why this government made the change from a nominal fee to market value? Why has it taken so long to let the public know of this drastic, impossible new demand, and when will the

feeder lands be transferred for a true nominal fee, like the government promised?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** The supplementary I'll refer to the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, this is an exceedingly important question that the member asks, and I want to assure him that the Ministry of the Environment has the greatest interest in the question that he directed to me.

I have been in conversation with the Minister of Infrastructure, and I'm sure, as we continue to deliberate on this matter, we will be able to find a resolution which will be pleasing to the people of Hamilton.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I was remiss in my duties. I would wish the members to greet my guests from Brant: Tracy Kadish, Lorne Kadish and Avery Kadish. Thank you for joining us today in the House.

#### USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I listened carefully today. Thank you for admonishing me; that gave me the opportunity to listen carefully, as you have told me, to the responses from the other side and also the questions from the other side. I refer today to standing order 37(a), where it explicitly says that "the Speaker shall disallow any question which he or she does not consider urgent or of public importance."

I listened to a number of those questions, which were nothing more than opportunities for the government to tout what they believe to be a positive spin on their record. I question, Mr. Speaker, whether that is of urgent or public importance and whether that kind of question should be allowed in the limited time that we have here each day, as members in the Legislature, of one hour for question period.

I recognize that you're only here for the first week and you may want to refer to this and make some changes, if possible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member would be pleased to know that I was listening to the questions. I listened to all the questions, and I did not find that particular order to be in line with what you're asking. I thank you for your point of order.

I declare this House to be in recess until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1137 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature today to welcome presidents and board chairs from Ontario's colleges. They've joined us all today for meetings throughout the afternoon, and they're having a

reception this evening in room 228-230, starting at 5 p.m. It would be excellent if all members could attend that reception, Speaker.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to recognize the important role that colleges play in our province, strengthening the economy and helping people find lasting, meaningful employment. At a time when post-secondary education and training are becoming more crucial to finding work, colleges are becoming more and more relevant.

Even at the height of the recession, more than 83% of college graduates were hired within six months of graduation; 93% of employers were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of college graduates.

These days, it is crucial that post-secondary institutions adapt to meet the changing demands of the workplace. Ontario's college system is at the forefront of these changes, offering a comprehensive range of programs from certificates to diplomas, degrees and apprenticeships. The fact that since 2007 the number of university graduates applying to college has increased more than 40% demonstrates the need to update our understanding of post-secondary education. We need to open more doors to college education by helping students transition between programs and facilitating credit transfers to and from universities.

In my riding, Conestoga College has had an enormous impact and has proven itself invaluable to Cambridge-North Dumfries residents. Its innovative food processors' institute is exactly the kind of relevant skilled trade that our Ontario colleges are in the business of teaching.

I hope all members of this House join me this evening to celebrate Ontario colleges and show our appreciation for the work they do.

### ROAD MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on the road conditions in northern Ontario, and in particular in Algoma-Manitoulin. In the north, we are very dependent on the roads and highways to get our kids to school, to get around our communities, and to access essential services like doctors, dentists and hospitals. Emergency vehicles often have to travel great distances on highways and rural roads to service members of our community who are in distress.

Snow will be flying soon. Not having the highways cleared, and cleared properly, is an accident waiting to happen. The Ministry of Transportation contracted out these jobs to a private company. We used to have good public service employees clearing our roads. These public employees were accountable to us, the taxpayers. Now we have a private company clearing our roads and a

response time which is lagging. The roads are simply not being cleared, and this is unacceptable. Big surprise.

Northern and rural Ontarians are as important as other Ontario residents, and we should be able to get to our destinations safely. So we in Algoma-Manitoulin are very interested in how this government is prepared to deal with this situation.

We had our first snowstorm, which really wasn't that bad according to our standards, but because of the terrible road conditions and services, many highways were closed for an extended period of time. This is totally unacceptable. Lives are at stake. Answers are required. Accountable public services are the solution.

### GO TRANSIT

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Last Friday, I was pleased to welcome Gary McNeil, president of GO Transit, to my riding to announce that GO rail service will start in Guelph and Kitchener on December 19. Since last year, when we announced that Guelph will be getting GO trains, my constituents have been very excited about the return of GO train service, which was cancelled in 1993 by the NDP.

Commuters from Guelph will now have more options, and many will find it more convenient to take public transit and leave their cars at home. Monday to Friday, there will be two morning trains to Toronto and two return trains in the afternoon. Trains along the line will also stop at the Georgetown, Mount Pleasant, Brampton, Bramalea, Malton, Etobicoke North, Weston and Bloor GO stations, providing maximum flexibility for Guelph and Kitchener commuters.

Commuters will be able to use their Presto cards to get on the GO train in Guelph, seamlessly connecting them with other Presto-enabled systems in the GTA.

Not only will this \$18-million investment by GO help get cars off the road; this project has created approximately 180 design and construction jobs.

Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that understands that better public transit means a better quality of life for Ontario families.

### COLLINGWOOD GENERAL AND MARINE HOSPITAL

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My statement is directed at the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and it concerns the need for an expansion of the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital.

The government has left the hospital's expansion application in abeyance for more than seven years. Regrettably, this neglect has serious consequences for local health care.

The hospital cannot sustain clinical programs on its current footprint. The emergency room is grossly inadequate and doesn't meet the standards for a hospital that serves 32,000 ER visits each year. There is simply no more physical space to uphold the outstanding level of

care provided by local doctors, nurses, staff and volunteers.

They have already moved the administration into modular buildings and knocked down walls to expand capacity. Thanks to the support of the hospital's foundation and the county of Simcoe, the old administrative offices have been turned into an endoscopy suite, and renovations are also being done on operating rooms, the sterile processing department and the dialysis unit.

Despite the hospital's best efforts, there are no more broom closets that can be turned into hospital rooms. They can't add another dialysis machine to meet local demand because there's nowhere to put one.

In 2011-12, the government is projected to spend over \$1.4 billion on its health capital program. That's money already being spent across this province. Collingwood General and Marine Hospital only needs \$1 million of that allocation to get started. Then they need to be put into the queue and given the green light to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, we're not asking for new money; we're simply asking for our fair share. I urge the government to respond to the needs of patients in southern Georgian Bay.

#### GOVERNMENT POLICIES

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** It's truly an honour to represent my community in this chamber. Thank you to the thousands of residents of Davenport who worked on my campaign and who put their faith in me to represent them here at Queen's Park.

It's our responsibility as elected representatives of this province to reverse the trend of political cynicism and restore hope to Ontarians. There is little inspiring about a status quo agenda where the largest corporations receive no-strings-attached tax cuts while everyday people are asked to go without.

We lose hope when we're told that government is impotent in the face of global financial markets, that those we elect cannot act on our behalf. We lose hope in our electoral system when we watch the government give away billions of dollars to the wealthiest and then claim there is no money left for food or housing, for child care or public transportation, for libraries or social assistance.

Voters in my riding are sick of this race to the bottom. They are sick of cuts and layoffs; of increased user fees and reduced services; of watching wages stagnate while costs of living continue to rise, when the only new jobs that are created are part-time and precarious, with no pensions or benefits.

My constituents want to hear what we can do when we work together. They want to hear that we can have clean air and water, that our children can have the best start, that our seniors can live in dignity, that our workers can be properly respected and compensated, and that our vulnerable communities will always be supported in times of need.

It's our challenge in hard times to do more, not less, for Ontario. We can do better; we must do better. This is

no small challenge, but let's not forget: This is why we're here.

#### DAVID EVANS

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** For those of us who are fortunate enough to live in the riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville, the fire station at the corner of Highway 10 and Fairview in Cooksville is a landmark. I was at this fire station last Friday to meet with Fire Chief John McDougall and all the other fine firefighters who work there.

One of those firefighters, David K. Evans, was awarded the Ontario Medal for Firefighter Bravery yesterday, right here at Queen's Park. Lieutenant Governor David Onley, along with the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, gave the award.

Firefighter David Evans's story is a profile in courage, selflessness and humility. He was off duty, having lunch at a deli, when he noticed smoke coming out of the apartment above the deli. Despite having no protective gear, firefighter Evans made several attempts to enter the smoke-filled apartment and rescued the woman living in that apartment. The woman was treated for second- and third-degree burns, and firefighter Evans had to be treated for smoke inhalation. Luckily, the woman survived.

It is such acts of bravery and selflessness that make our communities rich, vibrant and safe. Mississauga East-Cooksville is indeed privileged to have firefighter David Evans on its team, and I was privileged to be able to attend the ceremony yesterday.

1510

#### FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors, who are here at Queen's Park today. I want to commend them and Ontario's food and beverage processors for developing a strategy to strengthen and grow their industry. Already they have over \$33 billion in annual sales, and their goal is to increase it to \$40 billion. I think it is particularly important that this strategy includes the entire value chain from farm to retail.

The PC caucus recognizes that the food and beverage processing industry is an essential part of our provincial economy and our agriculture industry, purchasing a full 70% of Ontario's farm production. We are pleased to continue working with the industry to address issues such as red tape, the need for skilled workers, and decreasing hydro costs.

In their strategy, they said, "Innovation in Ontario processing companies is being held back by a complicated, outdated regulatory system that has not kept pace with changes in the marketplace." That is why, last May, the Ontario PC caucus announced our commitment to one-

window access to government through OMAFRA, as requested by the Ontario food and beverage processing sector.

Already, the industry is the second-largest employer in Ontario, employing 110,000 people. We know that this industry has the potential to create even more jobs if we can address issues like the regulatory burden. Tim Hudak and I are looking forward to meeting with them this afternoon to continue to work with them to ensure a strong Ontario beverage and food processing industry.

Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to bring this statement to the House, Speaker.

#### FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** It is my pleasure to offer a very warm welcome today to representatives of the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors. The alliance represents the interests of the Ontario food and beverage processing industry, manufacturers of products that we enjoy every day.

The food and beverage processing industry is a major contributor to jobs and the economy of Ontario. As the largest manufacturing employer in Ontario, it directly employs over 110,000 people, some in my riding of York South–Weston, and it is the major customer of Ontario's farmers, transforming over 70% of what is produced at the farm level into safe, quality food for consumers.

This is the third year running in which the alliance has held a Queen's Park day. Representatives of food and beverage manufacturers will be meeting today with MPPs and government officials to talk about some of the major issues affecting their industry. They will be discussing the various opportunities that the industry can provide to support the government's key priorities of innovation, creating skilled jobs and building the economy.

Alliance members have travelled from all across the province to let us know that they are important assets to our communities. Please join them in the legislative dining room from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. I encourage all members to attend.

#### JEAN CASSELMAN WADDS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's truly a privilege to rise today to pay tribute to Mrs. Jean Casselman Wadds. It's not only people in Leeds–Grenville mourning the loss of Mrs. Casselman Wadds, a resident of Prescott who passed away on November 25.

This remarkable woman was a true pioneer. Her career in public service blazed a trail and opened doors for generations of women who would follow. A member of the Order of Canada, Mrs. Casselman Wadds was our federal member of Parliament for Grenville–Dundas from 1958 to 1968. She won the seat in a by-election to replace her late husband, Arza Clair "A.C." Casselman.

The impact she made was nothing short of history-making.

The first woman ever named a parliamentary secretary, she and her father, former Ontario Lieutenant Governor William Earl Rowe, remain the only father-daughter duo to sit as MPs in the same session of Parliament.

Later, she was the first woman appointed Canada's high commissioner to the United Kingdom. In this role, she played a key part in the history-changing repatriation of Canada's Constitution. No less than former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau offered this at the time: "I always said it was thanks to three women that we were eventually able to reform our Constitution: the Queen ... Margaret Thatcher ... and Jean Wadds, who represented the interests of Canada so well in London."

Mr. Speaker, time limits my ability to paint the full picture of this truly outstanding Canadian. On behalf of myself, the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and all of the citizens of our ridings and the province of Ontario, I offer my sincere condolences to her family. And to her daughter, Nancy, and her son, Clair, I trust you will find some comfort in your time of grief in knowing what an indelible mark your mother left on our community and this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm sure everyone in the House feels the same way. Thank you, member.

#### ANNUAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2010-11 annual report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### ATTRACTING INVESTMENT AND CREATING JOBS ACT, 2011

##### LOI DE 2011 VISANT À ATTIRER LES INVESTISSEMENTS ET À CRÉER DES EMPLOIS

Mr. Duguid moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act respecting the continuation and establishment of development funds in order to promote regional economic development in eastern and southwestern Ontario / Projet de loi 11, Loi concernant la prorogation et la création de fonds de développement pour promouvoir le développement économique régional dans l'Est et le Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'll make my statement under ministerial statements, Mr. Speaker.

HELPING VOLUNTEERS  
GIVE BACK ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 VISANT À AIDER  
LES BÉNÉVOLES À CONTRIBUER

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act respecting criminal record checks for volunteers / Projet de loi 12, Loi concernant les vérifications du casier judiciaire des bénévoles.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you, Speaker. This private member's bill is as a result of my trying to encourage volunteerism in Ontario. Currently, you need to get a criminal record check for every individual organization that you volunteer with. My bill would allow you to use the same criminal record check for five organizations and be able to use it for over the calendar year.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm pleased to speak to the House today about another step that the McGuinty government is taking to create jobs and bring investment to Ontario.

Since 2003, we have worked closely with the business community and regional economic development partners to attract new investment and create jobs for Ontario families. We've partnered with companies that are making investments in Ontario and creating jobs. Our different economic funds have leveraged over \$8.6 billion in business investment, creating over 12,100 new jobs and protecting over 19,300 existing jobs across Ontario.

It is no secret that the global economy remains fragile and the road to economic growth will be challenging. The debt crisis in Europe, the slow economic recovery in the United States and increased competition from low-cost jurisdictions continue to impact our economy.

We don't yet know how much of an impact that will have on Ontario. That is why we're taking further action today by proposing the creation of a southwestern Ontario development fund and by proposing the continuation of the eastern Ontario development fund.

1520

Mr. Speaker, southwestern Ontario, with a rich tradition and high concentration of manufacturing jobs, has endured a significant number of plant closures, with people being laid off during the economic downturn. Eastern Ontarians are among the largest number of people still looking for work. As a government, we recognize the value and unique nature of our regional economies, and we understand the need to collaborate and partner with businesses and regional communities to attract and retain economic opportunities and to create and protect good jobs for Ontario families.

The proposed Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act would help our regional economies become more competitive, dynamic and innovative, and strengthen Ontario's overall economy. Specifically, the act, if passed, would continue the eastern Ontario development fund and create the southwestern Ontario development fund. Together, they would promote innovation, collaboration, cluster development and job creation in those regions.

The proposed legislation builds on the success of the eastern Ontario development fund, which has already supported over 100 projects, leveraging over \$485 million in private sector investment and creating or retaining 11,700 jobs across eastern Ontario. As we did in developing the eastern Ontario development fund, we'll be consulting with the people living in southwestern Ontario to gather their advice and input into the creation of the new southwestern Ontario development fund. These consultations will help us to better understand their challenges and how we can work together to strengthen southwestern Ontario's economy.

The proposed legislation, if passed, would require the funds to be reviewed within five years to ensure that they are achieving their intended objectives and investment outcomes.

Finally, our government has identified the cost offsets for funding these important investments, and the gentleman to my right is very interested to know that.

Mr. Speaker, the Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act would build on our efforts to make Ontario the best place in North America to do business and supports the government's plan to strengthen our economy. Our government will work with Ontario families to see our province through these challenging times.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Response?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for recognizing me here this afternoon to speak to this bill. It's an honour to rise to offer feedback and comments on this bill on behalf of opposition.

You see, Mr. Speaker, while the honourable Minister for Economic Development and Innovation makes mention of a number of interesting things, a few important facts might have been overlooked and must be returned to the forefront again here today.

As you will know, under the current Dalton McGuinty government, Ontario has lost over 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs, and we are now losing over 100 jobs

per hour. That's right, Mr. Speaker: Since we had our prayers earlier this morning, nearly 750 Ontarians have lost their jobs. There are 750 Ontarians who went to work yesterday but won't be doing so tomorrow, 750 Ontarians who used to pay taxes and help our economy but who have now been deemed surplus and unnecessary. These are people who want to work, are able-bodied, but now have no place to go, no place to hang their hat.

You may have also noticed a slight rise in the temperature here at Queen's Park. We've had a lot of hot air about world economic challenges and how policies and decisions in Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Spain have impacted us here in Ontario, about how others are to blame for our economic conditions. I've even heard some of my friends on the government side talk about their so-called record of economic successes. But unfortunately, for too many families this couldn't be further from the truth and certainly does not reflect reality.

As a small businessman and someone who employs over 65 people at our family business, I can tell you the facts on the ground don't jive with the words coming from the government. You see, under the Dalton McGuinty government, we have seen skyrocketing energy rates, increased red tape and government bureaucracy and, of course, our ineffective and antique apprenticeship system. This is why we have a jobs crisis in the province of Ontario.

But here we are today, continuing down the same path as before, blindly throwing money at problems in the hopes that some of it sticks, but this very approach is how we've ended up in the situation we are now in, with hundreds of thousands of unemployed Ontarians.

It's really very simple. This government has a spending problem, and spending more money when you're in debt is a bad decision, the wrong decision, and certainly won't help get Ontarians back to work.

We have heard from Ontarians time and time again that they don't want a government that picks winners and losers, that pits rural versus urban, that favours one region over another or one industry over another. Most importantly, they want a change in direction, new thinking and new ideas coming from their government. But Dalton McGuinty and his government just don't get it.

It's not just members of the opposition saying this, Mr. Speaker. As reported in the Ottawa Citizen on November 15, the recent Roger Martin report has asked that the government abandon "its policy of picking 'winners and losers' ... through subsidies to businesses." This is a respected dean from the Rotman School of Management saying this.

Our position is quite clear: We cannot support additional spending without significant savings elsewhere. We cannot continue writing cheques that we can't cash. We can't buy things that we can't afford. Families in Ontario understand this, small businesses in Ontario understand this, and certainly the Ontario PC caucus and members of the opposition understand this. To be clear, it's not government's job to pick winners and losers amongst privately owned companies.

Again, Ontario families can't afford these subsidies and corporate handouts. So I will be voting against this bill, and I encourage my colleagues in the House to do the same. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Response?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I will be speaking to this bill in terms of what it may or may not be doing, and I will also speak to what the government is doing that I profoundly, Minister of Finance—actually, I'm not quite there, Minister. Others were, but not me. And while it takes some people a long time to get there, you've got to work at it. I will have a lot more to say about what your government is not doing, but I'll get to that, because I've got a few minutes.

On this issue, on this bill, New Democrats will be looking for a number of things. We'll be looking to ensure that there are real job guarantees built into agreements with companies. There are too many instances of companies pocketing government money and then laying off their workers. We'll be looking for assurances that money isn't simply being diverted from other economic development programs into this new program; in other words, that there will be a positive net economic benefit to the province once fiscal offsets are taken into account. And we'll be interested in the mix of loans and grants that the new fund will offer. Will this be strictly a grant program, as is its eastern Ontario equivalent, or will it offer loans as well? These are the kinds of things that we'll be looking at.

I've got to tell you, we have been concerned about the direction of this government, not just yours, but Conservatives as well, because for the last 15 years, both you and Tories have been giving away across-the-board tax reductions that have created very few jobs. Tories are real believers, but when I hear Liberals expound the same ideas, I begin to worry, because you guys often want to say that you're different, but you are not.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Oh, we are.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You're not. For the last eight years, you boys and gals have been cutting corporate tax cuts as if you were no different than they.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That's not what they say.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It's true. But it seems to me that Liberals are Tories in a hurry, and they have been for the last eight long years. There is, Minister of Finance, absolutely no evidence that giving taxpayers' money away, billions and billions every year, is creating any jobs.

Minister of Economic Development, you look quizical about the whole affair, but if you could produce any evidence that would satisfy me and citizens and taxpayers, which is the language of the Tories, that somehow all these billions of dollars that you're taking away from citizens to give to them has actually produced jobs—give me a little evidence. I'm not asking for much, Minister: just a little piece of paper, one fact sheet talking about the great evidence, the pile of paper that you and Mr. Drummond have that giving our money away to banks, insurance companies and other corporations is helping anybody.

**1530**

For the last 15 years, corporations take the money and they bank it, they keep it, they store it. They don't put money back into the investments in their plants, in machinery and other information technology. They're simply not doing that. Other countries are, but we in Canada are not doing a great job, and yet we keep cutting corporate taxes each and every year. You would think that with all the billions that you Liberals give that they would invest in their own plants, in machinery and information technology. They're not doing it.

Shouldn't some Liberals ask the question why—at least, as I often say, one of you? Not one of you is asking that question? Would that I would be in your caucus meetings to hear that maybe there are some of you asking these questions. But please, be bold enough in this Legislature to admit that you are doing that.

Look, there are other jurisdictions—Manitoba and Quebec—that have done much better than we in these recessionary periods. They've done much better, and they have targeted investment tax credits that have worked for Manitoba and Quebec. We should be doing more of that so that we can create good, long-term jobs. Liberals are not doing it.

**PETITIONS****AGGREGATE EXTRACTION**

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

“Whereas the Highland Companies, an American company, wants to build a quarry in Melancthon township which is to be bigger than Niagara Falls. It will be the second-largest in North America. It will be built over 200 feet (60 metres) below the water table of the headwaters that feed three major rivers. This will contaminate these rivers, which are a freshwater source for over one million people. Furthermore, the land that the quarry will be built on is some of the best farmland in Ontario. Over 50% of the GTA's potatoes are grown on this soil. The Highland Companies is under no obligation to fill in the quarry when they are finished. There is also no law stating that there must be an environmental assessment on the quarry site before it is built. This quarry will hurt the environment and affect many people, and therefore it must be stopped.

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

“To stop the development of the Melancthon quarry.”  
I will sign that petition.

**HEALTH CARE FUNDING**

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

“Whereas the consolidation of medical laboratories in rural areas is causing people to travel further and wait longer for services; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have equal access to all health care services; and

“Whereas rural Ontario continues to get shortchanged when it comes to health care: doctor shortages, smaller hospitals, less pharmaceutical services, lack of transportation and now medical laboratory services; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government continues to increase taxes to make up for misspent tax dollars, collecting \$15 billion over the last six years from the Liberal health tax, ultimately forcing Ontarians to pay more while receiving less;

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

“That the McGuinty government stop the erosion of public health care services and ensure equal access to medical laboratories for all Ontarians, including the people of Elmvale.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and I'll sign it.

**RAIL SERVICE**

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I have one petition here, so I would ask for some assistance from our pages. This is not a petition in favour of the forestry sector, however, as I've used a few trees.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, on June 24, 2011, Metrolinx announced that they would award a contract to refurbish 127 railway cars operated by the Ontario government's GO Transit to CAD Rail located in Montreal;

“Whereas it is abundantly clear Metrolinx did not take into consideration the overall net benefit to the province of Ontario in their evaluation of the CAD Rail bid versus the Ontario Northland bid;

“Whereas the Ontario government has the capacity to have this work performed in its own rail facilities at Ontario Northland, where a similar 121-GO-train-car refurbishment is coming to a close and the overall net benefit in retaining this work at Ontario Northland far outweighs having this work leave the province of Ontario;

“Whereas awarding of the contract to Ontario Northland would result in \$34 million spent on direct wages, providing a return on \$7.5 million in tax revenue to the province—not including the 233 other estimated direct and indirect jobs that would have been realized in the region—thus making the Ontario Northland bid ‘significantly superior’;

“We, the undersigned”—and there are 5,000 signatures here—“do hereby petition the government of Ontario to step in now and award the Metrolinx contract based on the ‘overall net benefit to Ontario.’”

Speaker, I agree and affix my signature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Further petitions? The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** And I ask that pages Ashley—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No, carry on.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** —Yousef and Danica deliver them.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario”—I don’t have 5,000 signatures here, but I do have some.

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

“Whereas Ontario’s Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

“Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

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

“Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.

A great petition. I support it, Speaker, and send it down with Christian.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas there are over 300 homes in the area of the proposed UDI Port Ryerse Wind Farm;

“Whereas a precedent has been set by other counties in Ontario for bylaws of increased setbacks of 1,200 to 2,000 metres for the erection of wind turbines in populated areas;

“Whereas property values are decreased by proximity to wind turbines;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reinstate municipal powers to

allow Norfolk county to reassess and increase setbacks to 2,000 metres in populated areas, to honour a moratorium on construction until these bylaw adjustments are met, and to reimburse lost property values in this affected community.”

I agree with what the people of Port Ryerse, west of Port Dover, are saying, and I affix my signature to that.

#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

**Mr. Steve Clark:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

“Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

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

“That the Minister of Health agrees to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment, to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis.”

I’ll affix my signature and send it to the table with page Andrew.

1540

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** “Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

“Whereas Ontario’s Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

“Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

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

“Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.”

I support this and will sign it as well.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Parliament of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontarians who now live in long-term-care (LTC) homes are increasingly older, frailer and have greater complex care needs;

“Whereas our elder parents, family and friends deserve to live with dignity and respect;

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government failed to revolutionize long-term care and broke its promise to seniors to provide \$6,000 in personal care, per resident;

“Whereas five years of Liberal inaction has restricted Ontario’s ability to meet the demands of our aging population;

“Whereas more than 24,000 Ontarians are currently waiting for a LTC bed;

“Whereas Ontario funds significantly less resident care than Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and New Brunswick;

“Whereas dedicated LTC homes are short-staffed and have not been given resources to hire enough front-line workers to provide the level of care residents require;

“Whereas devoted LTC staff are burdened by cumbersome government regulations;

“Whereas some 35,000 seniors are living in LTC beds which do not meet more home-like design standards introduced in 1998 by the former PC government;

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

“That the McGuinty government must enhance long-term care by:

—initiating a sector-wide staffing increase of 4,500 full-time positions within a year;

—expediting the redevelopment of Ontario’s 35,000 oldest long-term-care beds by providing adequate support and funding;

—achieving an average of three worked hours of personal care, per day, within a year;

—simplifying the regulations which govern nursing homes;

—producing a comprehensive plan with benchmarks to reduce LTC wait-lists of more than 24,000 people;

—addressing inflationary pressures by adequately funding the increased operating costs of LTC homes.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature and give it to page Mobarrat.

## LYME DISEASE

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn’s, Alzheimer’s, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently

not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the US and Europe;

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario;

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario health insurance plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

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

## AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Nepean–Carleton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And may I say, you look lovely in the chair, as you did last year. It’s great to see you—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Lovely? You’re splendid?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Lovely.

This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Highland Companies, an American company, wants to build a quarry in Melancthon township which is to be bigger than Niagara Falls. It will be the second-largest in North America. It will be built over 200 feet (60 metres) below the water table of the headwaters that feed three major rivers. This will contaminate these rivers, which are a freshwater source for over one million people. Furthermore, the land that the quarry will be built on is some of the best farmland in Ontario. Over 50% of the GTA’s potatoes are grown on this soil. The Highland Companies is under no obligation to fill in the quarry when they are finished. There is also no law stating that there must be an environmental assessment on the quarry site before it is built. This quarry will hurt the environment and affect many people, and therefore it must be stopped.

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

“To stop the development of the Melancthon quarry.”

I put this in on behalf of my colleague from Dufferin–Caledon. I’ll affix my signature. Thank you, page Owen, for carrying that to the clerks’ table.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

#### DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 28, 2011, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Scarborough–Agiincourt.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Windsor West.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Windsor West; I apologize.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Thank you, Speaker. Please note that I'll be dividing my time with the member from Scarborough Southwest.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to address this esteemed group for the first time. It is truly my pleasure and honour to sit with every member of this House and to be part of the 40th Parliament of Ontario.

Given that this is my first speech, I trust you will indulge me a bit, as I will be thanking many who have given me this opportunity. First and foremost, to my constituents in Windsor West: I am truly humbled by the trust and faith you have placed in me to represent the area that I have called home my whole life. During the election I met with and spoke with thousands in the riding, speaking to them about the progress accomplished in our community and listening to their concerns. There is one promise that I personally made through the campaign, and that is to continue listening to their concerns and to work as hard as I can to effectively represent them.

To the many volunteers that gave their time and energy to my campaign: Thank you. Of course, to my family—my husband, John, and my boys, Anthony and Joshua, for the sacrifices they are making to allow me this opportunity—I will be forever grateful.

I've had the distinct pleasure of working with many leaders throughout by career, each of whom has made their mark on me and provided me with lessons that have allowed me to grow with the courage, strength and discipline required of an MPP.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention those who came before me in this chamber. Of course, many of you here today either worked with Sandra Pupatello or have heard of the former member for Windsor West. First elected in 1995, Sandra certainly made her mark not only for the people of Windsor West but across the province. She held many portfolios while in government, including community and social services, women's issues, education, economic development and trade, and international trade and investment.

Even in opposition she was making her mark, starting with the delivery of cereal boxes to then Premier Harris in support of breakfast programs.

### 1550

I had the privilege of working with Sandra for five years and, believe me, there were many lessons learned.

Locally, Sandra worked tirelessly for our community. Many have said that I have big shoes to fill, following Sandra as the MPP for Windsor West. I'm not so much filling her shoes as continuing in the plan to move Windsor West forward.

Some of you may even remember another fine member from the area previously known as Windsor–Sandwich, William Wrye. Bill was a member and cabinet minister under Premier David Peterson from 1981 to 1990, and served in both opposition and government. I also had the privilege of working with Bill and count him as a friend and mentor.

Speaker, there's another former staffer of Minister Wrye that sits with us in this House, the current Minister of Finance and member for Windsor–Tecumseh, the Honourable Dwight Duncan. I am grateful for his support and friendship. I will continue to need his good counsel and support as we work for the people of Windsor and Ontario together.

I represent a community that is rich in history, the gateway to Ontario and home to one of the most diverse communities in Canada. Windsor West has been this province's southern frontier for more than 300 years.

Windsor is often remembered as the automotive capital of Canada, and we are proud of our automotive and manufacturing history. In 1904, Ford Motor Company established its everlasting footprint in Windsor, along with General Motors, Chrysler, and many other car and truck companies. There is little question that Windsor put Canada on wheels.

Windsor's history began as a European settlement in 1701 when French-speaking migrants established a community on the south shore of the Detroit river. The settlement grew to include British migrants, creating the town of Sandwich. This was the site where General William Hull invaded upper Canada and later withdrew upon word of forces advancing under the leadership of Major General Isaac Brock and Chief Tecumseh. These heroic acts, along with many other acts, will be commemorated next year for the bicentennial of the War of 1812. I invite all Ontarians to come join us in Windsor and Essex county to celebrate our proud history.

Windsor's multiculturalism and openness is not only a current reality but has been the area's culture throughout its history. We have been a beacon for settlement for new Canadians—not foreigners, as some may call them, but new Canadians—from every region of this globe. Since the 19th century, many have sought refuge and established a new and free life in what is known as Windsor. The area's involvement in the underground railroad and respect for all members of the human race reflects the values we deeply cherish as Ontarians. The cultural diversity in Windsor West is a model for all Ontarians. Our residents are able to indulge in pleasures from around the world within the convenience of a few city blocks, creating a truly global citizenry.

Education is a cornerstone of our city and Windsor West is the proud home of both the University of Windsor and St. Clair College. These institutions, in partnership with many private sector partners, are innovating and conducting world-class research that is helping Ontario, Canada and the world progress. These amazing developments are happening today as I speak in this House.

We host one of the busiest trade crossings in North America, representing fully one third of all trade between Canada and the US. More trade goes across Windsor each day than Blue Water in Sarnia and all the Niagara crossings combined.

My community of Windsor West and its mild winters and pleasant summers is home to many seniors. The wealth of knowledge and history that our seniors bring to the area enrich all those they encounter. It is for this reason and many more that I, as well as my colleagues of the Liberal Party, are committed to our seniors. I would not be here if it were not for the guidance and teachings of my parents and elders.

As many here, I grew up listening to stories from my parents about when they first came to Ontario. Both came through Pier 21 in Halifax, my father in 1955 and my mother in 1963. Both hopped on a train to Red Lake, Ontario. I often imagined what it would be like—

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** No kidding—what it would be like to land in a country where you don't know the language, the culture is different, and your family is thousands of kilometres away. What kind of services or supports would be required?

A couple of years ago, I had the pleasure of going to Halifax and visiting Pier 21. You could almost hear and feel the history of that place, the history of thousands coming to Canada, making their way over to Ontario for a better life for themselves and for their families. It is that history that makes us as strong as we are, and it is that history that demands that as MPPs we continue to support our families and keep Ontario strong.

It is in that context that I refer back to the recent throne speech. I am proud of the accomplishments this government has made over the last eight years in strengthening our health care system, our education system and our infrastructure. As we move forward together, we must protect those gains while continuing to protect our communities, grow our economy and support our families.

We know that there will be challenges. The Premier often reminds us that we were elected to make difficult choices, not take the easy way out. That is why we are here: to govern, to make decisions and to move Ontario forward. Governing is always more challenging in tough times, but with these challenges come great opportunities. That is why we must work together at accomplishing our goals.

Ultimately, each of us has the same goal: to represent our constituents and to make Ontario stronger for the next generation, just as our parents and grandparents did

for us. We will be faced with tough decisions, but I commit that I will work with all members of this assembly to move forward, working together, for that is the Ontario way.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am filled with awe each time I walk into this glorious chamber, and I take great pride in being a part of the 40th Parliament of Ontario. It is not many who are given this opportunity and privilege to lead and govern this great province of ours. As the member for Windsor West, I will always bear in mind its history and the critical role that it plays for our province. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I understand the member was indicating she wished to share her time with the member for Scarborough Southwest. I now recognize the member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** First of all, I want to congratulate the member from Windsor West for her maiden speech. It was excellent. Over the past couple of days, or today and yesterday, I've had a chance to listen to the maiden speeches of the new members, and they're all excellent. They're inspiring as well. Hopefully, this Legislature can live up to the inspiration that these new members bring to this place.

I want to start off—we are talking about the throne speech. The document that was laid before us last week sets out a vision. I listened the last few days; there were members in the opposition, from both parties, who were very critical of the throne speech. I guess that's the opposition's job, to criticize the government and to point out any faults or any things that the government is not doing.

But I want to talk a little bit about the throne speech and talk about what it does. The throne speech that we have sets out a vision, a very clear vision. I think it's important that it sets out the vision that this government is going to work on during the next several months. It's an important vision because it provides clarity to uncertain times.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker: These are uncertain times. If we look at Europe, almost every day there's a headline about Europe and its markets and its finances and what's happening. I understand the finance ministers in Europe are meeting right now to provide clarity to the rest of the world as to what their plan is to help the countries that are involved in the European Union and to try to send a clear message to all people around the world that they know what they're doing—and hopefully that will come true.

**1600**

If we look south of us to the United States, we can see that the economy there is still in trouble. A lot of partisanship is taking place between the two major political parties, the Republicans and the Democrats—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** There are three parties. How about the Tea Party?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** —and I guess the Tea Party as well. But the bottom line is that they are not able to put their financial house in order. The US economy is

still in trouble. It's not growing as fast as they want it to grow. I think that the problem will not be solved in the next day or the next month or perhaps even this year. We've heard a lot of doom and gloom from the United States, the world's largest economy. We've heard again and again that their growth rate is very small. If people have a chance—I had a neighbour go to the United States and he actually purchased a home in Nevada. The people who lived in that home just left, basically abandoning the mortgage, and he was able to pick up the house for \$40,000. That's true in other states as well. Michigan has a major problem, and other states as well.

Recently, I've been reading about cities that are not able to fund their budgets—

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Tent cities, too.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Tent cities, I hear from my friend from Etobicoke North—that cannot manage their budgets and are declaring bankruptcy or are on the verge of declaring bankruptcy. That's very troubling to hear.

But the situation here in Ontario is a lot different. We haven't heard any city in Ontario declare bankruptcy or claim that they're on the verge of declaring bankruptcy. In the States, it's different. The cities are on the verge or have declared bankruptcy and have asked for state help. No one's come to this government and asked for a bailout or help with their budgets.

So, in spite of all the doom and gloom around the world, our government has laid out a vision, and I think that vision is important. It provides a road map for what we're going to do in the next few years so that we can continue to function and move forward in the face of a world economy which has changed and remains very uncertain.

Our five goals are very clear.

We want to continue to build a strong, more competitive workforce. When I was knocking on doors this past election, Mr. Speaker, people were asking me—they had lost their jobs, or they weren't able to sustain their household. Our government has provided a lot of opportunities for people to go back into the workforce by being retrained, whether it be by attending Centennial College or Seneca College or any other college that exists around Ontario. We've worked very hard with the community colleges and other learning institutions to provide retraining. It's difficult for some people who are a bit older, but when I knocked on doors in my riding, some people were telling me they had completed a particular course in a program and were rejoining the workforce, as they were retrained to do a completely different job than what they did before.

Secondly, in the throne speech, we talk about continuing to make investments in infrastructure. We've had a lot of announcements and a lot of talk and a lot of fulfilled promises on building a better infrastructure here in Ontario. We've created thousands of jobs by rebuilding the infrastructure, working on highways and GO train tracks and making continued announcements across the province so that it provides confidence for people that

either work in Ontario or live in Ontario, and they at least have the chance to see that this government is not going to stop, but will continue to move forward with its goals.

Thirdly, the throne speech makes it very clear that this government intends to continue to aggressively pursue new investment in the Ontario economy. We've seen foreign companies continue to expand here in Ontario, whether it be Samsung or Toyota, and other foreign-based companies come into Ontario. The opposition often argues about the fact that we have high taxes for companies that come into Ontario and that we should reduce the tax rate, but I argue the other side. By keeping the tax rate low—I'm sorry, I meant to say that we have a lower tax rate here—what's happening is companies are coming here. We have one of the most attractive jurisdictions in all of North America, where companies will come here because the tax rate is lower.

People say you should raise the tax rate on corporations. The corporations have changed over the years. They can move around jurisdictions very easily. It's not that they're stuck in a warehouse or a factory; they can move very quickly and just leave a certain jurisdiction and go elsewhere, invest in an area where they're able to function without having to worry about all the high tax rates that they'll have to pay.

Ontario's very, very welcoming to new companies. I knocked on doors and people argued, "Why don't you lower the taxes on people and make the corporations pay for everything?" But the fact is, if corporations come here, they bring new jobs, new opportunities and basically more work for more people.

I'm convinced that we've done the right thing when it comes to corporate taxes: you know, keep them low and they'll come here; increase the tax rate and they'll leave and go elsewhere, either to the United States, another province or even another part of the world. So we're welcoming new investment here, and I think that's very important.

The fourth thing is that the government will continue to focus on improving the quality of life for our families. This morning, we were debating the home renovation tax credit. People at the door had heard about this home renovation program and many people wanted to know more about it. It was in the brochure, the literature, that I carried door to door. They can get a tax credit if they are able to fix their homes to accommodate seniors who live in those homes, and I think it's a very good thing because one thing we want to do is keep elder people at home and not put them into nursing homes or other institutions, because it costs money to put seniors in those places. So we're asking people to fix their own homes, whether it be building a wheelchair ramp—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Sorry, I have to cut you off. Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did listen quite intently to the new member from Windsor West. Congratulations on your successful replacement of Sandra Pupatello.

Sandra Pupatello—it would take me hours to really thoroughly comment on what she did while she was here, but she certainly was an effective member. Hopefully she's successful in her life after politics. I've heard she's actually in Newfoundland and Labrador. Her husband was recently elected there, and I believe she's run down there. She'd probably run into Danny Williams, I suppose.

I think it's important, in your maiden speech, to represent and thank those people who helped you to achieve that. I did hear you—the great privilege it is to be here. I think we all continue to feel that way. It's important to get that on the record, because it can become a bit partisan. You know, we're here for the right reasons. All of us want to make Ontario better. Anyone who assumes that anyone on this side, including Tim Hudak—we want Ontario to be effective, productive, and have opportunities for everyone. We've got to make sure we don't lose sight of that, that nobody is trying to turn Ontario into a have-not province. Sometimes you hear that being said in here. It's simply not true.

**1610**

Even the bill introduced today was a bit polarizing. It was pitting southwestern Ontario against eastern Ontario. I don't know why they do such divisive things that are not productive. In and of themselves, they're overtly political, and people watching become so frustrated with us. What's happened over the last eight or nine years? People don't even believe us any more. How many people didn't even bother voting? They've become apathetic and disappointed by the cynicism that we often bring to this place.

Now, the member from Scarborough Southwest has been here for some time. He's a nice young fellow, a lawyer, I believe. In fact, I believe his partner is also—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for London—Fanshawe.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, and good afternoon to everyone here today in the House.

I want to start by congratulating the member opposite from Windsor West and the member from Scarborough Southwest.

The member opposite referred to the part about continuing to listen to her constituents, and I hope we're also going to take that and continue to listen amongst each other; because in this minority government, that's part of the success that we're going to create for the people and the supporters that put us here.

Some other things I wanted to talk about was the word "sacrifice." We've all sacrificed our families, our jobs, all kinds of personal time, but it's an honour and a privilege to make that sacrifice, and I know we're all here to work really hard for the constituents in our riding. I'm looking forward to getting back to that work when we rise in the House.

I was also very pleased to hear about the history in Windsor that she talked about. I learned a little bit about Windsor, so thanks for that.

There was a comment about the jobs, of course. That's something on everyone's minds right now. One thing that we're finding—and I was at the door in the campaign—is that it's not working to just give blank cheques to corporations; there's got to be some type of accountability. So when a business or a corporation creates a job or buys a new piece of machinery, that's when they get their tax credit.

We need to try something different and we need to make it work here in Ontario. We owe it to the people who we came here to speak on behalf of. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. We continue with questions and comments. The member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I want to acknowledge my colleague's maiden speech, the member from Windsor West. As a desk mate but, more importantly, as a colleague, I think that I got to know and appreciate what you went through and your challenges—and ours together. I'm just thrilled that you'll be my desk partner for a little longer.

The throne speech draws on the importance of this government's commitment to education. I, for one, as a former school board trustee—more importantly, the importance of a post-secondary education is about building the economy, but most importantly, it's about an educated, strong workforce. I'm thrilled to see that our commitment is continuing to ensure families that are making less than \$160,000 a year will get tuition reduction support.

My high schools—Dr. Norman Bethune, L'Amoreaux high school, Stephen Leacock high school, Agincourt Collegiate, Sir John A. MacDonald—all of these young families will now have an opportunity to go on to post-secondary education. Regardless of whether it's college or university, they will now be given opportunities. I know they're getting ready now to apply for post-secondary education. Through this reduction, every young person, not just in my riding but across the province, will be given an opportunity to go to post-secondary education.

This is what this government is about: commitment to ensure that we have the strongest workforce, a well-educated workforce, to ensure success. I'm just thrilled to be a part of this government, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further questions and comments? The member for Leeds—Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to put a few comments on the record. I appreciate the speeches by both the member for Windsor West and the member for Scarborough Southwest.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome the member for Windsor West. I appreciated your maiden speech to learn a little bit more about Windsor. I can remember attending the AMO conference in Windsor just after my by-election in 2010 and it was a wonderful opportunity for our caucus to spend some time in that city.

I remember fondly knowing some friends from university who lived there, and I have to tell you, in my younger days I always had a fabulous time when I visited your community.

I also want to just—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** That's right, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I am still talking about it.

I do want to just make a few comments on something you said. You talked about the fact that there are difficult choices and not taking the easy way out and in fact to continue to support families. I know specifically the member for Scarborough Southwest made several comments about the throne speech. I think over the last week and a half that we've sat in this place, we've had an opportunity to show the public that we're willing to look at those decisions, to make some bold decisions here in the Legislature.

I know our leader, Tim Hudak, has made some excellent points here in the Legislature, things like a public sector wage freeze that I think we need to debate and we need to talk about in this place.

Just today, in talking about renewing our antiquated apprenticeship system, I think we're missing the opportunity to create 200,000 skilled trades jobs by not having the debate here in this Legislative Assembly. I hope it happens soon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time we have for questions and comments. I'll now return to the member for Windsor West, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Thank you. I'd like to take this time to thank the members from Durham, London–Fanshawe, Scarborough–Agincourt and Leeds–Grenville for your comments today, as you all commented on my maiden speech. I'm glad I made some points that made you think and made you respond, so thank you.

I look forward to working with each of the members of the House in our shared objective to keep our communities strong, to support our families and to move Ontario forward, which I know we're all here to do.

I know that youth, like my children Anthony and Joshua and their friends at Notre Dame grade school and Assumption high school, are getting a world-class education; patients at our hospitals are getting enhanced care; and there are many working in jobs that have been created over the last couple of years through many of the initiatives of this government.

We are all well served by the progress that is made and I look forward to working with each of the members of this House on continued improvements—improvements that have been announced over the last couple of weeks. We've spoken about the healthy home renovation tax credit; we've spoken about assisting students in high school and university being able to afford their education. All of those will make us a stronger community.

I am also thankful for the announcement today that we introduced, in terms of the southwestern Ontario economic development fund. Being from Windsor and

having been in Windsor yesterday speaking to individuals about this fund, they are welcoming this fund. They do want to see the investments, they want to see the jobs created, and that's what our priority is. Our priority is job creation. Our priority is making our economy stronger. Only by a stronger economy and stronger jobs will we have community support and strong families.

So again, I thank everyone for their comments. I thank everyone for their statements made with respect to the throne speech. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and join the debate on the throne speech. I want to personally congratulate the member from Windsor West, as well, on her maiden speech today and being elected to this chamber. She feels the honour every time she comes into the chamber, and you'll feel that way for some time, I can assure you. I'm pleased to have you here and wish you the very best in your service to your community.

I welcome each and every one of the 31 members who have joined this assembly as a result of the October 6 election and wish them the very best as well. I know that each and every one of us comes here with the same belief that we are elected to improve our communities and improve the condition of this province which we call home.

1620

It's the greatest province in the country, in the greatest country in the world, and we're all working towards that. We just sometimes differ in how we're going to get there.

And that brings me to today's debate, Speaker, the throne speech. Not much there. In fact—and that's not a prop, Speaker, because this is a copy of the throne speech. In fact, I believe that I heard His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, when he finished this speech, say, somewhat under his breath, "That's it?"

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I do believe I heard that, because he read it to this chamber, and I'm sure he wondered himself. He must have been asking himself, "This is the best that the government can bring forward? We just had an election. The economy of this province is in the throes of one of its most difficult times that we can remember, and that's it? Wow."

I'm going to get back to the throne speech in a minute, because I know we do have a little bit of latitude in the throne speech debate, and we don't get the opportunity sometimes, Speaker, to talk about the issues that matter, because they're not directly related to specific legislation. But we are talking about the election itself and what happened, and one of the things—

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** You lost.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, thank you very much, Harinder, for reminding me.

One of the things that I find most distressing about the last couple of elections is the mess—the mess—that Elections Ontario has made of voting in this province.

It's an absolute disgrace, the number of people with incorrect information. You know, we just had a federal election in May of this year, Speaker, and if Elections Ontario would have used some of the federal data, we would have had a much more efficient election operation here in the province of Ontario. And I believe absolutely that that led to the poor voter turnout in this province: 49%, less than half of the people eligible to vote in this province, voted in this past election. That should be something that is of deep concern to each and every person that sits in this chamber, that less than half of the people that are eligible to vote actually voted.

I'm going to tell you about a couple of instances, and then I'll get to the throne speech. People in my riding who were showing up to vote in the hamlet of Madawaska, for example—because they confuse Madawaska with somewhere else at Elections Ontario. Maybe they should come up to visit the beautiful area that I live in. I had one gentleman who always has voted in Madawaska. He lives on Ayleen Lake, and do you know where they had him voting? I say to the member for Windsor West, he might have been down there, because they had him voting in Windsor. Yes. Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, in the district of Nipissing, and they were sending him to Windsor to vote. Now, if it wasn't so sad, it would be funny.

But I'm going to tell you, we should all commit, each and every one of us in this chamber, to get this right. We have a responsibility. We have a responsibility to everyone who has the right to vote. As I say, these young pages here, they'll have the right to vote in not that many years, and we have a responsibility to get it right so that those people who are eligible to vote are able to vote in a streamlined and efficient fashion. We're living in the 21st century, for goodness' sake, and we can't get it right? My goodness gracious. When my father was a member here in 1963, we didn't have problems like this voting. We live in a computer age. How can we not get it right?

Elections Ontario needs to be called on the carpet. There should be a committee set up to deal with the mess that they created in this election, and let's get it straight for next time.

So back to the throne speech, that vacuous bit of nothingness that we heard last week, November 22. I heard the member say about making choices and making tough decisions. There are no decisions in that throne speech. "Let's muddle along with a few of the things that we promised while we were out on the campaign trail and see if we can fool the people for a little longer. Maybe if we just avoid facing the facts that we've got a mess on our hands, maybe if we just pretend, you know, put the hands up over the eyes, maybe the people will fall for it." I don't think they're going to, Speaker.

But it is the responsibility of this government—yes, it is a minority. Remember one thing over there, I say to you: You didn't win a minority; you lost your majority. Remember that: You lost your majority.

So there is a message, a very clear message, being sent to you on that side of the chamber. One of the things is to

pay a little more attention to what's going on and to what you're hearing from this side of the chamber. We're all elected, too, and there's a lot more people voted against you than for you. You've got to start listening. This is a minority Parliament. You've got to start paying attention.

It's time to say goodbye to that arrogance of the last Parliament; it's time to say goodbye to that. You should have lost some of that with the results of the election.

It's time to get down to brass tacks and get down on the business of trying to turn this province around. You've created half this mess. Goodness gracious, see if you can't help try and fix it. We're going to do our part, I can tell you that much.

Now, where was I? Back to the throne speech. Let's make some tough choices. Let's make some really meaningful decisions. Looking at the financial update that the finance minister seemed almost proud—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Don't get personal, Harinder. The finance minister proudly got up to say that he had a \$16-billion deficit. I'd be ashamed. Speaker, this province is in a financial mess.

And what do you do—you know, if one part of your expenditures accounts for 60% of that, how would you ever expect to get your fiscal house in order if you don't deal with that 60%? Across the country, jurisdictions are saying, "We're going to put in a wage freeze for the public sector." Now, somebody might say, "Oh, my, isn't that draconian?" All we're saying is that we're asking the people who are working for the government in the public sector to forgo a wage increase at a time of terrible economic difficulty in this province. That's what we're asking you to do.

The government in 2010 talked—they talked—about a wage freeze. But do you see what they wanted to do? They wanted to make it voluntary. You know why? Because, you see, Speaker, there was an election coming up, and part of the support group, part of the group that spent \$9 million trying to defeat and malign and assassinate the character of Tim Hudak was their friends in the Working Families Coalition, funded by Liberal-friendly unions. So do you think they were going to put in the mandatory wage freeze? Nay. It's not going to happen; it's a non-starter. Pat Dillon said no. Pat Dillon said, "No, we're not going to allow you to do that, Premier McGuinty." So they didn't, and now the problem has only gotten worse.

The member from Scarborough was talking about Greece and the mess in Europe. Oh, yes, it's quite a mess, all right—and how did it get there? It got there because they wouldn't rein in government spending. That's the key ingredient there: 38% of the population in Greece was somehow being paid for through the public sector, one way or another. It's not sustainable.

And this government, while it was in office, its answer was to spend, spend, spend and hope that they got something back in the form of political support. It's nothing to do with making the economy work or the province more efficient. Spend: Public sector unions get

something back in the form of, “Join the Working Families Coalition. Make sure you keep the Tories out of power.”

**1630**

It's reminiscent of the 1980s, of the Peterson government, while they spent money like drunken sailors—with all due respect to the drunken sailors. Speaker, they couldn't control themselves. And what happened? You see, they had this accord from 1985. They wanted to make everybody their friend, so they took the rest of the people's money and made as many people their friends as possible by spending it. Then, in 1987, they won their massive majority, but all of a sudden, they said, “Oh, my goodness, you know what? You just can't keep spending forever. Sooner or later, the bills have to be paid.” They figured it out. They were glad to go, practically, in 1990, because then the NDP that they had worked together with from 1985-87 took over government in 1990. And you know what? In all fairness to the NDP, they didn't create the problem; they got it from the Liberals of David Peterson. Now, they didn't do a good job of managing it either.

Four consecutive years of \$10-billion deficits added massively to the debt and created all kinds of problems that had to be dealt with. You guys are doing the same thing now. The debt of this province is over \$250 billion—

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Most of it created by Conservative governments.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** Oh, no, no, no. Maybe you'd better check Dwight Duncan's economic update. Read it in the book: \$250 billion. They got rid of the deficit. Do you think you can get rid of it overnight? My goodness gracious, you know better than that—\$250 billion of debt.

And that \$250 billion, Speaker: Do you know what it costs us to service that debt? This year, over \$10 billion—\$10 billion. If we don't control that deficit—you see, it's an accumulation, folks. It's an accumulation. So when we add another \$15 billion or more to the debt next fiscal year, those interest payments are going up, okay? They just keep going up. What's going to happen in this province, Mr. Speaker, if interest rates go up a point, half a point, two points? Who knows? What happens then?

This is the situation you create when you fail to govern with propriety and strength when you have to. They just let the thing—they're whistling past the graveyard and letting the fiscal condition of this province deteriorate more and more on a daily basis—on a daily basis.

You have to take stock of your own situation. You have to ask yourselves the question—and I say to the members opposite, don't just line up like lemmings behind Dalton and Dwight and let them lead you over the cliff, because that's where you're going. You've got to stand up to them. You've got to stand up to them and say, “Look, we want to act responsibly here in this province. We want to do the right thing, and the right thing is

getting our fiscal house in order.” And it starts by doing the right thing and instituting a public sector wage freeze.

Speaker, here's the funny thing, getting back to that cozy mingling of the people of these two groups, the Working Families Coalition and the Liberal Party. It's just so intertwined, it's—gosh. You see, the non-union public sector workers, you're frozen. You know? Boom. That's it: Non-union public sector workers: Wages are frozen. Easy to do. You know what? Those non-union public sector workers are soon going to want to get a seat at the Working Families Coalition board, because I guess the only way to find your way into the hearts of the Liberal government is to make sure that you're funding the anti-Hudak campaign, it seems to be. So that's step number one: Get your fiscal house in order.

The other thing is about getting your priorities straight. Last week was somewhat historic; it was moving, in fact, to see the New Democrats and the Progressive Conservatives working together to bring relief to the beleaguered families, seniors and small businesses of Ontario. What was that measure of relief, Speaker? It was the private member's bill, I believe from the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, Mr. Mantha: We're going to remove the HST from home heating. You know what, folks? She's getting colder out there.

When I talk to people in my riding and I say to them, “What do you think you'd rather see, the HST off home heating or this tax credit where, if you're rich enough to spend \$10,000 to put in maybe a walk-in tub or a stairlift, if you've got the 10 grand, the government may find \$1,500 for you?” They say to me, “First of all, we don't have the 10 grand. Secondly, it's not that we are in that mobility-challenged state yet. You know where we're challenged? We're challenged about staying in our home not because of our health, but because of our financial health because of what that government has done to us.” It's not their physical health; it's their financial health.

So we said: Do you know what? Is it not the right thing to do, Speaker, to offer them some form of relief, to give them a break?

So Mr. Mantha, along with my Conservative colleagues in this House, we actually passed the bill. It passed second reading in this House, which means that the will of the Legislature is that that rebate to people in this province would stand. That's the will of this Legislature. That's how it works—except, in the convoluted world of the government, they control what gets to third reading. And the finance minister just said—do you know what he said to those people out there? Do you know what he said to those people? “I'm not too worried about whether you can pay your oil bill or whether you can pay your gas bill or whether you can heat your house; we're not giving it.”

I've got an email here. I'm running out of time. As one person from my constituency said, “My wife and I are senior citizens living on a couple of pensions and cannot afford this. We will be freezing this winter as I must turn the thermostat way down.”

That's just a sample of what we're getting. We need help, real help for all people, not this targeted stuff that is

politically motivated. That's the problem, and that's what gets me: Everything they do is politically motivated. Can't they just see for once that everybody out there needs a break? You've got to stop focusing on your political agenda and start thinking about people, because that's who we're here to represent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to follow some of the comments from the honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, although I'm sure I can't equal his delivery.

I would like to comment firstly on Elections Ontario. That is one of the reasons why our voting is going down, and I'll give you an example. In the advance polls in the little town of Thorne—the honourable member for Nipissing would know exactly where that is—the advance poll was in Sturgeon Falls, so the voters had to go all the way across the honourable member of Nipissing's riding to vote in an advance poll for my riding. It's ridiculous.

1640

Now, on the throne speech, the throne speech was, from a farmer's viewpoint, and I'm a farmer, very thin on two things. Agriculture and the processing of agricultural products is something we've talked a lot about today. It was totally ignored in the throne speech. It's one of the greatest industries—value-added, job-added—in this province. It wasn't mentioned at all.

The second thing: The only time—and I'm a northern farmer—that northern Ontario was mentioned in the throne speech was the Ring of Fire, because somebody wants to pay off the deficit with the Ring of Fire. What we know in northern Ontario is that to have lasting jobs from the Ring of Fire, we've got to process that ore in this province. That will create lasting jobs, because we've been through this before. We have been through this before, where you take the gold, you take the silver, and when the boom is over, our towns are left to die. We have to learn from what we've done wrong in the past.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Ottawa–Orléans.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd just like to respond to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I'd just like to remind him that his government, in 2003, left us with a \$5.4-billion debt, in good times. And as I understand it, you lied about it and you said it was a—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You've got to withdraw that statement.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Pardon me?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You've got to withdraw that statement.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I withdraw.

So we didn't know about the \$5.4-billion debt, and that was in good times. That was in addition to the tens of billions of dollars of infrastructure needs that were left: unbuilt roads, unbuilt hospitals, unbuilt colleges and

universities. So in the last eight years, the infrastructure deficit has been paid for by the province of Ontario.

I want to speak to the main issue in the speech from the throne, which was jobs, and jobs are very important. That's why we brought in comprehensive tax changes. You've heard that many groups feel that Ontario is the best place in North America to invest in because of those tax changes, and so they've been done.

I'd like also to speak today, in the 40 seconds that I have left, about 10,000 jobs that were in the city of Ottawa that have now been moved by Baird and O'Connor and Poilievre to Kanata. They're out of the reach of the people in my riding of Ottawa–Orléans. It will be 5,000 families in Ottawa–Orléans that will probably have to move. It will make our city significantly less sustainable. We're going to move the jobs to Kanata, so instead of promoting densification, which has been historically what Ottawa does, we're going to be promoting urban sprawl. I wanted to mention that today, so thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I congratulate the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on his eloquent 20-minute speech.

I too have a familiar story of Elections Ontario. In a recent election, my wife and I, who have been together 25 years, four months and 15 or 16 days, depending on the date today—17 days. It's 25 years, four months and 17 days today. We have lived in the same home together and have voted in the same polling booth or polling station together.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Do you vote the same way?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Well, I don't ask her that, how she votes. Nonetheless, in a recent election, I got to vote less than a half mile from our door, and yet she had to vote in another community, Astorville, which is a place, in an arena, that she has never been to at any time in her life and that was several dozen miles away, yet we've been voting in the same place together all these years. It was strange, so I do concur.

With respect to your comments on the throne speech, I don't have to tell you, member, that our party stands for private sector job creation, reducing government waste and government spending and bringing relief to families. We did not see that in this throne speech. An opportunity to bring relief to families would have been to honour the HST off home heating that we saw our NDP propose. That would bring real relief to families—in fact, immediate relief to families.

So, thank you, member, for your wonderful and entertaining 20-minute speech.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question and comment. I turn to the member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour and pleasure to rise today to join in on the debate. I thank my honourable colleagues, who have

offered some quite poignant commentary on the speech from the throne several days ago.

I think what we're speaking about, the general consensus is what we've found as a common narrative in this book or maybe what we haven't found. Some have raised the issue that there was no relief from the harmonized sales tax. Many members indicated that Elections Ontario has some issues. I might offer some of my commentaries on what I've seen repeated very often in this book—two recurring themes, one of massive corporate tax cuts and the other of a fiscal messiah named Don Drummond.

Both of these, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, won't resonate within the boundaries of my riding of Essex. I'll tell you why: because it is a working class riding. It's a riding of blue-collar workers, people who really don't have massive financial acumen. It's the people who built this country, a largely manufacturing base, a massive agriculture base. Names like Don Drummond just don't resonate with them.

But I'll tell you who does, Mr. Speaker. I pulled into a Tim Hortons a couple of days ago and I saw a younger single father—well, maybe he wasn't single. He was by himself. He was taking his two kids out of the minivan, about a 2007 Chrysler minivan made in Windsor, and he went in, dragged the kids in and bought some coffee. As I watched him walk in with his two kids, I figured: That's the guy we should be asking, because he's balancing his budget. He's making every dollar stretch to afford his van, to afford his home. We don't need to be paying \$1,500 a day for messiahs to come and rescue this province. Take some direction from real people, is my message to the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Two? I was looking for another 20, Speaker. Thank you very much, Speaker. Not much time. So little time; so many things to cover.

First of all, thank you to the members from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Ottawa–Orléans, Nipissing and Essex for their comments on my address today.

One talked about job creation. The member for Ottawa–Orléans mentioned job creation. So did the member for Nipissing. Yeah, let's talk about job creation. I never got into that because I'd like to get more time. Maybe I can get another 20 minutes on this too.

We are prepared to bring 200,000 apprenticeship positions to this province, solving, or helping to solve, number one, a jobs crisis, private sector job creation that needs to be a priority of this government, which is not a priority, in spite of what their rhetoric might be.

Secondly, it will solve a challenge in the skilled trades field, where there's a shortage of people that is growing every day because you see what's happening, Speaker: The average journeyman is probably somewhere around my age, which is too old to be expected to be carrying the ball over the next many, many years. We need to bring young people into the trades to ensure that we have the

skilled people as our economy evolves and, hopefully, gets out of this mess, perhaps when these guys get defeated and the province starts rolling again. So we're offering to create 200,000 positions. See, today, it's another sellout to the unions by this government. The unions control all those positions.

**1650**

Apprenticeship ratios today: You have to have three journeymen for one apprentice. Even if you were a small ma-and-pa operation and you wanted to bring your son in as an electrician, if you only had two employees you couldn't, because you can't even meet the ratios to bring your own son into your own business under this Liberal regime. It's sad, and it's got to change. Tim Hudak will change it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Before I ask for further debate, I'd like to remind all members of the House to address their comments to the chair, and if they're referring to another member to please address them by the name of their riding, not their personal name.

Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and, if I may, I will be splitting my time with the honourable member for Hamilton Mountain.

These are what are called our inaugural speeches. It certainly feels great to be a part of the assembly, to have this opportunity. I look across the aisle at the new member for Windsor West. I applaud her and her comments today. I know she certainly feels passionately about the issues affecting our region, Essex county.

C'est vraiment un plaisir d'être ici comme député pour mon comté, ma circonscription d'Essex; c'est vraiment un honneur. J'aimerais dire merci à toute ma famille et à toutes les personnes qui m'ont aidé chaque jour durant notre campagne.

Thank you, first and foremost, to the members of my community, to Essex county. They've seen me, since 2005, as a New Democratic candidate federally in my first campaign, and coming in third place, but with a good amount of support, I think the message was: "You're new. Keep at it. We hear you. We know you're passionate, but let's work on some of your issues." I did keep at it. I stayed connected with my community. I was able to connect with a variety of associations and groups that are working on a whole litany of issues in Essex county, and specifically my riding of Essex. I'll talk a little bit about those issues.

But, first and foremost, those people sent me here with a mandate and with their trust, and it is something that I honour, respect and carry with me each and every day that I walk into this wonderful place.

I would be really remiss—I'd be in a lot of trouble too, Mr. Speaker—if I didn't thank my wife, Jenny, and my kids, Drake and Airika, who have been with me along this journey since 2005—the sacrifices that we have made and are continuing to make.

I know many members in this House who have young children, or even some older children make those same

sacrifices, and spouses who are at home. It's tough, but I think we all get it. It's important to be here. It is a privilege and an honour. It makes those times that much more special when we do return to our ridings. Isn't that what it's all about? To embrace your family, your friends and your community, and to really honour and cherish those moments when you're with everyone.

To my riding association, the members there that put a fantastic team together and countless election campaigns, and to my mom and dad who have been long-time activists in my riding—passionate. They've been married for 50 years this year. That was maybe the most wonderful moment of the election, on October 6, seeing them hug like they were 19 years old again. So Mom and Dad: Thank you. I love you. I really am honoured to hold this position.

I talked about my riding, Essex, and maybe some of the great things—for those of you who have never visited Essex, some of the great things we have. Certainly, it is Ontario and Canada's southernmost riding, provincially and federally, which means we do have a wonderful climate. It also means that sometimes at the end of December you can come and golf. I was speaking to one of the members from Nipissing or Nepean—Carleton—am I getting that—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Okay. Come on down. It may be an indication of some of the climate change issues that we're facing here, but it certainly is one of the benefits of our riding, that it is pretty nice in terms of the weather in the winter. It's pretty easy to get around.

Also, it's historically deep in tradition. Next year we'll be celebrating the bicentennial. The town of Amherstburg in my riding of Essex will feature one of the biggest parties, so to speak, at Fort Malden, where we actually fought back the Americans and stood our ground and kept this wonderful country, or part of our country, ours. The winefest is also in Amherstburg, Mr. Speaker. It's a wonderful event too, and I would invite you to come down and indulge in some of our local wineries. Fishing: incredible fishing in the Detroit River, Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair. Wonderful amenities. And of course, our proximity to the United States.

Those are some of the beautiful things, but we also in our region have many challenges. I don't think it will come as too much of a surprise to the members in this House to learn that Windsor and Essex county are the canary in the coal mine, so to speak, when it comes to the effects of the economic meltdown, the economic crisis, whatever you want to call it. I think it was a crisis created by greed, mismanagement, deregulation, privatization, globalization, and not simply, as some members would suggest, a spending issue or a spending problem, or by public services being too rich. I think a whole history, a whole litany of issues, comes into play to put us where we are today.

You know, this is something that we've seen in our region, being again so heavily or densely populated in manufacturing. It started when successive Liberal and

Conservative governments started signing free trade agreements, originally with the free trade agreement between the United States and Canada, its predecessor NAFTA, and now we're looking at the comprehensive economic trading agreement with the European Union. New Democrats have always stood with workers and with activists, folks who've studied these agreements and sounded the alarms on how this was going to continue to devastate so many important sectors of our economy.

We also have issues in my riding in terms of agriculture. It's an area where you'll find one of the most fertile soils. We can grow hundreds of varieties of plants, grains and oilseeds, and fruit trees. At one time it was abundant with those, but again, since the advent of ill-conceived trading agreements, we've seen massive orchards being ploughed over, farmers losing their family farms that in some cases have been in their families for generations, unable to compete against global forces and a government that simply doesn't want to respond and actually just continues along that path of neglect, I would say.

These are issues that are deep; they require a lot of—they're complex, I guess is the word. To simply state that if we continue to roll back corporate tax cuts it will solve these issues is again a measure of that blind faith that we see so many governments take.

I think, as I was mentioning to my friend, my colleague the honourable member for Toronto—Danforth, in good times, when the government coffers are full, you'll hear the calls, "Well, we have to roll back corporate taxes. We're overtaxing corporations. Look at how much money we've got in our provincial coffers," or federal coffers. And then when times are bad and the coffers are empty and you're crying poor, unable to fund some of the most basic services in this province—health care, education, child care, housing, poverty reduction—what do you say? "Well, the cupboards are bare. Let's reduce corporate taxes." So your remedy for each scenario is the same.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit respectfully that that just has not worked, and I would point to a wonderful article on April 6, just prior to the federal election, in the *Globe and Mail* by Karen Howlett. It states, "Corporate Tax Cuts Don't Spur Growth" An analysis reveals that even the federal Liberals were questioning their long-standing tradition of blind, across-the-board corporate tax cuts.

**1700**

So, Mr. Speaker, I think you can sense that I'll be moving towards that agenda. Our caucus's concerted effort will be focused towards trying to find some common rationale there. I'm sure it makes sense to some of the members across the way. I'm sure, deep down in their hearts, they know that it will be the right thing to do. In fact, it will be the only thing you can do, because everything else hasn't worked yet.

We're certainly prepared to work together with you. We don't need to embarrass you into it. We don't need to say, "Ha, ha. We were right; you were wrong." Let's just

do the right thing on behalf of the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, thank you so much. I appreciate the time given.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Did he indicate he was sharing his time?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** He did. Okay. Thank you very much.

I now have the opportunity of recognizing the member for Hamilton Mountain.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you to my seatmate, the member from Essex, Taras Natyshak, for sharing his time with me today.

I'm proud to have asked my first question in the House this morning. Now it is my honour to address this House with my maiden speech.

This has been an amazing journey for me to this point. First, I would like to thank the residents of Hamilton Mountain for placing their faith and trust in my ability to serve in this House by representing their needs and their concerns. Their overwhelming show of support is not something that I will take lightly, and I promise them that I will continue to work hard and to hold the current government accountable to all Ontarians.

I would like to take the time also, Mr. Speaker, to thank my partner and my best friend, Mike, for being my pillar of strength during the campaign and before that and for supporting me each and every day. I know that I can count on you, and I love you so much.

My daughter, Destinee: She's my pride and joy. We have faced so many tough times as we've grown up together. I'm so proud of the young woman that she has become, and I know that if we continue to work hard, we will both be role models for the many young women in our community. With hard work and determination, we can be and do anything that we want to do in this life.

My family—my mother; my father; my brother, David; my sisters, Nicole and Lorraine; their partners and their families: Thank you for the guidance and support that you have given me over the years. Your encouragement and pride in me has allowed me the courage to continue forward.

During my campaign, Mr. Speaker, I had an absolutely brilliant team. I had a campaign manager who kept a smooth ship running forward and sailing smooth every single day. Our campaign was positive, fun and always full of momentum. There are so many people who were on my team, but of course I can only name a few and don't want to leave anybody behind. Steffanie Greene, Lynden George, Cam Robertson, Tiffany Kowalyshyn, Sharon Brae, and so many more—people who were there from the absolute first thing in the morning to the very end of the night, making sure that we were contacting as many people as possible. I could go on forever with such a positive group—and the group hugs that we had at the end of the night were definitely a common occurrence. So thank you, thank you, thank you so much to each and every one of them.

Mr. Speaker, as I previously said, I was sent here with a very clear message from my constituents. They were not happy with the current government. I won 196 polls out of 210. That is no small message for you. I believe it's time that Mr. McGuinty start to work with our caucus and that we all work together. It's a different day, it's a different time, and they weren't very quiet about the message.

Our leader, Andrea Horwath, has put us on a very clear plan that puts people first. We need jobs in our community. We need to hold up small businesses and make sure that we have a plan to keep them in business. We need to make sure that our families can make ends meet and put food on the dinner tables.

My colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin has started that ball rolling with his bill to remove the HST from home heating, but there is so much more to be done, Mr. Speaker. We need to work on health care, wait times in our emergency rooms and for important surgeries, the shortages that we're facing with doctors and the thousands of nurses who have been dismissed over the last couple of years.

While I was knocking on doors, I met a woman who had been lying on her couch for six months, waiting for an important surgery for hip replacement. That's unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. Six months lying on the couch, and that's an emergency surgery? Something needs to change.

We need to address our seniors, and not just with assistive devices but with a better plan. We need so many more hours of home care and more support services, things that would help, like helping with the groceries, shovelling the snow or cutting the grass. These are the kinds of programs that would ensure that they could stay in their homes—seniors who can barely afford to keep healthy food on the table.

I met an elderly woman who had her disabled son living with her. He was also in his late 50s or early 60s. They invited me into their home. There she is with an oxygen mask on her face, and she's telling me that she had to cancel her life insurance plan because she can't afford her hydro bill. These are the kinds of things that our families are facing. She doesn't have a choice if she has to have oxygen, or what time of day she can wear that mask.

These are the heartbreaking stories that I heard from my residents every day while knocking on doors. This is a brief touch of what my residents are facing on Hamilton Mountain. These are the issues that they're concerned about. These are the reasons that they voted for change on Hamilton Mountain.

Mr. Speaker, before I decided to run in this election, I was the assistant to a city councillor, Scott Duvall. Daily, I listened to families who could not make ends meet, families who could not afford to pay their rent, seniors and single folks who had been on subsidized housing wait-lists only to be told that they were still going to be waiting for years and years more. Three to 10 years for subsidized housing? That's unacceptable.

We need to input plans to fix these problems. We need a government that is going to act on their behalf. We need to ensure that families have suitable safe housing. Ontario Works recipients who are living below poverty and eating from food banks that can't keep up with the needs of our community, special diet allowances that have been retracted from people who need it the most: These are the reasons and the people that sent me here. These are the concerns that drove me to knock on more than 10,000 doors and make sure the residents knew that there was an alternative to the administration that they had just grown used to.

Voter turnout in this last election, Mr. Speaker, was at an all-time low. People have given up. They think that no one is listening. They think that it doesn't matter who is elected, that their voices and their opinions do not count. I'm here to let them know that October 6 was a new day for the residents of Hamilton Mountain. I do care. I will make sure that their voices are heard. I urge them to contact my office and speak with myself or my staff.

I'll also take the moment—in my office, working right now, are Steffanie Greene and Patrick McCoy, and they're going to be my full-time staff in that office, listening and working with me to ensure that the work gets done, the phone calls are returned, and when the times get tough, people do have an ear of someone who cares. These are the commitments that I made on the doors, and these are the commitments that I made to the residents of Hamilton Mountain.

1710

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me this time today. I really enjoyed being able to address this House and letting them know exactly what Hamilton Mountain residents expect of this upcoming provincial government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you to the members for Essex and Hamilton Mountain. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I just want to welcome the two new members from Hamilton Mountain and Essex. I listened to their maiden speeches and I welcome them into the Legislature. It's a fascinating place. As you stay here, you will learn that we have all sorts of things happening in here. There are moments when we all agree and talk to each other in a friendly way, and there is sometimes heated debate in here as well.

It's my third term here, and I've learned, over the years, just by gaining experience. All I can say is, you'll learn by experience, by attending committee meetings, by doing other jobs and dealing with constituents in your ridings. So I congratulate you for getting elected and coming to the Legislature. As I said, it's a fascinating place, and it takes time to learn how everything works. When I first came here, I was a bit confused as to how everything worked. It's a different level of government and it's a very nice place. You'll find a lot about how this Legislature works and the rules. As we get further into debate in the months to come, I'm sure that you'll participate in the debates and you'll enjoy your time here.

I enjoy my time here. As I said, it's a great experience. You grow as the months and years go by. Just again, I want to welcome you here and wish you all the best in the time that you're here in the months and years to come. So welcome to the Legislature. I look forward to your contribution. I appreciated your maiden speeches. The months to come will be very interesting. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

*Applause.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, everybody. It's so nice to be back.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Minister Gerretsen, for welcoming me back.

I'd like to comment on the inaugural speeches of the two members. It's great to see you get up and participate in the Legislature. We're welcoming you and your input. I know that the member from Essex spoke very passionately about issues in his riding and the time for change, and the taxes he talked about, and working together. We were very proud to support the NDP motion last week, to send a message to the government. They chose not to listen—well, so far, anyway; we can always hope. But to give that relief, removing the HST off the home heating bills—because we both know that that is very critical in our ridings. I can tell you, in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock it's going to be a really rough winter on a lot of people. It is very serious, and the government should have listened to that NDP bill that was brought forward and supported it. We won that vote in the Legislature.

The member from Hamilton Mountain—I had the pleasure of attending a debate with her during the election, sponsored by the RNAO in Hamilton. So we got to know each other a little bit there when we were on different sides of some of the issues, but today you saw her speak very passionately about health care and some examples from her area of things that need to be changed in the health care sector, and that is very, very true. How we deliver health care is not providing the services that the people need. She's going to be a very strong advocate for the health care sector in the Legislature. So I hope the Liberals will listen to some of the ideas.

I can say again that we all want to see people stay in their homes this winter, whether it be the cost of home heating that's going to be challenging to them or just the cost of getting health care services in their homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd first like to welcome two of the nine new members we have to the Legislature. The member from Essex and the member from Hamilton Mountain will be a great contribution to our efforts in this House in the upcoming months.

These members come from diversified backgrounds. All our new members come from different fields of

Ontario, whether it be agriculture, labour, business, a profession, you name it. They come from every direction. I think we have a balanced and effective squad who are going to be very effective.

I'd also like to point out that I was very pleased last week to stand up with the official opposition to have two bills that are helping the people of Ontario. We are working together, and I'm sure that even the government side is going to work with us on certain bills that are certainly going to benefit the people of this province.

I can say that over the years that I've been in this House, I've watched, unfortunately, a lot of partisan politics take place, a lot of very poor committee work because it was stacked against us. We brought forth a lot of good proposals from both the official opposition and the third party, which were squashed because the individuals on the committee had their marching orders from the corner office.

This is over. I was quite shocked to hear several government members talk about a "major minority." There is no such animal as a major minority. It is either a majority or a minority. It's not a major minority. Get used to it. You're going to have to work with us, whether you like it or not. I hope you do because I think we can get a lot of good things done if we put aside all the past nonsense that went on in here. I think it's going to be a positive working environment, and thank you for all your co-operation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Okay, we have time for one last question or comment.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I congratulate the member for Essex and the member for Hamilton Mountain on their election victories. They are making their maiden speeches today and they'll find out over the years that this is a great place to be.

I wanted again to speak to the people from Ottawa-Orléans. The city of Ottawa has in their official plan sustainability as one of their major goals—balanced development. We have 0.5 jobs per household in Orléans. We have—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I just have to remind the member that if he can relate his comments back to the speeches that were made by the NDP members, that would be helpful.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Speaker, and they will be related to jobs, the speech from the throne and what the members have said.

We have 0.5 jobs per household in Orléans and we have 1.65 jobs per household in Kanata. This was working out fairly well because there were a lot of jobs downtown. We've got a new light rail coming to the city of Ottawa. What happens? A million square feet of office building right in the middle of our city is vacated, and so the jobs are very important—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, following up on your last comment, I think this was supposed to be a response to

the two new members and not a tour of Ottawa, so I'm hoping that we can—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I appreciate that. I asked the member for Ottawa-Orléans if he was going to relate his comments back. He said he was. I'm prepared to listen to him and I'll give him a couple of extra seconds to listen to him as he brings it back to respond to the members who spoke.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Speaker. Sustainability is important, and we're talking about that in this House often. That's good for people who are coming in here, to know about the sustainability of our cities. This province has put \$600 million into light rail transit through the centre of our city, and that was going to be great to get people from the suburbs into the middle of town to their jobs, but now we have 10,000 jobs that are being moved to Kanata, away from the centre of our city, away from that transitway and away from the families who provide—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Your time is up. Thank you very much.

I'll return to one of the New Democrats, who has two minutes to respond. The member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you. I think maybe what the honourable member across the way was getting to is the need for public transit across this province. It sounds like the riding of Ottawa-Orléans has a wonderful public transit system. You know, public transit, high-speed rail or higher-speed rail, is an issue that—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Talk about your own topic.  
1720

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Well, it is on my own topic, because we would love that in our neck of the woods, and it's something that we will call on the provincial government to make a substantial investment in. It has often been said that the province ends at London. Well, we feel that effect in the lack of public transit, in the lack of access to transit. Maybe the member is outlining some of the benefits of being from Ottawa, which are that you get loads of money for public transit. But if you're from southwestern Ontario—

*Interjection:* Nothing.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** —you get nothing. I'm pleased to talk on public transit issues, and I'm pleased to talk on job issues at any opportunity.

One of the issues that we talked about earlier today—I forget at which point it was—the corporate tax cuts and the agenda that seems to be pushed by the government here. In our area, just for instance, you know what we do have? We have a British Petroleum, or BP, refinery—many of you may not know that—down in the Windsor area. It's in the honourable member from Windsor West's riding, actually. They're not really the best corporate citizen, if you haven't noticed lately, and they get massive corporate tax cuts from various levels of government. You know what? In fact, Mr. Speaker, I've never even seen them sponsor a Timbits hockey team, or a soccer team. Even your local Timmy's does that. Let's

look at the agenda here, when we're sponsoring massive companies like BP instead of helping small businesses who create jobs in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** First of all, I just want to commend all the members who returned, but particularly the new members. It is refreshing to hear the enthusiasm of my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. Did I get it right, sir?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That's me.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** That's you. That's who I mean—you.

I want to share his observations, because to all of you who are new, it is a bit exciting to be in this place for the first day, to walk in past people like Oliver Mowat and John A. Macdonald and people who we learned about in the history books out there, and coming in here. There is a sense of grandeur and awe to this place that sometimes I wish we had elevated our rhetoric to do that.

I always find, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about throne speeches—I'm trying to imagine what the throne speech was like when John A. Macdonald, in this House, started to talk about the need for a national railway—and the scandals with John Abbott, and those things that were underpinning that.

We have become—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Yes, I know that. I'm sorry; I'm sharing my time with the member from Ottawa Centre, Mr. Speaker. I neglected to say that.

When we go on these great, grand visions, there is so much machinery politically to tear apart and shred a major new idea that I'm hoping that the enthusiasm of many of the new members and their idealism will not get lost in this place. I want to tell you that it's been pretty positive and affirming for new members from all parties to see so many new faces here. I want to commend them and welcome them, and I hope they don't get caught up in some of the excessive partisanship that sometimes pervades this place.

It's interesting, and I don't say this to take cheap shots, but you know, under the previous Conservative government, debt went up to 40% of GDP, which I think is the highest debt ratio we had. There were a number of contributing factors to that, including the bust of the tech bubble—not something that the party opposite could have done much about, and I'm sure many of us who were in opposition at the time blamed the government of the day for all of the consequential fallout of that.

We are now going through the most turbulent economic times in the global economy, where not only are jobs disappearing around the world, but some governments in Western Europe who have long been powerhouses of the global economy are on the verge of insolvency. This is something that would have been hard to imagine. As a matter of fact, in 2008, when those of you who ran for this office before I came in here—if someone had said at an all-candidates meeting in 2007,

“What are you going to do in 2008 when an energy price spike, interest rates and the collapse of the US housing market send the world into the worst global recession in our lifetimes?”, most of us would have probably stared blankly into the camera, because I don't think anyone could have expected how much the world was going to change within the first 12 months of the last mandate.

We are in a position of incredible turbulence. We're also going through, and maybe this will—and you may notice that my tone in my speech is very not-partisan. It's a bit of an offering to try and have a more elevated discussion, because we're living in a different economy. My friend from Leeds–Grenville earlier mentioned issues of ratios. Quite frankly, these are relatively small potatoes. They are consequential to many people, but within the dynamic of a knowledge economy. So let's look at what's happening and what we're trying to address with the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, and maybe we'll invite a more elevated discussion.

There a crisis of capital in the world: 4.4% of companies in Canada are creating almost 50% of our jobs. Our manufacturing sector, which we heavily invested in and, with the federal government, subsidized—to be quite frank, to the credit of this government—has maintained 400,000 jobs and seen 9,000 jobs come back to the auto sector.

Agriculture is terribly important to us, and we need to continue to invest in innovation in those areas. We know that agriculture and manufacturing are now part of the stable, slow-growth parts of our economy, and that's true in France, Germany, Italy and all across the United States.

If we're all honest with each other, we know that knowledge- and innovation-based companies are highly sensitive to available capital and talent. So when we ran—and for me, Mr. Speaker, the two most important things in our platform were our tuition commitment, especially for young people coming out of high school within four years, to try and upskill our workforce, to build on the 200,000 spaces that we had created and add 60,000 more and try to accelerate it. We have improved apprenticeships. We have gone from about 60,000 people to 120,000 people in a year, and I think that we would share with the opposition parties an agreement that we have to probably double that again to meet the labour shortages there. So, rather than carping about measuring who has done better on that, we can acknowledge that we built a foundation.

I was with Bill Davis last night, former Premier Davis. We talked a lot about the development of the college system, which was revolutionary in the 1970s, to meet another economic need.

The other thing is venture capital. As you know, we established the Ontario venture capital fund, and we've been working on things like life sciences, early stage development. We're looking at tax incentives to liberate capital, because we know that in almost every major global economy right now, for start-up and grow-up new venture firms, those that are generating about 50% of our

jobs, we have a capital shortage. Surely, between all of us, if we take some inspiration, Mr. Speaker, from the newer members of each of our caucuses—these are problems that are not Liberal problems; they're not Conservative problems; they're not NDP problems. If you actually look at the real debt-ratio challenge, for about 30 years in Ontario, going way back to the 1980s and maybe before, the governments in this Legislature traditionally borrowed at higher rates as a percentage of GDP than was wise. And for 30 years of small recessions and periods of boom, governments were resilient about that. Now we're coming to a point of reconciliation because we have a global capital crisis.

What are our strengths? We have the most educated workforce in the Western world. We have, over the last 30 years together in Ontario, built the best education system in the Western world, and I think this government deserves credit for having accelerated that and pulled that together. We have built—all parties—the best banking system in the world and the most stable banking system in the world, and that's not the property of people who live in the south, where I live in Toronto Centre. I lived so far north; it was way past northwestern Ontario. That has a lot to do with miners in Sudbury and the forestry industry in northwestern Ontario, because it was our resource industries that created the foundation for this capital. Now our challenge is to get bankers and financiers to invest in the new generations of businesses and use the platforms of Lakehead University and other places to use those knowledge centres—Nipissing University in North Bay and other places—to launch new regional economic policies.

Do you think that there is a message, as my friend the Deputy Speaker pointed out earlier, for us to be caught up in trying to find three or four or five extraordinarily positive things that we have in common and for a few years, at least until we get out of this period of incredible global turbulence, to try and come together on those things?

1730

We had a fundamental disagreement about the HST. We believe, as we do with the federal Conservative Party, with Jim Flaherty, as we do with the NDP in Nova Scotia, that the HST was a critical need for change. It brought down the marginal taxation rate in this province to make it competitive. Had we not done that and if we started dismantling it—you've taken it from a strategic and tough decision that I was proud to have been part of and ran on twice and explained with great difficulty to people on their home heating bill why this was so critical.

I used to work with Jim Flaherty's chief of staff. He and I were business partners, so I got to know the federal finance minister. I have quite a lot of respect for him and I have a lot of respect for what the NDP did in Nova Scotia, where they recognized that.

If you don't believe the HST is a good thing, Mr. Speaker, and why this government isn't backing off on it—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** No, don't talk to Darrell Dexter. Go and—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** No, can I finish, please? Please don't interrupt your own members.

Mr. Speaker, watch what's going to happen in British Columbia now. You want to see what's going to happen. One of my childhood best friends is president of the University of British Columbia. Go and talk to researchers and those start-up companies about what's going to happen to their ability to raise capital. They've just driven the marginal investment rate in BC through the roof and they've now got a competitive disadvantage.

So let's try to be a little more sophisticated. Let's try to move beyond that. The Leader of the Opposition is an economist and knows that consumption taxes are a good thing and this was a good move—imperfect, but critical to many of the jobs we've kept here today.

So Mr. Speaker, I look forward to bigger ideas to solve bigger problems. I'd now like to turn it over to my friend from Ottawa Centre. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** And I recognize the member for Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for his comments about the innovation and productivity agenda and how it's important in terms of growing our economy in the 21st-century context.

There are many, many challenges ahead, no doubt about it. I think I mentioned before, Speaker, that if you look at globally what's going on around us, it's pretty astonishing; it's pretty awesome, I would say—and I'm not saying that in a positive way; I'm saying that it's grand, the collapse of financial institutions in the United States that took place two years ago, starting in 2008, and the impact it had on our economy and the US economy—which, by the way, they still have not been able to recover from.

Now, the kinds of challenges European nations are having within the eurozone—it's like a domino effect. Country by country, they're going through some incredible things which have a significant impact on us as an economy—when I say “us,” I mean Canada, but of course Ontario as well—but also, the impact it's having on the US economy, which is still stuck in a vortex somewhere and it's not able to recover. That has a huge consequence on us. Those who are from the bordering communities can attest to that, given that we are traditionally a manufacturing province.

So that raises the point, in that context, as to what we need to do. Where do we need to go in order to ensure that not only do we evolve our economy so that it can meet the challenges of the 21st century, but also, on an immediate basis, create jobs? So it's a two-pronged challenge. We've got a deficit in jobs right now and we need to make sure that we create meaningful jobs so that people have sustenance, so that people can look after themselves and their families, but also, on the second

prong, in the long-term aspect, we need to determine what kind of economy we're building.

Now, there are two things in this throne speech that speak to it. There are quite a few elements, but I will pick on two very important things that speak to both those sides, one being the short-term immediate relief that we need in order to ensure that we're creating jobs in our economy, sort of a boost to the economy; and the second, of course, being the long-term planning.

The short-term is—and I spoke this morning on how the healthy home renovation tax credit is a good example of that. Here you've got a policy idea which not only deals with a very grand societal, demographic issue that is right here at our doorstep and is going to become only bigger and more challenging; i.e. the aging population. Baby-boomers are becoming seniors. They worked very hard in building this economy and now, as they get older—and I think all of us probably have a relative who we can speak of, or some members are in that category themselves—we need to make sure that we look after them and we do so in a manner that helps to take pressure off of our health care system.

Now, I think that everybody knows this, and people watching at home know this as well: We spend the most money on our health care system. I believe the number was 42% of our programming dollars are spent on health care. That's the biggest chunk, if you look at the pie, and that number will only continue to grow unless we do something radically different. The big portion of that spending is going to be looking after our seniors.

We need to make a couple of policy decisions: Do we continue to just look after our seniors in an acute care setting, in a long-term-care setting, which is extremely expensive, or do we find other meaningful ways to make them healthy? One of the best ways to continue to keep them healthy, which is more economical to the system as well, is to keep our seniors at home, to make sure that our seniors continue to get the care that they need at home, as opposed to going to a hospital setting, which is very expensive, or going to a long-term-care facility, which is very expensive not only in terms of the real dollars, but it takes a toll on the senior as well because a long-term-care facility—with all due respect to hard-working nurses and personal support workers who work in the long-term-care setting—is still an institutional setting. It does not have the same feel as a home.

So what the healthy homes renovation tax credit is doing is essentially saying to seniors, "Look, let us help you, as a government, so that you can continue to live in your own home," and as long as we can prolong that process, the better it is for their health and the better it is for our health care system.

The immediate relief is also the job aspect. The renovation sector is a big one in our economy, and by ensuring that we are providing a tax credit, it gives that incentive, a very targeted incentive, to our seniors or their loved ones to make the changes they need to make in their home, that they will go buy products from suppliers,

they will get construction workers to come into their own home and make certain changes that create real jobs.

That's at an immediate level, and I think that's just one example that we are looking at and have proposed, through Bill 2, which again I hope all members will support, because it's tangible, it's meaningful and it really helps the economic situation, but also, more broadly, the issue around demographics. No doubt we need to do more when it comes to dealing with our seniors, our aging population, but this is a good start.

The second aspect we need to look at, and I think the minister was alluding to that earlier, is the long-term economic evolution as to the kind of economy that we are building in Ontario. That has to be done through a highly skilled, highly educated workforce. That can only be done by making sure—and when I talk about the education system, I'm talking about from junior kindergarten to Ph.D., the full spectrum—that from the moment that our children are able to get an education, which is through age four in a formal education setting, we get the best education system to them, because that is going to prepare them for the new economy. That is going to give them the foundation they need to be able to be innovative, to be creative and meet the challenges that we need to meet in the new economy.

The McGuinty government's commitment to support full-day kindergarten—I have to tell you how excited and happy I was when I saw both the official opposition and the third party finally coming out in support of full-day kindergarten in their platforms. Thank you. Thank you for recognizing that that was an important policy, that it is the right thing to do. I really hope that you believe it. I hope you didn't make that into a political decision because polling told you that it was really popular. I hope you made that decision because you recognize how important it is to help our children from the earliest age possible, hence lending your support to the full-day kindergarten program that was pioneered and championed by the Premier and by this government.

**1740**

But then, when we move on through our education system, we need to make sure that we are investing in our post-secondary; that we are not only providing good places to learn in our colleges and universities, but we are also providing the means to our students to be able to pursue the kind of education they want to get.

Let me speak to my community in Ottawa Centre. Carleton University, I'm very proud to say—I'm an alumnus myself—is part of Ottawa Centre. We have been making a tremendous amount of investment in Carleton University. Most recently, we invested \$25 million to build two new buildings, the River Building and the Canal Building—state-of-the-art, from an environmental point of view and from a sustainable perspective, but also in terms of the quality of this infrastructure, because it will result in better education for our students.

One of them, the River Building, is an engineering building; I just had the chance to go to the open house. The labs are just incredible, and you could see the

excitement among students. We're investing \$16 million in renovating and expanding the MacOdrum Library at Carleton University, another worthy investment.

But what I wanted to say very quickly in my limited time, Speaker, is that a 30% reduction in tuition fees for college and university students is another very meaningful way of ensuring that university education or college education is affordable for our students—that any young man or young woman who wants to go to a post-secondary education after finishing high school is able to do so. So reducing tuition fees by 30% is meaningful and is going to, again, build into that foundation of creating an innovative and creative economy in Ontario, which we very much need. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to respond to the member for Ottawa Centre, and I believe the member for Toronto Centre was speaking earlier on half of that.

I just want to comment on a couple things that he has talked about. One of them is the new seniors' healthy homes tax credit. You know, when I talk to people in my riding, they say, "So let me get this straight, Yak: If I spend \$10,000 that I don't have, I get \$1,500. But when I don't have the money, how can I spend it?" Well, that's not going to work. So right off the bat, he says, "Well, that doesn't apply to us; that only applies to the seniors that have some money." And he said, "Secondly, we're not mobility-challenged right now, but we are having trouble paying the oil bill."

Thirdly, then I talked to another person, and they said, "So this is for people who own their homes or rent their homes." And he said to me, "So why would I spend \$10,000 making improvements to someone else's asset? Yak, I could be dead next year, and what do I get for it? I'm out of the rental property, I've got a permanent home now somewhere, and the landlord gets to keep the asset." He says, "They just never really think about it."

It gets back to what I said earlier, Mr. Speaker: When your motivation for legislation—that's a rhyme, there—is always politics and political, then you get it wrong. Start thinking about the people and you will get it right.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you for that. Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would also like to comment to the member's speech on the seniors' healthy homes renovation tax break. It's great initiative. I'm sure that you have the best interest at heart. Unfortunately, it's not enough. Like the other members said, how can these seniors put out money that they don't have?

In my riding, we're blue collar. Many of my seniors are on fixed incomes. They haven't had a raise in their pension in many, many years. Now we're seeing, "Here, we'll give you money if you spend money." Well, they don't have money to spend. So it's not going to do much to keep them in their home.

There are better ways, like I was talking about. We can make sure that they have better home care hours, that we're putting more hours into them staying in their home and taking them out of the long-term-care facilities. We'll keep them in their homes longer. It will make more room in our long-term-care facilities and ease up our rooms in the hospitals.

If we save money—\$150 a day will keep \$1,500 a day out of the hospital. Big difference, right? Weigh the options. Let's see what we're looking at here. If we look at the big picture instead of one little piece, we might be able to make a difference for not just our seniors but our wait times in our hospitals and our lack of hospital beds. These are the kinds of things that we need to look at, not saving money from money that they don't have in the first place.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm happy to comment on the speeches made by the members from Toronto Centre and Ottawa Centre. I begin by first talking a little bit about—I think I've got the name right—the healthy home tax credit for seniors that we have introduced. Hopefully we'll be debating and passing it in not too long a time-frame.

Some of the criticism coming from the opposite side of this healthy home tax credit for seniors is that seniors do not have the money to invest in this particular program. I would say, by way of example, if we only look to the very recently introduced and very successful home energy retrofit piece, which was a very, very popular program and was matched by the federal Conservative government as well as the provincial Liberal government, I know that a lot of seniors took up that offer in terms of energy retrofits when it came to their home. So I'm hoping that some of the members opposite will remember that when it comes time to vote on whether or not they're going to support seniors when it comes to this healthy home tax credit.

Speaker, some of the other discussion has focused on the single sales tax and what occurred in BC—of course, a very different circumstance. We do believe on this side of the House that the decision in BC is going to be a windfall for the province of Ontario. The way that I talk about the single sales tax in Ontario is simply this: We've got a federal Conservative Prime Minister who quite possibly is the most right-wing Prime Minister we've ever had, the most predisposed ideologically against tax hikes, it's fair to say, and yet when our government here in Ontario introduced the single sales tax, the federal Conservative government, under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, passed federal legislation to allow us to do it. Along with passing federal legislation, the Conservatives also transferred \$4 billion to the Liberals in the province of Ontario. So if somebody is in favour of tax hikes, I guess it means that the federal Conservatives are as well. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question and comment. I turn to the member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have listened very carefully to the speakers today on the Liberal side: the member from Ottawa Centre, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I'd like to put things in reference here a little bit. It's important to look at what other commentators are saying. I'm going to read a couple of these—

**Interjection:** The Toronto Star?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, they're not out of the Star. This one here is out of the Toronto Sun. I'm quoting Don Drummond here. "Even to achieve the deficits I'm talking about, they have to slightly tighten spending growth relative to what it's been in the past," he said in an interview. "It's a lot higher than people are thinking, and it's a graphic illustration that there is a structural deficit in Ontario." That's what Don Drummond said, and I'm quoting the article here.

I've got another one, too, that's very important. This is from the Canadian Council of Chief Executives. This is what they're saying about Premier McGuinty as well as the finance minister: "The single most important thing you could do to secure the future of the province is to rally your caucus and the population of Ontario behind a declaration of war.

"Wars require political support, but they also require strength of will, determination and strategy. I'm not suggesting a war on Ottawa, by the way. I am proposing a war on the provincial debt, before it is too late."

Who from the Canadian Council of Chief Executives said this?

1750

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** John Manley.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It was John Manley, who is a former finance minister for the Liberal government in Ottawa.

So even the very brightest people are saying that Premier McGuinty and Dwight Duncan cannot manage the deficit. Here's what they say: that the Ontario "government has a strong track record of fiscal prudence and discipline." That's what Dwight Duncan said.

"The unfortunate reality ... is that this government's fiscal record has been nothing short of a disaster," and Tuesday's budget showed that the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very, very much.

I'll return now to the member for Ottawa Centre, who has two minutes to reply to the questions and comments.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My gratitude again to the members from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Hamilton Mountain, Thunder Bay-Atikokan and—my favourite member—Durham, who I did miss while we were off, because I like hearing him totally off topic on various things. But that's the nature of this place.

I want to go back to the theme, because it's kind of unfortunate that nobody spoke about the broader theme of the throne speech that I was talking about, which goes down to the times that we're living in. You can be partisan, and yes, this is the place to be partisan. You can pick on this initiative or that initiative, put your twists

and turns to it and have your version of whatever you want to accomplish. I appreciate that; I accept that it's part of the democratic process to do that.

But I think that when it comes to the fundamental issues around the global economy, when it comes to the issues around the kind of creativity and innovation that we need in rebuilding our economy, there should be very little disagreement, and I wish I would have heard a little bit more about that, what we need to do.

We all work together, and we're open to ideas, but I think we need to have that discussion, though. We need to have those discussions about what we need to do when it comes to the global challenges that we are facing right now. This is serious stuff.

This is not of your making or our making. This is something we're inheriting, as to what happened with the financial services sector in the United States and its impact, or what's happening within Europe, within the euro zone, and the impact on our economy.

I think it's our collective wisdom which should guide us as we work hard to ensure that we put in the right set of fundamentals and build the right foundation for the new economy that we need. We need to work together to make that happen. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm not quite sure if it's a point of order, but I'd like to introduce some guests who have come to join us from Windsor. We have Dr. John Strasser, the president, and Patti France, the VP academic, of our local college, St. Clair College. They are here today for our college day. They'll be meeting with some of the MPPs and representing our local college. Thank you for coming.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It was not a point of order, but we do appreciate the introduction of your guests and we welcome them to the House. Thank you very much for that.

Further debate?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** We need somebody to debate for a short period of time, so I'll do that. Mr. Speaker, I have only a short period of time here, and I'm helping out my friends in the Conservative opposition who would like to have a full speech, a full debate, later on, so I want to help them out.

While I'm up on my feet, I do want to point out a dilemma I have sitting on this side of the House, listening to members of the Conservative caucus. The first half of the question period, the government gets berated for spending too much. And then, once the clock hits about 29, 28, 27 minutes, the members of the opposition get up and demand that the government spend more money.

Then there are the members' statements. I listen carefully to them, because they're very important. They get up and ask in that statements that we spend more money.

Then the petitions: My good friend the opposition House leader was making a plea today for the government to spend some money, and I agreed with him on that occasion—

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Speaker, this isn't a point of order.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm not on a point of order.

**Interjection:** He's speaking.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm speaking.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** To clarify, the Minister of the Environment has the floor, and I'll return to the Minister of the Environment. He's got about five minutes before we adjourn the House at 6 o'clock.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** He had a very good point he was making, I thought, today. He was asking the government to spend more money on a matter that was very important to his constituency.

The point I'm making when we talk about the throne debate—we are on a throne debate—is that the government has to find that balance.

I listen to my friends in the New Democratic Party as well, who are eager to remove the opportunity for \$350 million worth of funding coming into the government every year to be ceased, because they want another tax cut. Now, I can remember the days when my friends in the NDP, as Tom Walkom would say, were opposed to tax cuts and they understood the need for revenue. Today, no doubt, their critic would have been in the hallway saying that the government should spend more money on the environment, despite the fact that the government of Ontario has increased funding for the Ministry of the Environment by 42% since we entered office in the year 2003—42% since we took office.

Now, I think they may have been looking at the old days. In the 1990s, they used to have the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Energy together, and the clean water commission. That looked like there was a lot of money being spent on the environment.

I remember when the same government separated the environment and the energy ministries. I was suggesting that the budget of the Ministry of the Environment was diminished. That was mischievous because I knew at that time that, really, there was still an allocation of funding for the clean water commission; there was still an allocation of money separately for the energy ministry and the environment ministry, but opposition members tend to be mischievous. That's why when I hear members talk about that today, I know that they'll want to have the true facts, and that is that there has been an increase in funding for the Ministry of the Environment since 2003, when we assumed office, by some 42%. I think that's exceedingly important.

But I want to get over this dilemma. If every question that came from the Conservative caucus said "save money," then I would say, "Well, you know something, they're consistent." But when half of the time they're yelling at us to save money, and the other half they're beseeching us to spend more money, I wonder where they're going with all of this.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** We're not saying spend more; we're saying spend it differently.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Differently, on your priorities; I know that you would say that—just as with the southwestern Ontario economic development body that we are establishing. Now, I know the member for Brock-

ville would be in favour of that; he understands it. Yet I saw other members of the Conservative caucus getting up and panning it today. I'll be penning a letter to Senator Runciman, who has landed in paradise as a senator at this time, a former member of this House, suggesting that some of the Conservative members don't want to have this particular body, which will allocate funding for regional development in southwestern Ontario and ensure that it continues in eastern Ontario.

Another dilemma I have is this: The member for Belleville and Quinte was up with a bill that was suggesting that farmers would not be able to use the land the way they saw fit. I was looking at—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Hillier.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:**—Mr. Hillier, first of all, the member for Lanark—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** And Jack MacLaren.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:**—and the member for Mississippi Mills and saying, "Now, I had always heard the landowners say that farmers should be able to use the property whatever way they saw fit." Yet we have another member of the caucus who would prevent them from doing so.

So I think it's time for a major policy gathering in the Conservative Party so that they can decide—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Yes, a think tank.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, a think tank's going a little far—a gathering of the Conservative Party so that they can get done what they have to.

Anyway, I want to compliment the Acting Speaker, who always does a marvellous job, a good friend of mine. He looks superb in that outfit, the penguin outfit, that he has on today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you for that as well.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 39, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

1800

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### HOSPITALS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Cambridge has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given on November 28 on hospital expansion projects by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The member for Cambridge has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and either the Minister of Health or the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health may reply for up to five minutes.

I recognize the member for Cambridge.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday's question period produced a great deal of disappointment from this side of the House. I was thoroughly upset with the quality of answers that the Minister of Health was providing this

House. The minister did not understand the question that I was asking and then stated incorrectly that the information the House requested from this government was available online.

Mr. Speaker, the question that I asked yesterday was not whether or not the expansion was moving forward. Instead, I asked the minister if she would be tabling on behalf of her government a detailed plan that outlines the costs, a timeline for completion, and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of all the hospital expansion projects promised before and during the 2011 general election.

Choosing to ignore such a simple question, the minister thought that I was asking about funding for Cambridge Memorial Hospital and stated that the hospital expansion project was moving forward for Cambridge. I don't need the minister to promise the Cambridge Memorial Hospital expansion again. We all know that it will eventually happen. We don't know when. They have done this promising over the last eight years. I'm looking for the minister to table a detailed plan on how the hospital expansion projects across Ontario, not just in Cambridge, will proceed.

In addition, on the minister's supplementary answer, she said that all the information that the House has required the government to table is on Infrastructure Ontario's website. However, the website that the minister speaks of does not have the costs, it does not have a timeline for completion, and it does not offer any details about the government plans to pay for these projects: no dates, no figures and, most importantly, no accountability.

In addition, the minister stated yesterday that they cannot release numbers because it would affect the competition process. However, when determining what projects should be funded, the government must know how much they are estimating for each project.

They claim it is in the budget. Well, Mr. Speaker, I looked at the budget and Cambridge Memorial Hospital was not in it. I haven't been able to access the estimates for 2013 either. The motion is not seeking out nickels and cents, but rather estimates of the project costs.

In addition, if these hospital expansion costs have yet to be determined, then no project should have estimated costs; however, when my staff did research through newspaper articles, they found that certain projects were given these estimates. For example, Providence Care in Kingston is receiving \$350 million, whereas the new Vaughan hospital has no figures released. The member for Nickel Belt listed many examples of this last week.

All I'm asking this government to do is to table the plan that they say they already have. Why don't they take the next step and table that plan to this House? Mr. Speaker, it's time for the minister to stop passing the buck. Her government should follow the will of the House and table a detailed plan that outlines the costs, a timeline for completion, and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of all the

hospital expansion projects promised before and during the 2011 general election.

Yesterday, the Minister of Health could not provide me with the answers to the questions that I have been asking. Will the minister or the parliamentary secretary stand up today and answer such a simple question without being confused about whether her government will table a detailed plan for hospital expansions in the province of Ontario?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

In reply, I recognize the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, the member for Guelph.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you, Speaker, and it's good to see you back in uniform today. Congratulations on your appointment as—what do we call this? The Assistant Deputy Speaker? I'm never quite sure. Anyway, it's great to see you in the chair.

To address the question, I'd like to thank the member opposite for his question and I would like to provide an explicit answer. Yes, we will provide the information to the Legislature, and yes—because the subtext in all of this is, "You're not going to really build it"—we will be building Cambridge Memorial Hospital.

As a matter of fact, there are actually already two of the early works projects going on to prepare for the major construction, and the RFQ, the request for qualifications, for the main project is set for 2013.

I must reiterate: Much of the information is already online, but we'll ensure that as more detailed information becomes available, it's provided to you.

In defence of the minister, you accused her of not understanding the question. Quite frankly, I don't think you understood the answer, which is, depending on how construction is going to be carried out, the costings, the timelines and a lot of those financial details are part of the competitive process. You can't have it both ways. You can't make a big fuss if you say something has been sole-sourced and not competitively bid on and then turn around and say, "But we want you to announce all of the information in advance that would actually be part of a competitive bid." As in many cases, you can't have it both ways.

The other thing I would point out is that in fact the detailed plans are the responsibility of the hospital. Yes, they need to go to the Ministry of Health for approval, but the development of the detailed plans is actually presented by the hospital that's doing the particular project. Some of the information is under development at the hospital and, when it has been approved by the Ministry of Health, can be made available. But a lot of the information you're asking for—and this would apply to all of the projects—will become available as part of the ongoing construction process. Are we willing to make it publicly available as it becomes available? Absolutely; we will provide it.

I just want to point out that we are very proud of our record. In fact, it was your government that kept promising things and then not actually putting them in

the budget. If you look at what we did in our first two mandates, we had a capital plan for hospital reconstruction, and we carried that out. Now we have announced another round, a 10-year plan for hospital construction. We have announced what those projects will be and we will carry them out. If you look at our eight-year record of building hospitals, I'm absolutely delighted to stand it up against your eight-year record of building hospitals. We're the people who built hospitals in our last eight years; you're the people who closed hospitals in your last eight years.

So yes, we will build Cambridge Memorial, we will build a new hospital in Milton, we will be building Groves Memorial, Speaker, we will be building Brock-

ville General and we will be building Renfrew Victoria Hospital. I'm very proud that we are going to do that, because we're the party that has actually taken the time to develop long-term capital plans—not just in health care but in all sorts of other sectors—and then actually has followed through on our capital plans. We look forward—with your co-operation, I hope—to continuing to do that. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1809.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
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Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
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Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
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<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
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Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
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MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
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<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
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McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

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<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
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