



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 40th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 40^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 30 November 2011

Mercredi 30 novembre 2011

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

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

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

Index inquiries

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

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

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

Renseignements sur l'index

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

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 30 November 2011

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 30 novembre 2011

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please let us pray.
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

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 29, 2011, on the motion for second reading of 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): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Good morning, Speaker. I will be sharing my time this morning with three fellow members: the member from York-Simcoe, the member from Durham and the member from Leeds-Grenville.

I'm interested in this particular bill because, as members here know, over the initial four years of my first term I spent a lot of time on two opposite ends of the age spectrum: one was young children and the other was seniors. We have a lot of those in all of our ridings, notably in mine, so when we can take some measure that assists one of these extremes, I am always up for it.

Our party, I would argue, has the best track record in the entire House for dealing with seniors. We constantly are bringing forth, whether it be private members' bills or our support for other legislation—we do work in order to support our seniors. I myself have introduced several times a property tax deferral bill for low-income seniors; it's a bill that the Liberal government voted down twice, including, for the first and last time in history, voting down a bill where one of their own members was co-sponsor. I found that rather interesting, especially in light of the fact that that bill was reintroduced by way of an election promise by that Liberal government in September during the election campaign. Who says they can't learn, Speaker? But I digress.

It is because of our party's support for seniors that I stand here today and speak to this bill. We have in Ontario a jobs crisis. That's right, we have a jobs crisis.

You've heard those words; listen well, because we have one and it's in the private sector. This means Ontarians across this entire province are in the depths of an income crisis as well.

Many of these Ontarians are taking care of aging parents and taking care of aging grandparents. Especially in these tough economic times, it is the job of government to create the right conditions for businesses to thrive so that they can, in turn, create good-paying jobs for Ontarians and so that Ontarians can indeed take care of their families. Accountability and fiscal responsibility on the part of the government are crucial to achieving that objective.

So at a time like this, when we are literally standing on the brink of an economic disaster in the province of Ontario—and no, Speaker, I'm not overstating—every single move counts. At all times the government must make the decisions that will deliver the biggest bang for the taxpayers' buck. It's incumbent on the government to do this.

The question for us, Speaker, is this: Is the McGuinty government doing what it should to help Ontarians get the good-paying jobs they need so that they can help their families? The facts, I am afraid, suggest that this is not the case.

Ontario lost 75,000 full-time private sector jobs in October alone. In question period yesterday, the Premier stood up and said proudly that Ontario had regained 276,000 jobs since the recession, which occurred, as we know, in 2008-09. That's a gross number; it's not a net number. And we have to start thinking in net terms, because if we're creating jobs but losing more, we're basically not even running in place.

This is the 58th straight month in which our province, once Canada's economic engine, has had a jobless rate higher than the national average. This means that in far too many cases, Ontarians who are supporting their aging parents or supplementing their parents' or their grandparents' retirement incomes may well be out of a job. At a time like this, a responsible government would be considering measures that would target our jobs crisis; proposing for consideration by this House bills that are innovative, that are thought out, that are meaningful.

Enter the McGuinty government on a white horse with the healthy homes renovation tax credit. But on closer examination, that horse is stumbling, the armour is tin and the knight on the horse is tilting at windmills again. If the aim of this bill is to help seniors, it fails miserably. If the aim of this bill is to help Ontarians with disabilities, it fails immeasurably. If the aim of this bill is to

stimulate Ontario's economy, it fails completely. The only thing that hits the mark with this bill is the title—it does have a nice ring to it—“healthy homes.”

Let's talk about how it fails our seniors. Let's consider how much of an impact Bill 2 could have on Ontario families and seniors. About 13% of Ontario's population—about 1.8 million people—are over 65 years of age and meet the age requirement of Bill 2. The median income for seniors in Ontario—meaning that the largest number of seniors fall into this income category—is \$25,000 a year for a single, \$45,000 for a couple. To be eligible for the \$1,500 maximum-end tax credit under Bill 2, a senior has to spend \$10,000 on certain home renovations. We're talking about things, according to the bill, that are attached to mobility, functionality and accessibility, not covered by any other program and not meant in any way to enhance the value of the property.

At that income level, in the best-case scenario, we're talking about nearly half of the annual income of most seniors living in this province. That is the spending limit. So you're writing off a number of people—a huge number of people—right away. While some seniors in Ontario may be in the position to put \$10,000 into necessary renovations—which, let's face it, is a very substantial sum—the reality is that far too many can't.

The other caveats we've heard: This bill peels that onion away and away, and it gets down pretty far; I would say right down to the core of the onion or indeed to the seed. So I've got to ask, Speaker, how cynical is that? Are you really out to help seniors? Because the slice of the seniors' pie that you're actually helping is minuscule, especially with savings having taken a very serious hit over the past couple of years and diminishing the nest egg that provides for seniors' cash flow. This is what you are doing.

We have already established that there is a jobs crisis in Ontario. Seniors who are living off their savings or are dependent on their families for income are unlikely to be able to take advantage of this tax credit, and too many of our families at this point cannot assist because, as we know, Speaker, we're dealing with a situation where, as I've mentioned, our unemployment level is the highest in the country; for the past 58 months, it's over 8%. We're running a risk of seeing that expand, because of the softness of the economy.

0910

Furthermore, on this bill, even if you are a senior on low income and you've managed to save enough money to renovate your home to increase its value, so that you can build equity and secure an income for the future, well, you're not eligible, because that's not what this tax credit is about. And if you are a senior with a disability and require this help, you can only benefit from this tax credit if you're not already receiving any other assistance. So if you're on ODSP or have assistive devices that are paid for by the province—any of those things—they negate at least some, if not all, of what you can claim under this bill.

So the question is begged: Who does this bill actually help? The answer is the Liberals, because it sounds a

heck of a lot better than it actually is, and it benefits that small percentage of seniors who are in a stable, financial situation and who probably would have proceeded with the needed renovation whether there was a tax credit or not.

The rules of the game on this bill say that you must have attained at least 65 years by the end of 2012. I feel a personal relationship with this bill, because I will have attained that age by the end of 2012.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you very much for that round of applause.

What that means is that if I want to do a \$10,000 renovation to my home, I get to put \$1,500 in my pocket, and yes, Speaker, I can afford it. So I might do it. But the truth is I don't need it. If I do it, it will be something that will enhance my mobility, given that, God forbid, I need it, or I'll do it to enhance the value of my home and I'll put 1,500 free dollars in my pocket. That's who's going to benefit, and that's not what the intention should have been.

You have the option to help so many people in this province. You have that option. You could do it by broad-based tax relief. If you want to help seniors only, there are so many ways to do it. You could increase long-term-care beds; you could certainly help in the home by increasing your allocation to home care. But no, you do basically a political dance and you dangle a carrot that most people cannot have. That's what this bill is, and let there be no error about that.

Like many of the McGuinty government policies we've had to endure over the years—the ban on pesticides springs to mind; it's one of my favourites—this bill has a title that overcommits, while the content underdelivers. That bill guaranteed a ban on pesticides in the province of Ontario—100%. But if you look at the exemptions and find out what was actually banned, they banned 1.5% of the use of pesticides—that was the 2,4-D you put on your front lawn. The rest of it, all the rural people and the golf courses and the railway rights of way—so the 100% ban was a 98.5% ban.

My point is this: Whatever you do by way of legislation, you say one thing with the title and you do something else with regulation. Your intent, almost invariably, is political. Sure, it's a great thing to get a \$1,500 tax credit, and many Ontarians can certainly use \$1,500. Unfortunately, those who need it the most are in practice rendered ineligible.

In short, this bill sets out to benefit those, like myself, who don't need it. So this bill actually fails the broad-based category called seniors: people who are in need, people who cannot have through this bill.

How does this bill fail families? It does that too. If the goal is to offer financially strapped families some relief, then how about taking action to tackle the actual problem at hand? I mentioned broad-based tax relief. The example that comes to mind immediately, because we dealt with it in this House based on an NDP private member's bill last week, is HST relief on heating, or you could do HST

relief on hydro. There are a lot of things that you could do.

When it comes to economic stimulus, putting 8% of the cost of home heating or the cost of hydro back in the pocket of every single Ontarian and having those people spend that money to stimulate the economy—that's great. And by the way, that applies to seniors as well, and it applies to the families who take care of seniors. So why not deal with that?

An HST break on hydro bills to leave families some additional income in their collective pocket so that they could make decisions on what they need to spend their money on, or spending responsibly with respect for taxpayers' money so that Ontarians are not overburdened with taxes and fees and premiums that take away from their families. That's the hallmark of this government.

While we're on the topic of spending responsibly, I mentioned earlier that Ontario is in the midst of a jobs crisis and Ontarians are facing an income crisis. My friends over there know full well that the depth of the economic problems that Ontario currently has is extremely significant. Everybody knows we're in trouble. I'm afraid, Speaker, that people don't know just how much trouble we're in.

When you've got a province that owes over \$250 billion and with the projected deficits—forget about promises made, promises broken; I don't see us getting to a balanced budget before we get to a collective debt of about \$300 billion—one begins to wonder when it is that the ability to borrow on the part of this province becomes compromised. I don't think I overstate the case to say that this is the precise scenario that we saw in California; worse in Italy, in Greece. We see bond rating agencies downgrading even France at this point. Where does Ontario stack up in this? We have a problem.

Do you know who's not facing an income crisis, Speaker? The McGuinty government—no income crisis there. In 2011-12, the McGuinty government took in a record revenue of \$108.3 billion. I point that out because when we're dispensing money in one program or another and we're listening to fall economic statements, we've got to get the definition and terms correct.

The finance minister said that one of the problems that created the \$16-billion deficit projected for the current fiscal year is that revenue fell short by \$750 million. It fell short of his projections, but his projections haven't been right since he's been finance minister. What it didn't do is, it didn't fall short of the prior year. We actually collected record revenues in the province of Ontario—about \$1.6 billion or \$1.7 billion more in the current year than we did the prior year. So when you talk about revenue falling short, let's remember that. And that's revenue that comes out of the pockets of individual Ontarians and Ontario corporations. Still, they put our province into a \$16-billion deficit.

Since donning the mantle of finance minister, Dwight Duncan increased spending by \$21 billion per annum and has never balanced a single budget. The reason that the McGuinty government was able to get away with spend-

ing that much is because the province can still borrow, and that's how the current finance minister has increased Ontario's debt by \$70 billion. Yet that is still not the most frightening aspect of the Liberal spending spree of the past eight years. The McGuinty government has managed to increase its spending by also moving money from the reserve fund to cover their expenses, and we illustrated that in question period last week.

The Auditor General's review of the 2011 pre-election report on Ontario's finances stated that the purpose of the reserve "is to offset the impact of unexpected and adverse future events of the magnitude of, for example, a SARS outbreak ... in 2003 or a global recession" like the one in 2008. It should never be used to cover year-over-year expenditures or to reduce a deficit. This irresponsible use of the reserve fund is not in the best interests of Ontario, and certainly it's not in the best interests of Ontario seniors.

Events like SARS, as we know, tend to have a significant impact on the senior population. Ontario's Auditor General, in the review of the 2011 pre-election report on Ontario's finances, states that Ontario's population of seniors is projected to grow to 14.1% this year and 16% in 2016. Statistics also indicate that health care spending per person rises significantly after age 65.

Despite this and the expected rise in the senior population, the government somehow believes that the impact of aging on health care costs will be negligible over the next three years. By the way, that's also coming from the AG's report. If that is not a bad excuse for horrific planning, I'm not sure what is. Like always, the McGuinty government has cold facts staring it in the face, but chooses to look the other way and daydream and defer. That's what they've done for eight years, and that's what they're still doing.

0920

I find that, Speaker, more than passing strange because we're not in the Parliament that we left back in June. It's a new day, and we saw that last Thursday when this government began to lose votes. I would say that that heralds a point in time where they're going to lose a significant vote. I'm not rattling a sabre; the point is that you've got to come to the table and realize that you do not run the place single-handedly, that there are exigencies and problems that have to be addressed and that there are people who represent a majority of the citizenry of the province of Ontario sitting on this side of the House who, if the Liberals are absent without leave, will take their place. We're ready to do that.

According to the AG, our health care costs will rise significantly as a result of an increasingly aging population. How does this government plan on taking care of Ontario's seniors when it is wasting money on ineffective programs? Some \$60 million here, a billion dollars there, an eHealth scandal or two, and it all adds up to literally—literally—billions in debt, billions in deficits and a very vulnerable senior population that cannot count on the services that they have worked hard for in the province that they built.

That is something that I keep top of mind when I deal with seniors, as I do with some frequency. These are the folks who built what we have. These are the folks who invented that rule that said that you don't spend more than what you have. These are the folks who understand that there's a column marked "needs" and a column marked "wants," and you don't go and stray into the column marked "wants" unless you have an extra amount of money put aside for the rainy day or, at least, the day where you can go and delve into wants, take that vacation or whatever it happens to be.

On this side of the House, we say that if the McGuinty government really wants to do something for seniors, they should rein in their spending, show some respect for the taxpayer and manage the province's finances responsibly—responsibly. That way, seniors will receive the health care and the medication that they need, the services that they require and, yes, the reward that they deserve. This means that the McGuinty government could have done a lot more for seniors than offer token policies that miss the mark.

In fact, Speaker, I would say to you that what we have in the first two weeks of this 40th Parliament, by way of the presentation or at least the announcement of impending legislation or bills that affect Ontario, are bills that I consider to be entirely cynical. They're all politically motivated: "Oh, we think we have a problem in south-western Ontario; we'll go and fix that fund." "We have a problem with seniors; we'll go and address something to them." But there isn't really any help. It's kind of a shell game. The McGuinty government could have done so much more for seniors than offer these token policies.

There were warning signs, you know, all along the way, as Ontario was slipping, slipping into an economic downturn, losing jobs long before there was any global crisis. We were out there raising the warning flag; nobody was listening. It was going to be happy times forever—but it wasn't, was it? The McGuinty government was not listening then. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like they have learned any lesson and they're not listening now.

The fall economic statement confirmed that Ontario's debt is soaring, literally soaring. I cannot believe what I saw here in this House last week. I ran companies for most of my life, and I know what the bottom line is supposed to look like. There is no bottom line in governing a province, but there is an ability and a need to bring in a bottom line that is zero. In other words, you create a budget, you take in the money you predict, you spend that money and you wind up with zero. You don't wind up in debt; you don't wind up in deficit.

But what I saw here last week was a standing ovation for a finance minister who announced that he was delivering a \$16-billion deficit. That was up \$2 billion over a \$14-billion deficit last year—"But don't worry, Speaker, we're going to balance the budget by 2017-18," he said.

Where I come from, all you have to do is sit down at your computer and open up Excel and put in the points

for each year. The way I see it, those lines are spreading. Our deficits are rising. Our ability to balance a budget by 2017-18—well, it's well beyond the next election, so why should they worry?

That's what I saw last week, and yet here we are with programs that suggest that what we're going to do is take money that wasn't spent in other programs, shift them, and we'll be able to afford these new programs. The fact of the matter is that's spending—you can call it anything you want, but that's spending in excess of what we had, and the point is that the deficit next year—mark my words, because we'll be here discussing it next year—will be in excess of what they're talking about and moving quite the opposite from the line that goes towards a balanced budget.

How the Premier and the finance minister—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Excuse me. There's two sidebars down there by the third party. I'd appreciate it if we could keep it down to a dull roar.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you, Speaker. How the Premier and the finance minister of Canada's largest province are always the last ones to know is beyond my ability to explain, as is their stubborn refusal to consider managing government salaries.

Let's put everyone on a fair playing field, Speaker. Why should Ontarians be getting a deal far worse than government employees? Why should Ontario families, who are the ones responsible for their elderly parents and grandparents, or those parents and grandparents themselves, foot the bill through taxes for people who don't want to step up and take one for the team? Ontario families had to take shorter shifts at work, had to pay higher fees for services—the health tax being one—and had to take pay cuts. Some non-unionized employees had their wages frozen for a few years. According to some reports—the Canadian Federation of Independent Business comes to mind—even before we consider benefits and pension plans, government salaries are 13% higher than wages for comparable jobs in the private sector. So when we talk about wage freezes, because we need more money capable of addressing the deficits that preclude these kinds of programs, we're not just whistling in the wind.

Statistics Canada shows that there were over 92,000 people working for the government of Ontario. That's the public sector, not the broader public sector, so it excludes arm's-length agencies, boards, commissions, what have you. Their combined salary, according to Stats Canada, was over \$6.5 billion in 2010. Health and social service institution workers' salaries reached over \$13.5 billion. Add post-secondary and trade institution salaries—another approximately \$7.6 billion; local school boards, over \$14.8 billion. I might call attention to that, because that's actually higher than what we paid health and social services—educating our kids; government enterprises, nearly \$3.2 billion. That's where the money goes.

Adding all that up, taxpayers are carrying at least \$45.6 billion in government salaries. The Auditor Gen-

eral has outlined that collective agreements the government has negotiated in the past eight years with the two main ministries included pay increases that, in most cases, exceeded the rate of inflation. How many Ontarians out there had that same experience? The answer, Speaker, is pretty clear: None. So this may sound like I'm straying a little bit from the point at hand, but the point at hand is our ability to afford what it is we want to do.

We are the first to stand up for seniors, but we're the last who are going to support a bill like that, because all that is, is increased spending for a very tiny tranche, or slice, of the population that basically would much prefer broad-based tax relief.

If that's not enough—the spending, I mean—the Auditor General continues on to say that this was also the case with past negotiated wage settlements across the broader public sector. So this is how Ontarians are paying government workers right now, and we are all on the hook to pay for wage increases if the McGuinty government doesn't find the backbone to do with government workers what Ontarians who don't have cushy government jobs had to do, which is tighten their belts. With salary expenditures of such magnitude, it is simply insulting and irresponsible for the McGuinty government to dismiss doing anything about government worker wages.

And then, to add insult to injury, they introduce the healthy homes renovation tax credit, a bill that pretends to solve seniors' income problems, while in reality it does absolutely nothing to help those Ontarians who are in most need.

0930

I cannot reiterate strongly enough the fact that this is a vulnerable segment of the population. It is a cynical approach to dealing with that vulnerable section of the population to suggest that you're going to create a bevy of healthy homes by giving seniors across the board something when, in fact, you're giving a very tiny number of seniors something or you're giving seniors who don't need it something.

Broad-based tax relief, I say; and broad-based tax relief is what my party is prepared to support. That's why we voted with the NDP last week.

I began my remarks by stating that our party is proud of our track record of supporting seniors. I will end my remarks by saying that the province that Ontario seniors left us was an immeasurable gift, and we must never forget that and we must never forsake it. Ontario has a proud tradition of entrepreneurial spirit, a proud tradition of diversity.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Excuse me, the sidebar at the end, that's the second time I've asked you to keep it down. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Shurman: This is a province of great potential. If you listen to the McGuinty government, you hear that their initiatives are making this province ever better, but these claims are quickly negated by the facts. What the McGuinty government does not want anyone to

know is that while they are coming up with catchy bill titles, the content of these policies is making Ontario worse. What is truly distasteful is that this time they are doing so by invoking the words "Ontario's seniors," as if they were the sole guardians of that group.

If you want to invest in Ontario seniors, invest in home care. We all know it's desperately needed. Put in more long-term-care beds. An aging population needs that kind of investment. Offer broad-based tax relief, like an HST cut on essential services for everyone. The healthy homes renovation tax credit is not the way to repay our seniors for their years of hard work in building our province, and it is not the way to build a better future for their grandchildren.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to join the debate on Bill 2, the proposed home renovation tax credit for seniors.

While it appears obvious at the beginning and the goal of making it more affordable for seniors to make home improvements to help them stay in their homes may be commendable, this credit will not help seniors on fixed incomes who need the tax credit most.

To access the full \$1,500 tax credit, Dalton McGuinty's so-called relief requires seniors to spend \$10,000. I certainly don't know many seniors with \$10,000 to spare. Ontario seniors most in need would have benefited more from a reduction in the HST on their home heating or their hydro bills. Certainly in my constituency office, the question of the increase and the additional HST burden on these necessities was one of the things that I heard most about for several months, last winter particularly.

Seniors are struggling to pay bills on a fixed income, and they cannot afford to put up thousands of dollars to be eligible for a home renovation credit. I think it's important to note that once again the McGuinty government has chosen, frankly, a sound bite over real help for seniors. Ontario seniors deserve better.

The government's press release announcing the credit claims, "The credit would make it more affordable for seniors to install lifts and make other improvements to help them stay in their homes more safely and comfortably." As I said a moment ago, it's a worthy goal but one that is being defeated by this government's failure to address its failings in the home care field.

The speech from the throne directly connected the proposed tax credit and the issue of home care: "In combination with this new tax credit, your government will move to increase home care services for seniors." Now, I think a lot of us would like to know what the government means by the word "increase" when it makes this promise.

The auditor spoke about the funding of home care in his Review of the 2011 Pre-Election Report on Ontario's Finances. He said, "Long-term-care home costs have increased an average of 8.6% per year over the past eight years. Over the 2011-12 [to] 2013-14 period, the government plans to hold growth in expenditures to an average

of 4.2% per year, or about half of the past growth rate. The growth in CCAC expenditures has averaged 7.2% per year over the past eight years. The government's forecast for the 2011-12 [to] 2013-14 period assumes that growth in CCAC expenditures will average 2.3% per year, or only about one third of the past growth rate."

Now, the obvious question to ask is, if the government is going to increase home care services, what number are they starting with? The increased need for funding is driven by the increased demand for home care. Yet, the government is cutting the rate of increase from an average of 7% down to 2%.

Would the government have us believe that the demand has fallen? If the government does not increase funding enough to meet the demand, then it will mean more and more seniors and others in need on waiting lists for home care. And if they do not meet the long-term-care demand, they will face an ever-increasing demand for home care as people sit on waiting lists for long-term care.

It is doubtful that the government will be able to meet its targets to reduce the increases in long-term-care funding and home care funding. The Auditor General's 2011 review stated, "We concluded that the government's assumption that both programs will be able to significantly reduce their annual expenditure growth rates is optimistic rather than cautious."

So it appears that funding will go up, probably more than the government predicts, and I suppose the government will try to claim that this means that services will go up. This is an assumption, obviously, that many people will be pinning their hopes on.

The best measure of this is not funding in dollars; it's how much help each individual who is assisted needs and, more importantly, how much he or she gets. I think it's very important to look at the fact that in the 2010 annual report of the Auditor General he points out the problems with people receiving the services they need. The first one: "Funding is still not being allocated primarily on the basis of locally assessed client needs but rather remains a historically based allocation. This can result in clients with similar home care needs not receiving similar levels of services." The second problem he points out is that "CCACs do not have adequate assurance that services are being acquired from their external providers in the most cost-effective manner."

The unequal provision of health and social services throughout Ontario is an issue that I have raised a number of times in this House and that this government has done little to deal with. My fast-growing constituency has always received a lower level of funding for services than slower-growing areas, and many constituencies, particularly in the 905 belt, are in the same boat.

0940

When you look at these two issues, then—and, as I say, in the throne speech, they tie them together as the home renovation credit sound bite on the one hand and improved, increased funding for home care. But an examination of both these initiatives demonstrates the level

of superficiality in terms of what seniors might be able to expect.

As we point out, the criteria are to be 65 or over and to be a permanent resident of Ontario, and that's it. There's a list of things that are eligible for funding, and obviously they may or may not be able to be afforded by those people who need them most.

When you look at the numbers for long-term care and home care, they are not based on the increased need. We know that the senior population is increasing; we know that health care funding is more important at the senior level, and this is not being addressed at all. To suggest that, by the numbers, you're going to cut the increases in half when the increases in the last eight years have not been matched to growing numbers and growing needs—this is a pretty chilling picture that the government is facing.

We also know that they have refused to look at more generalized approaches to providing relief. Certainly, as I mentioned, the most common cause of telephoning my office throughout the six months in the November-to-March period of time was on the HST being added to those essentials of home heat and hydro. The fact that this government is totally unwilling to provide that kind of support for people is really quite disingenuous when you look at this—as I refer to it—sound bite that sounds like it will do something for seniors.

When we look at the kind of funding mechanisms that home care and long-term care are going to be faced with, this is a very bleak picture in reality. So it seems to me that these two parts, as they were put together in the throne speech, need to be seen together. They do not look like a picture where we are going to be able to stand up and say that we have provided for the most vulnerable in our community.

The question of real relief isn't there. The question of providing for a very small part of the senior population through this healthy home tax credit must be seen for what it is, and that is, a very superficial response to a very serious and growing need: looking after seniors in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: I was very impressed by our member from Thornhill, our finance critic, and his very thorough and well-researched response to a very targeted bill, Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit.

I think it's important to start at the beginning, and then I'll frame it out, with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker. In the preamble of the bill, it does outline very carefully how it's targeted, and it says, "The tax credit for a taxation year is generally determined with reference to qualifying expenditures"—in other words, it's by regulation what you can actually spend the money on—"paid by or on behalf of" someone else after September 30 and before January 1, 2013. So there's about a year there.

Then there's section 103.1.1, which lists the eligibility: "An eligible individual's tax credit for a taxation

year is 15 per cent of the lesser of \$10,000 and the amount by which the individual's qualifying expenditures"—so it's really about 15%. It's actually \$1,500, spending the maximum.

Let's look at how they get that money and how they spend the money. It's very important. If they have to cash a GIC, they may have to pay tax on it to get it out. To do that, for instance, if you want to get your hands on \$10,000, you've got to cash in \$20,000, because you're probably going to pay tax in the range of 50%. So they're reducing their capital asset in a time—there's no income security on that, either. They may be taking it out of a plan that's paying a reasonable rate of return, and in today's climate, you're lucky to get between 1% and 1.5% on a GIC.

This is the cynical part of this. The member from Thornhill touched on it, and I'm going to wrap this back to the real underlying problems here. We found out last Friday that Bill 4, the NDP's bill on giving everyone the provincial portion of the HST back—let's say it's \$100 a year. Those seniors or other persons who would qualify for that reduction of 8% would be spending that money probably on food and/or other kinds of—feeling comfortable in life a bit. It would have gone directly into the economy, because anybody making under \$30,000 spends all of it—not some, all of it. The very rich who make \$300,000 probably only spend a third of their money. They're putting the rest in some kind of investment, deferred income, a trust, whatever.

But this thing here, when they spend \$10,000, how they get it is important. When they spend the \$10,000, there's 8% HST on that. So they're taking right off the top of that expenditure half of the money. Do you understand? They're going to be—so they're really not getting back \$1,500. Because of the HST, which is 8% more on everything, they're actually only getting back about \$200. That's how cynical this really is.

Yet they refused. The majority of the people of Ontario voted for the NDP and the Conservatives; the opposition now has the majority. That means 50%-plus of the people of Ontario voted for the opposition side of the House. We voted unanimously in support of giving everyone a fair break. And I felt the member from northern Ontario spoke passionately about how you have to turn your oil furnace on—we don't have natural gas as much in some of the northern communities—probably in October, and it probably goes until April.

I'm going to put something on the floor up here for the Premier or the Minister of Finance to listen to. Why didn't they compromise? Why didn't they say, "Okay, we'll give you the HST off during the winter months"? They kept saying it was going to cost \$300 million to give this credit back; that's absolutely assumed revenue, that people are going to be spending that much on home heating. They could have easily compromised that day and been victorious and said, "Look, we'll take it off from November till March." All the people in northern Ontario who must heat their home would have received relief—everyone. I think it would have been a fair thing

to do and a reasonable thing to do, extending the olive branch to the opposition and giving credit to the NDP for trying to work with the government. But what have they done? They've put another shell on the table here that's empty. Once you open the nut, you find out it's empty.

Also the member from Thornhill mentioned, if you looked at the throne speech last week, it was absolutely a disappointment, to put it mildly. I only have a couple of minutes left. This is a plan for jobs and the economy. Everybody knows that Ontario is in serious trouble, and it's not me that is saying it. It's the experts who are saying it.

I'm going to give you three or four references here. There is a report out here; it's Prospects for Ontario's Prosperity. This is from Roger Martin; it's the prosperity institute. I'm going to give you a few references. These are not political statements; these are statements by experts who aren't bound to political outcomes. He says here, "We offer a set of recommendations for an overall prosperity agenda for 2020." There's so limited time here. He says, "Ontario's manufacturers shed 300,000 jobs. While the hemorrhaging has stopped, there is no evidence that these jobs will be coming back...." There are 300,000 jobs gone. What's their plan? There isn't a plan.

0950

The report goes on, and it states here that we are probably heading towards a double-dip recession. What's the plan? They're increasing spending. That spending is going to be the taxation of the future for these young people.

If you look at the Auditor General's report, which the member mentioned several times—I have a copy of it here, and I'd encourage everyone in Ontario to get a hold of it. What it's telling us in this report—I'm going to give you some idea. This is done by the Auditor General, whose report will be filed on Monday. Here's where we are: Health from 2003 to 2011 has spent, on average, 7.1% more each and every year. This is the Auditor General; it's on page 18. The projected forecast by Premier McGuinty is 3.6%, so they're cutting health care funding by 50%.

What is this home renovation tax credit all about? They haven't built any long-term-care beds—none. What is the growing population—it's aging. What's most needed is care for seniors. There's nothing in this home renovation; that's all baloney.

They have a program in the Ministry of Health called the Aging at Home strategy. I can tell you, from my riding of Durham, it's referred to as aging alone. There's nobody coming to help you with your personal care needs. CCACs are on their knees. I can't believe for a moment that they have no real plan to deal with the aging population. It's a tsunami of silver people; this is what it's called by the health care community.

Education spending from 2003 to 2011 was an average of 4.8% a year. The auditor says it's going to be 3%. Post-secondary training: They've been spending 8.6%; it's going down to 2.4%. Justice is 5.8%; it's going down to—they're taking 1.6% away from them. The court

systems are already backed up. They're taking spending from growing at 6.9% to 1.8%.

Now, I'm going to say what Don Drummond has said, and this is going to take the last part. Don Drummond is the person doing the full, respectful analysis. Here's what he said about your plan—you are a dismal, distant—you're 15th out of 16 jurisdictions in North America. You're 15th; you're almost last.

Here's what he said, and I'm going to end here, because I have to share my time. This is Don Drummond speaking, and it's an interview piece. He says, "Even to achieve the deficits I'm talking about," there's slight tightening of growth in spending that has to occur. He said it in an interview. "It's a lot higher than people are thinking," and it's generally illustrated. He says Ontario has a structural deficit. That's Don Drummond. It's not Tim Hudak.

We've been saying the fix is to freeze the payroll, which is the largest single expenditure in the ministry. It's the right thing to do. Nobody loses their job, to any great extent. His plan is to lay off 7% of the workforce of Ontario. That's going to cut services, and it's going to take three years to implement because everyone will have to get a severance cheque to leave.

Then it's completely—there is no consistent plan that is respected by any business leader or any other leader in public policy. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the bill that's entitled the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act. There's a long list of reasons—and I want to thank the member for Thornhill, the member for York–Simcoe and also the member for Durham for putting some of those reasons out in front.

It's typical of this government that they haven't told us too much about how they're going to pay for this or how much it's ultimately going to cost. It's simple: It really shows their philosophy. It shows that when they're in a \$16-billion hole, they decide the reason should be to keep on digging, and that's just not right.

The bill is so flawed, it goes right to the heart. I think it was the member for Thornhill who first talked about it, the reference to a healthy home. I've had the opportunity over the past 18 months to knock on doors in my riding not once but twice: during my by-election and also my election. I have to tell you that there are many homes in my riding that are far from healthy. After eight years of Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, particularly for those seniors, they're faced with higher taxes, skyrocketing energy bills; the cost of living is going through the roof.

So I guess the fundamental question, Speaker, that we need to put forward to ourselves today is, how do we make those homes and the people who live in them healthy? Well, I can tell you one thing: You're not going to do it by passing this bill, because it doesn't get to the heart of the problem.

The government made it very clear by this bill that they don't fully grasp how desperate people out there are.

They proved it last week when they first introduced this bill and then voted against a bill that would remove the HST from home heating. To make matters worse, we had the finance minister acknowledge that even though the majority of MPPs voted in favour of that private member's bill, the government wouldn't bring it back for third reading.

So let me make it clear to you over there, because you obviously don't get it: People are hurting, and they need a break. They're calling and they're writing our constituency offices, and I know they have to be contacting you; they had to be mentioning to you at the door that they're having difficulty making ends meet. This need for relief is especially true for our seniors living on fixed incomes.

They read in the newspaper about the bill that we passed on second reading to eliminate the HST from home heating, and they were excited. They think, "Finally Toronto, Queen's Park, is listening to what we've been saying." They've called me; they stopped me on the street all weekend and they said, "Thank you to the opposition for representing our views"; the fact that we could get together as two parties and put forward, in co-operation, a private member's bill. They felt proud, and they were shocked that a minority of members across, as the government, could stop that bill from coming to third reading.

I took a lot of time over the weekend to talk to folks about this tax credit program, and I used some of the examples—I was glad the member for Ottawa Centre used some examples about access to homes and bathrooms, shower amendments, widening doors. So I asked people, "Given the chance to choose, what would you choose? Do you have 10 grand in your jeans to spend on some of these renovations to get \$1,500 back, or would you prefer the HST relief?" Unanimously they all said the same thing. They supported what we were talking about.

Mr. Jeff Leal: How are the people in Athens?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm glad you mentioned that. There were many people in Athens that I asked.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I've got to get back to Athens.

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, you don't want to come back on this issue, I'll tell you that. They have no use for you on this issue.

Over the weekend, I also had a chance to speak to Linda Carr, who is a friend of mine. She's a very hard-working community activist, a member of Rideau Lakes council. She was the Leeds–Grenville representative at the 53rd annual convention for the United Senior Citizens of Ontario. They met for three days in August in North Bay.

During the convention, they debated and voted on 29 resolutions from all over the province—29 resolutions—on everything from doctor shortages to being gouged at the gas pump. They even had two resolutions dealing with hydro and home heating costs. Do you know what? It sounded a lot like the private member's bill that this side of the House voted in favour of. But do you know what wasn't in those 29 resolutions? There wasn't one

that even remotely mirrored your bill—not one. Again, it was pretty obvious from talking to seniors in my riding what choice they would make.

The Premier talked about not playing politics, making sure that—you know, he didn't want the opposition to divide. It's funny: He says one thing and does another. To my surprise on Friday, when I got back to my constituency, one of the members of the media handed me a press release that the member for Guelph distributed in my riding. It was entitled "Will Clark and Hillier follow Hudak's lead and vote against seniors?"

Who's trying to divide now? Who says one thing about working together and does something else?

1000

I actually brought this around and showed it to people and said, "You know, I'm a little worried you're going to think that Mr. Hillier and I are going to vote against seniors." They couldn't believe that this government would say one thing to the media, say one thing about working together, about listening to people, about moving things forward—moving forward; "Forward, together"—yet, when we get together on this side of the House, when we represent the majority of Ontarians when they want immediate relief, when they want relief on the HST, when they want relief to try not to pay \$10,000 for renovations—they're having difficulty paying a few hundred dollars on their hydro bill. I had hydro bills put in my face at the door and they asked: What are we going to do about it when we are elected? Well, I tell you, we told them that we were going to stand up for seniors, and we did last Thursday.

You think you're fighting for seniors. You know what? Joe Kapp and Angelo Mosca have more fight than you people across the way on seniors. I was more impressed with their battle than I am with your battle since we got here. You consistently say one thing and do another.

Madam Speaker, we had an opportunity last Thursday for the opposition to show the government, in a vote of 54 to 50, that we could do better, that we could move forward together, all parties, for things that our constituents wanted, for things that they told us they wanted at the door. I think it's important for us to listen to what they have to say. They don't have \$10,000. They don't have that type of money that they can provide for a healthy home tax credit. What is healthier is for their legislators to listen to them, to provide that relief on their home expenses, on those bills that they're struggling to pay for, that they have to choose, one over the other. We all have the need to provide our seniors with relief, but not with this bill, Speaker; not with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments? The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd like to comment on the four speakers. I listened to all of them quite intently: the member from Thornhill, the member from York–Simcoe, the member from Durham and the member from Leeds–Grenville. Each of them had something unique to say.

The member from Thornhill used the expression and the word "cynical" many times in talking about this particular government program. In his view, he thinks that what is happening here is a cynical exercise because the government has many options on how to spend \$150 million. In his view, this is a cynical exercise.

The member from York–Simcoe used a good expression. She said, Madam Speaker, that this was a sound bite over real help for seniors, and then did the tie-in with home care and how it is very difficult to understand how this government is going to proceed with only one aspect of their help for seniors, when you talk about the healthy homes renovation tax credit without also indicating what the home care is going to be.

The member from Durham gave a very good example about cashing in GICs to afford renovations. He used the word that this was all baloney because not many seniors are going to take it up.

The member from Leeds–Grenville talked about the choice that seniors are going to have to make and the choice that seniors would make. It reminded me a little bit of the unscientific Toronto Sun poll, when they polled their readers and asked them, "Which one, if you had a choice between taking the HST off home heating and the healthy homes renovation tax credit, would you choose?" The readers, by a 6-to-1 margin, chose taking the HST off of home heating—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: They don't have the same price tag. They don't cost the same.

Mr. Michael Prue: No, no, but I mean—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Questions and comments? The member for Oakville.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to join the debate this morning. Like other members, I listened intently to some of the remarks that were made. Certainly, I would think, at the end of the day, I didn't agree with most of the remarks.

I think on October 6, Ontarians also said that they didn't agree with most of the remarks that were made this morning. We're in the position that we're in the House now and we're moving forward. That was obviously an election that the Progressive Conservative Party was expecting to win but things happened along the way.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Fifteen points ahead in June.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Fifteen points ahead in June, and October 6, a much different result because people were able to look behind the curtain, were able to look at what the Conservatives were talking about. I think that came out very clear this morning when we heard some of the comments.

The healthy homes renovation tax credit is intended to help seniors stay in their homes longer. It's that simple. It helps family members who may decide to share a home with a senior; it helps them to perform that renovation. It also provides stimulus to the economy at a time when I think all three parties in the House would realize that the important thing that we need to be doing is that; something needs to be done about ensuring that people have

jobs. Something needs to be done about ensuring that people who would prefer to be in their own home are able to equip their own home in a way that allows them to stay there.

It's going to support about 10,500 jobs a year. Now, that may be a laughing matter to the opposition; it certainly isn't to the people who end up with the jobs. I think that would be some very welcome news.

It's going to support, we figure, about \$800 million in home renovation activity. That's something that I think is a major point of stimulus to the economy. That's something we've been after.

So the people spoke on October 6 and asked us to move ahead with this type of—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Although we would all agree with the goal of the bill—the goal, as stated, is to help seniors stay in their own homes. The four members who spoke before us understand that and agree, but it isn't the way to get there. We're talking a \$150-million program, and we're talking a direction that the government is taking that is going to help so few.

Like the four speakers who spoke before, we know that seniors have a hard time staying in their homes, but they have a hard time staying in their homes because they cannot afford to heat their homes. Taking the HST off home heating would help them. They have a hard time staying in their homes because they cannot afford the property taxes on their homes, but there's nothing in this bill that will help this.

Do seniors have a hard time staying in their homes? Yes, they do. Is it because of renovations? Some of them, some of the time, but we're talking a very tiny, little slice of the problem there. We're talking a decision to allocate \$150 million when the people of Ontario—60% of the people who voted—voted either for the NDP or for the PCs. That 60% of the people voted to take the HST off home heating, but are we going to respect the wishes of 60% of Ontarians? No, we're going to move ahead with a policy that is so tiny that it's not going to help a whole lot of people.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: These incentives are only a small part of what our government has been doing for aging at home. There are many other pieces of the Aging at Home strategy, and this will help some seniors make that decision to ready their homes for when they have to.

I participated in the federal project when these same types of tax credits were available for other issues. Would I have replaced my furnace and my roof at that time? I probably might have waited a couple of years. But this gives us the incentive to do it.

These tax credits are targeted to specific items: walk-in tubs, lifts etc. Seniors will look at their alternatives and aging at home will be promoted by the bill.

Of course, not all seniors can afford to take advantage of the tax credits. There will be, however, an incentive to prepare our homes for infirmities we encounter as we age. Renovations are not made for one year; it's not \$10,000 for one year, it's \$10,000 over maybe 10 or 15 years that you'll be in your home, so it comes out to maybe \$1,000 a year. So more people will be able to participate in that, looking at it over the long term.

This will incent those improvements, will create economic activity and will assist in making this option available for more seniors. The ability to age in our own homes is very important as we—in my own case, as we get closer to this age, this is what we want to do. It'll advertise the fact that these improvements can be made. The dollars can be set aside, and to think that it has to come out of your pocket immediately is erroneous. Your home improvements are put in over several years.

This will be great incentive to getting more people aging at home, and that, in our society, is what the seniors want, and that's what we want for them.

Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Response? The member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's a pleasure to debate with my colleagues from York Simcoe, Durham and Leeds–Grenville and put our party's points across, and as well, to listen to the responses of our friends from Beaches–East York, Oakville, Nickel Belt and Ottawa–Orléans.

You know, my friend from Durham brought up something very interesting, and it illustrates what I talked about when I mentioned a shell game. If you think about it—take a senior, 73 years old, who wants to take advantage of this and whose income is entirely derived from what is now a registered income fund. So that money comes out of there, and it's taxable when it's withdrawn. So there is tax paid to both the federal government and to Ontario on that money that's being used for the home renovation, and then the home renovation itself pays for goods and services that carry a 13% tax, the HST, 8% of which goes to the province of Ontario. So that's just moving money around and penalizing seniors for wanting to do this, number one.

Number two, to take a look at the \$1,000 home renovation that the member from Ottawa–Orléans talks about, where there would be a 15% rebate—\$150—take a look at that \$150 and ask yourself the question: In the broad-based tax relief that I spoke about, the HST being the example, that's approximately the amount that that same senior would be getting back every year—not just one year, every single year—if the 8% were taken off that.

The problem with you folks is you're choking on the Kool-Aid. You've got to stop looking at it as—my friend from Oakville talks about “the people have spoken on October 6.” Yes, they did speak. They wanted broad-based relief or they wouldn't have put more people on this side than they put over there. The sooner you people get this through your heads and start to understand what's

going on in this House, the sooner we can get on with business. We're not going to be here for four years, and you know it.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The time is close to 10:15, and I declare this House recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I'd like to acknowledge the presence of Chris Hodgson and the Ontario Mining Association, who are in and around the Legislature today for their Meet the Miners event. On behalf of the OMA, the Ontario Mining Association, I'd like to invite all members to make their way to the reception this evening at the Sutton Place. The Ontario Mining Association has invited all of us to meet them. They are very, very interesting people.

Mr. Ted Arnott: The Salvation Army is the largest non-governmental direct social service provider in Canada, providing critical aid to more than 1.5 million Canadians every year. Queen's Park is pleased to welcome representatives today as they host the Salvation Army parliamentary reception: Lieutenant Colonels Susan and Dirk Van Duinen, divisional leaders, Ontario central east division; Lieutenant Colonel Lee Graves, divisional leader, Great Lakes division; Major Pat Phinney; Majors John and Brenda Murray; and Lieutenant Colonel Ray Moulton. I encourage all members and their staff to attend today between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in committee room 2. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, member. Further introductions? Attorney General?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Thank you very much, Speaker. I wonder if you could help me welcome four very good friends of mine from the Kingston area that have joined us today. They are Dan Couture, Sam Laldin and Grace and Bill Eves. They're sitting right here in the gallery.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome our guests.

Further introductions? There being none, it is now time for oral questions—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. I've got to learn to use my broader vision. Yes, member? Carry on.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Richmond Hill. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Richmond Hill.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Yes. It's my pleasure to welcome Lester Lui from Richmond Hill, visiting the House today.

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

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. Congratulations. You're really coming along with remembering the names of all the ridings. For week two, it's really good.

I want to take this opportunity to wish the Minister of Children and Youth Services a belated happy birthday. It was his birthday yesterday, so if you can all give him a round of applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not an introduction. I would have saved that for another moment at another time.

The member from Scarborough—Rouge River.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say, congratulations to you for being elected the Speaker of the House. I haven't had a chance to say this to you publicly.

I would like to recognize my Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who celebrated her birthday last week. I had the honour of serving under this minister in previous terms.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There is another time to do that. I appreciate the members' enthusiasm, but I would ask that you keep your introductions brief and that we can move on to oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is directed to the Premier. As you know, Ontario is in the midst of a jobs crisis. There is a frightening paradox here in Ontario, where we have high unemployment at the same time that we have a skilled trades shortage. In fact, your own Ministry of Finance estimates that there will be a million positions unfilled by 2021 in skilled trades.

Premier, we brought forward an idea yesterday to create 200,000 new positions for electricians, plumbers, welders and HVAC operators, to actually put that talent to work here in the province of Ontario. I hope you've had time to review our proposal. Will you support the PC plan to modernize our apprenticeship system?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, first of all, I am pleased to take the question. I certainly support the thrust of my honourable colleague's purpose here, which is to ensure that we have a highly skilled and educated workforce and that, amongst other things, we continue to invest in and support apprenticeships and the trades.

To that end we've established a College of Trades. It's the first of its kind in Canada, I am proud to say. It's designed to ensure that all our young people and all our families see the skilled trades as a real, viable career option for them.

It's also to ensure that the college itself takes responsibility for dealing with issues like ratios. I'll provide a bit more information in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, only one quarter of the apprentices actually complete their job training. That's a fact from Colleges Ontario. So of the 50 or so young people we saw here today who aspire to put their considerable skills and energy to work in the trades—as welders, HVAC operators, plumbers or bricklayers, for example, Speaker—only one quarter under your current system actually finish their training.

Premier, I think you would admit that the apprenticeship system in Ontario is stuck in the 1970s when it comes to its ratios. We are now in 2011. Other provinces have modernized their systems and brought them into the 21st century.

Regardless of the College of Trades, Premier, would you at least agree that it's time to bring our ratios into the 21st century and move to a one-to-one journeyman-to-apprentice ratio?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, I think it's important to understand what has happened in terms of some of the basic numbers, because I believe that we have a very strong record when it comes to supporting apprenticeships in Ontario. More than 120,000 apprentices are learning a trade today; that's nearly 60,000 more than when we first earned the privilege of serving Ontarians in government. Annual apprenticeship registrations have grown from 17,000 to more than 29,000.

On the matter of ratios, Speaker, my honourable colleague will know we have changed eight; on their watch in government, they changed none. We've established a college, and that college has the responsibility in the upcoming year, 2012, to re-examine 34 ratios, including plumbers, electricians and steamfitters. We've assigned that responsibility to an independent arm's-length college. I would ask my honourable colleague to have confidence in that college.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, Premier, you know we don't have confidence in the college. You know we don't because, basically, you're putting many union bosses in charge; I think five out of eight on your board to date. And I think, as I brought up to you in the House already, Premier, that the majority of employer groups—those that will actually create the jobs—have opposed the college and have called for its abolishment.

Let me ask you directly—you mentioned ratios. In Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Manitoba, for every journeyman bricklayer, they can have one apprentice. Under your outdated system from the 1970s, you need five journeymen for one apprentice. That means that job opportunities are cut by 80% here in Ontario.

Will you at the very least, agree, Premier, that the other provinces have moved forward, that clearly our ratios are stuck in the 1970s and should be modernized toward a one-to-one system that exists in those provinces?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I would say to my honourable colleague that language such as “union bosses” is more properly relegated to the 1970s and even past that. I think our shared responsibility is to find a way to move forward.

We've set up a new college, and I would encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at the makeup of the college. It is made up of one half employer representatives and one half employee representatives. I'd encourage him to look at that.

I want to remind him as well, Speaker, that the college's mandate is to re-examine 34 separate ratios, including plumbers, electricians and steamfitters. That's their job, and they're going to take that on for all of us.

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

1040

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier on the same subject: Your 1970s apprenticeship system means a lot of young people can't get jobs in the trades today—I pointed out, when it comes to bricklayers. Similarly, when it comes to electricians, there's a one-to-one ratio, meaning for every journeyman, they can hire one apprentice and create a job opportunity. Here in Ontario you have to have three journeymen, which means that as a result, the job opportunities are cut to a third.

Premier, here's something very important, too, and this is your own Ministry of Finance. We are actually producing 46% fewer tradespeople per capita than the rest of Canada. So we have less than half that are actually getting their position in the trades. Doesn't that tell you the system is outdated and it's time for you to give direction to move to a one-to-one ratio and create jobs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, again I want to say to my honourable colleague that I really do recommend that he place his confidence in the college. They are now taking on the responsibility of lending shape to the apprenticeship system and skilled trades in the province of Ontario. It's the only college of its kind in the country. I'm glad to say that in Ontario we have elevated the status of the skilled trades to one that I think will inspire confidence in parents and young people alike.

The college is going to take a look at 34 ratios in 2012, and they include brick and stonemasons, cement finishers, construction boilermakers, construction millwrights, drywall finishers, electricians, floor covering installers, general carpenters and so many others as well.

My honourable colleague raises some real issues about ratios, but I have confidence in the college to get that done in the best way for all of us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Respectfully, Premier, you seem to be one of the few, aside from the union leaders who are running the college, to have confidence in this instrument.

Let me give you some examples. Eight construction employers say that your College of Trades is broken and are calling for its abolition: the Heavy Construction Association of Toronto, Merit Ontario, the Ontario Electrical League, the Ontario General Contractors Association, the road builders, the sewer and water main contractors, the progressive contractors, the residential construction council. I know there are unions that oppose your approach too, Premier.

I mean, we're talking about hundreds and hundreds and thousands of jobs here. They're the ones who have no faith in your system—that you're handing over the decisions to people who have a special interest, Premier. So it's not just us. Hundreds and thousands say they don't have confidence in this.

It's your role. It's your job. You're the one who can make the call. It's one simple regulatory change. Don't create a new bureaucracy; make the change. Create the jobs today. Open up 200,000 positions. Won't you show leadership and do the right thing?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, if my honourable colleague is interested in jobs, then I would ask him to support our healthy homes renovation tax credit, which will create over 10,500 jobs on an annual basis.

Again, we've set up a college. It is independent; it is arm's-length; it enjoys equal representation from employers and employee groups. I think we should give the college a chance to do what it was set up to do. It's specifically mandated to take a look at 34 ratios this coming calendar year. I think we should leave that responsibility to them. Let them take a look at it, let them be thoughtful, let them then be decisive, Speaker. I'm sure they're going to give expression to the public interest.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, Premier, I don't think the folks in the industry believe that. They believe, basically, you are handing over the decision-making to the special interests, those that have a special interest in maintaining high ratios to limit the number of people who are coming into the field. I think that's clear. And that's not just me, Speaker, that's all of the associations representing hundreds of thousands of jobs across the province.

The Premier—one thing he's right about: This is the only such animal in all of Canada. The other nine provinces don't have that. To me, that tells me he's actually down the wrong path, because they've moved forward. They've moved into the 21st century. He's stuck in the 1970s on this.

It worked in nine other provinces; they didn't need a new bureaucracy. They didn't need to hand over the decision-making to some special interest groups. They had a Premier—seven provinces, different political parties—who had the courage to do the right thing, who had a serious plan, who moved it into the 21st century. Why won't you show the leadership that we will, Premier, and

move to a one-to-one ratio and create 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades in the province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to remind my honourable colleague that on their watch, during their eight years in government, they changed no ratios—none. There were concerns expressed at that time, Speaker, and they chose to do nothing. We chose to get involved on eight separate occasions; we've changed eight ratios. Now we've set up an arm's-length college. The responsibility of that college, among other things in the upcoming calendar year, is to re-examine 34 separate ratios.

I think we should place our confidence in that college that enjoys equal representation from employer and employee groups. Let them do their job. Let's have confidence in that new college. It's our new college, and we should be proud of it.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. When the Premier announced his plans to establish the southwestern economic development fund, he noted a study from KPMG that showed this is an effective means to leverage investment and create jobs. This is what he claims.

My question to the Premier is, why hasn't he conducted a similar study into the effectiveness of his corporate tax giveaways?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I know my honourable colleague and I see things differently in this regard, but I think in order to build a competitive economy, we need to bring a multi-faceted approach. That includes investing in the skills and education levels of our people. It includes investing in our infrastructure. It includes modernizing and rebuilding our electricity system.

And yes, it includes making sure we have a competitive tax system. It's no longer just a matter of ensuring we are better than the US competition; we've got to take a look at what's happening in other parts of the world as well. I'm informed that our corporate tax rates today come in about the mid-level when it comes to the European competition. So we need to keep an eye on the big picture when it comes to the competitiveness of our taxes and ensure as well that it's just part of a broad approach to ensuring that we have a competitive economy here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the Premier plans to invest about 30 times more money into corporate tax giveaways than into the new southwestern economic development fund. Independent studies by groups like the Conference Board of Canada have indicated that this is one of the least effective ways to create jobs and stimulate the economy.

At a time when every dollar counts, Speaker, why is the Premier pushing ahead with a plan that costs billions and billions of dollars without any evidence at all that it's working?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think it was in the 2010 budget we announced our package of tax reforms, and that included \$12 billion in tax reductions for families, for people, and I think it's about \$5 billion for our businesses.

I remind my honourable colleague as well that in terms of external assessments of just how well we're doing and how competitive we've become, I refer her to FDI, foreign direct investment, which has determined that we are now the second most attractive jurisdiction in all of North America for foreign investment. I'd refer her as well to Forbes magazine, that issue in particular that has catapulted Canada from fifth to first place in terms of being the best place in the world for business to invest. The single most important reason for that escalation, Speaker, in terms of our attractiveness was because of the tax changes that we've made here in Ontario. I'd recommend that my colleague take those into account when she assesses corporate taxes.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the Premier expects families to buy into his corporate tax cut plan, but he can't even get some of his own cabinet colleagues to buy in.

Corporate tax giveaways and sky-high CEO salaries in the public sector are an absolute necessity for this Premier, but tackling the crisis in senior care, making life more affordable, not so much. Why won't the Premier even consider the possibility that billions and billions of dollars diverted into corporate tax giveaways doesn't create jobs and doesn't stimulate our economy?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, you know, it really is easy to pass off corporations and businesses as a kind of evil, I guess. But the fact of the matter is they employ people, lots of people. Families count on them for their jobs and their sense of hopefulness about their future.

I want to recommend one other piece of information to my honourable colleague. Because of the tax changes that we have made, in particular the corporate tax reductions, we are now witnessing a dramatic increase in investments in equipment and machinery, which marks the beginning of an investment in productivity—additional competitiveness—which means that our businesses can grab more market share, which means they can hire more people.

1050

So, in fact, I would argue with my honourable colleague on this score. These corporate tax cuts are in fact having an impact on the front lines. They will mean more jobs.

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The question is to the Premier. The Premier has called the Ring of Fire “the most promising mining opportunity in Canada in a century.” My question to the Premier is: Is he willing to let these good

processing jobs from this great opportunity be shipped overseas?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I do share the same enthusiasm as my honourable colleague, the leader of the third party, when it comes to the promise to be found in the Ring of Fire. They tell us, Speaker, that it's one of the most exciting mining finds in Canada in the last 100 years.

We are going to work with the community, we are going to work with our First Nations, and we're going to work with folks in the north to make sure we get this right. There is a tremendous opportunity before all of us, and we will work as hard as we can, I say to my honourable colleague, to ensure that we maximize the benefits for the people of Ontario.

If my honourable colleague has any specific recommendations in that regard, we'd be most willing to listen to those.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, Cliffs Natural Resources says it plans to send chromite concentrate mined in the Ring of Fire to China for processing. That would redirect good-paying jobs, value-added jobs out of northern Ontario. By refusing to answer the question yesterday, the minister suggested that he was okay with it. I want to know if the Premier's okay with it.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I say to my honourable colleague, we're going to do everything we can together to maximize the benefits for the people of Ontario.

I know where my friend wants to go on this, and I can't agree with her in that regard. She would suggest that we put up a wall around our resources sector here in Ontario. The fact of the matter is, we receive raw minerals from other parts of the world. We bring them into our province, we process them here, and we create good jobs here. So that's not the kind of fight I want to get into with the international community.

Having said that, I again say to my honourable colleague, let us see if we can find a way, all of us together, working with northerners in particular, to ensure that we maximize the benefits of the development of the Ring of Fire for the benefit of all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, the sad and frustrating thing is, we've seen this story before. We saw it with Xstrata. Xstrata in Timmins put 700 people out of work after they exported processing jobs across the border into Quebec.

Cliffs claims that by processing the chromite into concentrate, they won't even need the province's approval under the Mining Act to send that quasi-processed material over to China for full processing.

I want to ask the Premier very clearly, is this something that he agrees with? Does he believe that this is the right solution and in the best interest of the province and northern Ontario people?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We are part of the global economy. We are a free-trading jurisdiction.

I would remind my honourable colleague that, today, in Ontario there are thousands and thousands of jobs that are associated with us receiving from other provinces, other countries, indeed other continents, minerals that are coming in for us to process here.

I say to my honourable colleague, do we really want to get into a trade battle based on protectionism, where we put up walls, because I think, in the end, that will cost us thousands of jobs, and it will hurt our families.

Having said that, let's find a way to maximize the benefits for the people of Ontario when it comes to developing intelligently, thoughtfully and responsibly the Ring of Fire.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question today is also to the Premier. After eight years of trying to create jobs your way, the results are in: 300,000 manufacturing jobs are gone; 58 straight months of Ontario trailing Canada in job creation; and 75,000 full-time jobs lost just last month alone.

You tried it your way and you failed. You refused to listen to our plan to modernize the apprenticeship system and create 200,000 jobs right here in Ontario. Instead, you take pride in creating a looming boondoggle called the Ontario College of Trades.

Premier, can you inform the House today of how much money the College of Trades has cost Ontario taxpayers up to this point?

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: As the member should know, this is a private sector partnership not borne by the government.

It's fascinating. We talk about proposals here. This is the Conservative Party's research position on trades: three sentences.

This is two years of work by leading professionals and 26 consultations with business and labour leaders, leading to one of the most well-researched, well-executed projects ever.

One sheet, three sentences; consultation with 26 industry business associations and labour groups.

It's interesting to me, Mr. Speaker. These folks think we're cozy with labour because we want labour leaders to sit down with business people to look at these. Those folks over there think we're cozy with business because we think they need some tax breaks to create jobs. Mr. Speaker—

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

Member, I am going to get some advice. I would wish that members be reminded of the rule of using props. I would probably have ruled on that if I had been quicker on my feet. So I would remind everyone about props at all times.

I will accept the member's supplementary question.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you, Speaker.

I didn't expect that you would actually divulge information that has been so closely guarded and hailed by your good friends in the Working Families Coalition. The key objective of the College of Trades is to compulsorily certify many additional trades that are functioning absolutely fine right now, and they will do this with no known public criteria. This will cost tens of thousands of jobs in the housing and road-building industries alone, as well as drive up the cost of all construction.

Minister, just when are you and the College of Trades planning on informing the construction workers of your plan to have their trades compulsorily certified, and how much will tradespeople be charged to belong to this unnecessary institution?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, by 2025 we have to create 362,000 apprenticeships. That is the serious work that this government is involved in.

The comment was made by the Leader of the Opposition—I wish they'd actually read these reports; maybe they would come up with better questions. Maybe the leader should ask his critic to read the reports and then ask some questions.

It's interesting, because the comment was made, Mr. Speaker, out of 1970s-style thinking. You were in power many more years than we were since the 1970s. You cut apprenticeship by 74%; you didn't designate one ratio. You didn't have years, you had decades to do it, and you did nothing. Now you've got ants in your pants and you're all terrified by this. It's absolutely hysterically funny.

We consulted with 26 trade organizations—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Jonah Schein: To the Minister of Transportation: Reports indicate now that Metrolinx is looking to privatize the proposed Eglinton crosstown transit line. It seems that, almost weekly, there is another setback on this project resulting from the McGuinty government's mishandling of the Eglinton line, from soaring costs to technical challenges to lengthy delays. Is the privatization of this line just another indication of how badly off the rails this project has gone?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question and I'm pleased to clarify the situation for him. The Eglinton crosstown line is an \$8.2-billion investment on the part of our government and will create 82,000 jobs. With investment that significant, it's natural that Metrolinx look at all procurement options to achieve the best value for taxpayer money.

No decision has been made at this point in time. This is one option and discussions are ongoing. No matter which way we move forward, value for taxpayer money, community consultation and seamless service are absolutely critical to this project. Metrolinx has, in fact, al-

ready started community consultations on the crosstown line.

1100

Most importantly, I want to note that alternative financing and procurement does not mean private operation of the facility. When Infrastructure Ontario does procurement on a hospital, we still have doctors and nurses funded through OHIP—

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: Thank you, Speaker. Toronto once had an affordable, publicly run and widely supported plan for light rail expansion across Toronto: It was called Transit City. Then the McGuinty government systematically dismantled this plan, delaying and shortening routes with a \$4-billion cut, and willingly let Mayor Ford spend almost the entire budget on one line while cancelling or cutting lines to underserved neighbourhoods across this city.

Does the minister really think that privatizing transit will get the Eglinton line back on track?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this government is known to work co-operatively with cities and municipalities across this province and has done so with the city of Toronto and with the TTC. We have a memorandum of understanding that is a consensus between the TTC, Toronto and the province of Ontario. We are still discussing the issue with them, we're negotiating with them, and we will come up with a consensus position, as we have in the past.

We work co-operatively with our partners, we will continue to do so, and it will be in consultation with the public: strong, strong communications with the public as well as the TTC and the city of Toronto.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. Yesterday, the minister introduced legislation to create the southwestern Ontario development fund and continue the eastern Ontario development fund. This is an important step and people are interested to know more about it and how the program will work. I know because I've been speaking to people in Windsor about it.

This bill has widespread support from many groups across southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario. There is concern, however, because the opposition critic yesterday expressed that he does not support this bill.

In my community there is a lot of support and optimism for this initiative. People want to see us working together, putting jobs ahead of politics. Is the minister confident that this initiative does indeed have support across the region it would serve?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'd like to thank the member for her advocacy for jobs in southwestern Ontario, which is so important for her region. I know she knows that as well.

I, too, was concerned by the comments that the critic made yesterday in opposition to this—and frankly quite surprised, given the support and interest that I've received on a one-on-one basis from many of his colleagues in the PC caucus, who are very interested in the jobs that these funds could possibly create in their communities. Mr. Speaker, I was surprised as well that he would take that position without hearing out all sides that will occur when this legislation comes forward and is debated in this House.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that his colleagues who have expressed an interest to me about getting jobs in their communities from this fund will persuade the critic to think twice about this, persuade the critic to hear out all sides and listen to groups like the Southwest Economic—

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

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: Speaker, we know that all of us are committed to strengthening Ontario's economy and to making Ontario the best place in North America to do business, but this can only be achieved if we have strong regional economies.

The eastern Ontario development fund has been in place for a number of years now. Ontarians want to be confident that their tax dollars go to good use. These are important investments being made. Is the minister confident that the regional structure for these funds is the right one, and has the eastern Ontario development fund been successful?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Absolutely. Since the eastern Ontario development fund was established in 2008, the Ontario government has invested \$52 million, Mr. Speaker, leveraging private sector investment of \$485 million. These investments have created or retained 11,700 jobs in communities in eastern Ontario, and believe me, Mr. Speaker, I know those communities very much welcome those jobs.

This fund has also demonstrated what we call a higher leverage rate—that's the grant versus the total investment—than regional economic funds in other jurisdictions. Really, Mr. Speaker, that's what it's all about: making investments here on behalf of the province of Ontario, leveraging those investments to even larger investments on the part of the private sector, and creating jobs. It has worked in eastern Ontario; it will work in southwestern Ontario.

It's something we on this side of the House are very, very proud of. I really recommend to both opposition parties that they take a good look at this, because their constituents in southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario are going to be on them for this to help us create jobs in those regions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, last week we heard that Global Sticks of Thunder Bay has shut down, and workers are still waiting for their paycheques.

As you know, the Ontario government has a big investment in Global Sticks; you gave them \$7 million. On May 20 of this year, you put out a press release. It said, "McGuinty Government Creating 130 Jobs for Oliver Paipoonge Township." My question is: How is it possible that you so recently gave them this money and the jobs have disappeared?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Listen, Speaker: We're very, very proud of the northern Ontario heritage fund and the incredible opportunity it brings to northern Ontario, whether it be northeastern Ontario or northwestern Ontario. It brings real jobs and real opportunities.

The fact of the matter is that since 2003, when we re-profiled the northern Ontario heritage fund away from what it used to be before, under the previous Tory government, one that used to fund golf tournaments, we turned it into a job creator. In fact, statistics would indicate that 17,918 jobs have been created because of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp., and we're very proud of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again, to the minister: I don't know where he gets these numbers from; he just picks them out of the air. These are real jobs I'm talking about.

Minister, reports say that it's the Ontario government that is creating the problems for Global Sticks. It has been death by 1,000 cuts. The plant first broke ground in 2009. It took 1,137 days from the start of this project before they were operating. It took two years to get the C of A for the boiler from the Ministry of the Environment. They had no wood supply and they had to get wood from Minnesota.

My question is: After investing over \$7 million of taxpayer funds, what exactly is the minister doing to help get Global Sticks back on track and open its doors?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: To the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, we are working very closely with Global Sticks and have from the beginning. They came forward to us a couple of years ago with a good business plan for a good product, and they had good markets. We did due diligence, provided them with some significant support, but they continued to have some challenges. They came to us and asked for a wood facility licence—no need for a crown allocation. We helped them with that; we were happy to provide that as well.

I wish I had a lot of time to discuss this. What I can tell you is that indeed we continue to work closely with them, including, when they identified that they still had some challenges, we identified over 35 different suppliers of wood for the white birch that they needed for the product.

We are proud of the investment. We understand they're working their way through a restructuring. We're optimistic that indeed they will do so. We will continue to work closely with them. This is an example of a company that came forward with a good product and a good market. We—

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

SECURITIES INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday, Competition Commissioner Melanie Aitken informed the Maple Group consortium that she has concerns, and I quote what she said, "about the likely competitive effects of the proposed transactions ... primarily in connection with equities trading and clearing and settlement services in Canada."

With this new development, the proposed acquisition of the TMX by Maple Group has clearly been put in some jeopardy and doubt. Will the minister reconvene the select committee that looked into the TMX-LSE merger in light of this new development in order to protect Ontario's interests?

1110

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think, given that this is a federal process, we will have to rely on the federal government to protect Ontario's interests.

I'd remind the member opposite that, in fact, the Competition Bureau has stated some concerns, concerns which we signalled last spring. I think the response of the Maple Group to the concerns is that we need to work with the regulator to address those concerns.

I think the work the select committee did last spring was good work. There's also the Ontario Securities Commission, as well as the Quebec securities commission, that have regulatory issues to deal with.

I think it's appropriate for the proper constitutional authorities and regulatory authorities to let this process unfold. I think that's in Ontario's interests, both in the short and long term.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: I am glad the Minister of Finance agrees that the select committee did a good job last time. I think all members of this House acknowledge the excellent work done by the all-party select committee that looked at the original bid by the LSE for the TMX.

In the spirit of all-party co-operation in this new minority environment, surely the minister will reconvene, or will agree to reconvene, the select committee, and not just pass it over to the federal government.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We look forward to working with both opposition parties on a variety of issues. We had, I thought, a very good meeting yesterday, where you, on behalf of your party and leader, put forward some very good suggestions for moving forward, so I do want to do that.

The Competition Bureau has clear authority here; they have the expertise. We have to rely on that regulatory process, in my view, which is established in law, endorsed at both the federal and provincial levels, to take its course. There have been concerns expressed about this. I think this is the right organization. I think that the Maple Group needs to work with the regulators at both the federal and provincial levels.

I'm proud that it was this government and Premier that first raised questions about the control of our major stock markets and our derivative markets. I think the Legislature—all of us—did a good job, and I think we need to let the regulators follow their processes and require the Maple Group to respond to the challenges raised.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Energy. There has been a great deal of interest in Ontario's clean energy economy. Ontario has become a global leader in clean technology and manufacturing through the North-America-leading Green Energy Act and feed-in tariff program. Despite the opposition's constant threats to destroy this economy, it has thrived, creating jobs and establishing manufacturing facilities across the province.

However, we are facing uncertain times in the global economy and my constituents in Oak Ridges–Markham are concerned about the impact on our clean energy economy.

Can the minister please provide this House with an update on the status of Ontario's clean energy economy?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member from Oak Ridges–Markham asks a very important question, because we are in a worldwide fight for jobs. The Green Energy Act and the clean, green economy has not only helped clean up the air for Ontarians, but we've got more than 20,000 jobs and \$26 billion in investments—investments which have gone to places like Oxford county and Tillsonburg; hundreds of jobs in a Siemens plant.

I can tell you, Speaker, these are construction jobs that employ apprentices like the ones who were here yesterday, and journeypersons—jobs that will come to a crashing halt if the bill from the member for Prince Edward–Hastings ever became law, because it would create such uncertainty that the jobs that many are relying on in urban and rural Ontario will not be available and investment will not flow into the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Minister, and I'm certainly happy to hear that Ontario's clean energy economy is still a global leader in manufacturing.

I'm pleased that Ontario is on track to replacing dirty coal-fired generation with cleaner sources of power, and this is cleaning up the air for my constituents, their children and their grandchildren.

Minister, you said that Ontario's clean energy economy is about to transition from a procurement stage to a construction stage. I think that we're all interested in the impacts of this evolution and what it will mean for Ontario's clean energy program.

Minister, can you please tell us what this transition in the clean energy economy will mean for jobs in the sector and for existing manufacturers of clean energy technology?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: We are in a phase when we've had the very important initial two years—lots of

excitement, lots of contracts. Now they're beginning to be built out, and we're constructing all over the province.

We have a feed-in tariff review to make sure that our green energy economy has a solid foundation for the future. I know members like the one from Oxford and like the one from Newmarket–Aurora, where they're hiring with Northland Power, creating hundreds of jobs, buying solar panels, building them in his riding—you know, that's the type of job that will disappear if the member from Prince Edward–Hastings has his day and his bill ever becomes law.

What do you say to the families who are looking for those jobs? What do you say to the apprentices and the journeypersons who are involved in those jobs? What do you say to Ontarians? Where are the jobs? They're in the green—

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

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Rod Jackson: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. On November 16, we saw nothing but yet another example of public information being hidden from public scrutiny and accountability. Hamilton city councillors were told that they would not gain access to details about three bids for the Ivor Wynne football stadium rebuild for the 2015 Pan Am Games—that is, unless they waive their right to inform the public.

How can the people of Ontario be certain that Infrastructure Ontario's cloaks of secrecy are not merely shielding government cronyism?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The procurement that it does is recognized as among the best in the world, internationally. Infrastructure Ontario has completed 52 projects, worth \$21 billion. They have come in on time and under budget.

In terms of procurement, they are in a competition process to try to get the best prices possible for the projects that they're working on. They cannot disclose the information until after the contract is let and all the details have been negotiated.

We have to be really proud of the work that Infrastructure Ontario is doing. It has tremendous credibility in the construction industry and in the financial sectors. Let them do their work, and they'll come in on time and under budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rod Jackson: How can the minister justify the endemic secrecy of the Pan Am planning? It's the same endemic secrecy that blocks Hamilton city councillors from holding government to account unless they waive the right to inform the public; the same endemic secrecy that facilitates the sole-sourced equestrian deal in Caledon, where Pan Am CEO Ian Troop's brother benefited when he sold land to the bidder for the development; and the same secrecy that denies freedom-of-information re-

quests by the opposition to discover the secretariat's updated budget forecasts.

Minister, will you grant free access to public information so that Ontarians can be sure that hand-picked Liberal cronies are not serving their personal best interests cloaked behind Kafkaesque policies?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: First of all, I want to take the opportunity to congratulate the member on his election. Having just gone through an election campaign, I'm sure the member is fully aware of the tremendous level of investment in Hamilton and the confidence that the government of Ontario has shown in Hamilton with respect to the infrastructure that is ongoing there. It has been unprecedented in terms of what we have provided to the city of Hamilton.

We want to implement that significant infrastructure in a professional, responsible manner. That means that, in the procurement process, it is absolutely imperative that the information remain confidential until the amount is known, until the contract is announced, because otherwise, the competition is destroyed. So please understand the process.

I'd be happy to sit down with the member and talk to him about the operations of Infrastructure Ontario and most—

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

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. There seems to be a growing consensus that bullying in our schools is a problem that needs to be confronted. Students who want to tackle this problem have a simple question: Will they be able to establish gay-straight alliance clubs in their schools?

1120

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, today I had the opportunity, together with the Minister of Education, to speak about a new initiative. I certainly hope we can count on support from all members of this Legislature. What we simply want to do is convey to all our children in all our schools that they have our support. We want our schools to be warm, welcoming, safe, secure and accepting. We want all our kids to feel free to be who they are.

In response to my honourable colleague's question, yes, we're going to require that, at every school where students request that this be put in place, they be permitted to organize themselves with a gay-straight alliance. It may not be that name that they use, but the important thing is we're going to have that kind of supportive group there available in all our schools.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, I was starting to feel a little bit positive and then, all of a sudden, got disappointed near the end there.

Nearly two-thirds of LGBTQ students and their parents say that they feel unsafe in their schools. There have

been at least three young people who have taken their own lives in the province of Ontario. It is heartbreaking, Speaker, but it is also completely unacceptable.

Can we finally put the politics aside and answer a simple question? Will students who want a GSA club in their schools be allowed to put one together and have one in their schools?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Yes. The answer to that, very simply, is yes. In fact, that wording is in the bill. I appreciate the sincere passion demonstrated by my honourable colleague, and I think we have a shared purpose. I invite all legislators in this assembly to come together on this very important issue.

We need to be able to say to all our kids in all our schools that we're going to stand up for them and that you will not be the subject of discrimination on the basis of gender or race or place of origin or tradition or culture or sexual orientation. We need to speak with one voice on this issue together as adults in the province of Ontario. Our intention through this bill is to send that message loud and clear.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. These are uncertain times in the global economy and challenging times for our families. This is the time to make bold choices to continue our investment in developing the skills and education of the people of Ontario. In tough times, we need to make the right choices while we take the steps to move forward together.

Speaker, the families in my constituency are worried about the rising cost of post-secondary education. Getting students to pursue post-secondary education is critical to making Ontario the most attractive place in the world for knowledge-based jobs.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, what is the minister doing to ensure that post-secondary education is affordable and accessible for college and university students at this time?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to congratulate the new member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, who is joining us in the House. It's great to have another former mayor amongst us; some of us have a special affinity for that.

Under the Premier's leadership, and I think the Premier has stated this over and over again, education is an unqualified priority for our government. We have added 200,000 spaces, so 200,000 more Ontarians get a yes when they apply for college or university; they used to get a no. We have increased the number of students who receive OSAP support by 66%, and we have a program for low-income students that gives them 50% of their tuition.

As you know, we are moving forward now on our election commitment of a 30% reduction for first-entry students in our post-secondary education system. If there

is a supplementary, I'll be happy to elaborate on the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister. I remember the time when our government took office in 2003. Successive NDP and PC governments had abandoned our colleges and universities, leaving us with too many students jammed into cold, outdated buildings while allowing tuition to skyrocket. I am proud that our government has taken the action to implement the 30% Ontario Trillium tuition grant, an important investment to the future of Ontario students.

Students entering their first year of post-secondary education have raised their concern about the 30% tuition grant. Their concern is that they will not be eligible for the grant since they are enrolled in a professional program. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities: How is the minister going to ensure that these first-year students in professional programs are eligible for the 30% tuition grant?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: This grant applies to families whose household income is less than \$160,000; to students who are within four years of high school, which will be upwards of about 340,000 students. It applies to all first-entry programs. So, if you're going to Ryerson University and you go into nursing, you're in a first-entry program and you'll apply those grants.

It is one of the most significant assistances to working families in difficult times. It's not just an investment in young people—especially those from smaller communities like you represent, who often have to travel to get the specializations they want and have a particularly difficult challenge and additional costs, which is why we have the satellite campus program and others. It's also important to all of us as we get older, because we're going to rely on the next generation to support those of us with greying hair around here, and we want them to have the best opportunity for the best jobs.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier: I'm very pleased that you're going to take further steps to respond to the very serious issue of bullying and its devastating consequences on our students—all of our students. We need to provide them with a safe and secure environment for learning.

Today, after two years of consultations with students, with parents, with educators, I introduce for the first time in the province of Ontario a piece of legislation designed with the sole purpose of comprehensively addressing the problem of bullying in our schools. I would say to you, Premier, it deals with raising awareness, prevention, accountability and the Ministry of Education assuming leadership. Are you prepared to support this bill?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I thank my honourable colleague for her question, and I thank her for her initiative. I have yet to see the bill, but I think there's good news here. I think a lot of us are on the same page. I look

forward to seeing the bill, learning a bit more about it and seeing what we can do to make common cause.

Again, I think there is a growing sense of responsibility that we share in this Legislature to send a very important message to all of our children, right across this province, who find themselves in any one of our schools, that we are going to stand up for their interest. I get the strongest sense that is exactly the intention of my honourable colleague. As I say, I look forward to looking at her bill closely and seeing what we can do to make common cause on this very important issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm encouraged because we can no longer implement pieces of legislation that are ad hoc. We need to take a comprehensive approach. We need to ensure accountability. We need to make sure that statistics on bullying that are kept in our schools, in our boards, are provided to the Ministry of Education and that each year, the Minister of Education can report to the public as to what's going on in order that we can do everything possible to reduce the instances of bullying. This bill will do that.

1130

This bill will also provide a process to deal with the reporting, the monitoring, the investigating. This bill will also make sure that our teachers are provided with inservicing in order that they can respond and intervene appropriately. Also, and finally, it makes the Ministry of the Education the lead body tasked with devising and implementing a province-wide bullying prevention and intervention policy. Will you do so?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, Speaker, this is all very encouraging. As I understand it, our bill as well takes into account a responsibility that we place on the ministry to collect data and to make that public. What our bill essentially does is give the force of law to policies that pre-existed. It adds to that, but essentially it says to our school boards, "We're going to step it up now when it comes to treating bullying seriously. We're going to impose a legal obligation on you this time around to prevent bullying, to intervene where it takes place and to ensure that there are progressive consequences, up to and including expulsion."

So I think, Speaker, there's a lot of common ground here. I'm encouraged by the information I'm receiving from my honourable colleague and I'm convinced that we can and will in fact work together on this.

HOME CARE

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Yesterday, Port Colborne city council in my riding unanimously passed a motion calling for stable home care funding. The Niagara peninsula, as you know, has the largest concentration of seniors in Ontario and Canada, yet the services that these seniors have access to, to stay healthy in their homes, are hard to access and are inconsistent in the Niagara peninsula and across the province. Port Colborne, in their

motion, asked for the minister's help. Will the minister work with Port Colborne and other local municipalities across our province to develop a stable and comprehensive program of home care in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you very much for the question, because enhancing supports for home care is a key priority for my ministry and for our government. We believe—in fact, we know—that the more we can do to help support people in their own homes actually takes pressure off our hospitals and our emergency departments and our long-term-care homes, so investing in the community, providing funding to do that, is exactly what we are doing.

We have significantly increased funding to the home care sector. We've also added new programs like our Aging at Home program that is doing exactly what the member opposite has talked about: helping support people in their own homes.

Speaker, we are very encouraged by progress that has been made across the province in bringing people home after they've been in hospital. I'll be happy to speak more to that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: The motion notes the importance of supportive homemaking services. Those services have been seriously eroded over the last 20 years. The CCAC criteria provides for 90 hours of care in their homes, but the average person is only getting 30 hours of care across the province, and in many cases housekeeping is not allowed. For many seniors, it isn't a complex health issue that forces them to move out of their home; it's rather the daily tasks of cooking, laundry and housekeeping. During the election, the Ontario New Democrats recognized this and we developed a plan to provide seniors with the supportive services they need. Will the minister work with us, the local municipalities and the health care groups to develop a province-wide plan for supporting seniors in their homes?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, as I said in the first question, helping people stay at home is a very high priority for us. That is what our healthy homes renovation tax credit is part of. We are adding three million hours of PSW support for exactly the kind of functions that the member opposite has spoken about. We've got some great successes. We are now seeing fewer people getting on the list for long-term care. We're seeing more people coming home from hospital, stabilizing at home so that they don't need to go into long-term care. This is exactly where we need to go, and this is where we are going.

DIABETES

Mr. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. November is Diabetes Month. In Ontario, diabetes is on the rise. Today, an estimated 1.2 million people have been diagnosed with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. This astounding number represents 8.3% of the population.

Diabetes is serious and needs managing. If neglected, the complications of diabetes can lead to serious long-term complications, including heart and kidney disease, stroke, blindness and, often, amputation.

Diabetes also counts for a significant number of emergency room visits each year and costs the health care system an estimated \$4.9 billion every year.

Mr. Speaker, to the outstanding Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Can the minister please tell us what this government is doing to help Ontarians living with and affected by diabetes?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker, through you to the outstanding member from Peterborough, for this really important question, because November is Diabetes Awareness Month.

Speaker, I'm very proud of what we have been able to do. For example, Ontario is the first province in Canada to fund diabetes insulin pumps for young people and adults with type 1 diabetes. We're also creating centres of excellence in bariatric surgery. We are funding over 2,000 procedures a year. It means less waiting for people. It also means care closer to home.

Through the MedsCheck program, people with diabetes have access to a pharmacist who will help them with their medications. We're increasing the number of diabetes education teams, Speaker. These are teams of people who work with people who have diabetes or are at risk of diabetes, and they are really improving the health care for people with diabetes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just a reminder, again: good question period. Thank you very much. I believe we are beginning to use our inside voices, and I appreciate that.

The second thing I'd like to mention to you is that there are no deferred votes today, so this House stands recessed until 3 o'clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1137 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LAKE SIMCOE REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Mrs. Julia Munro: Mr. Speaker, 2011 marks the 60th anniversary of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. For the last six decades, the conservation authority has worked tirelessly to protect Lake Simcoe, our rivers, streams and watershed.

One of its greatest strengths is its ability to work together and build partnerships with municipalities, landowners, environmental groups and the general public. It prevents erosion along watercourses, helps to prevent flooding, preserves water quality, protects wetlands and provides key scientific research. Thousands of local residents enjoy using its conservation areas, and thousands have worked with the conservation authority in its projects.

Its work as an educator is vital in teaching our young people about the environment, about the effects of conservation on our lives, and how they can help to do their part. The outdoor education centre at Scanlon Creek has taught thousands of children about natural heritage and stewardship.

So congratulations to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority on 60 years of work to make our watershed healthy, safe and a wonderful place to live. Thank you to all of the staff, supporters and volunteers for all the hard work you have done to make the conservation authority such a success.

EVENTS IN HAMILTON EAST— STONEY CREEK

Mr. Paul Miller: In May 2008, I told the Legislature about the deteriorating facilities at Winona public elementary school. Winona public school has grown in leaps and bounds from its humble beginnings as a small rural school. The current facility is now home to over 650 students and serves as a glowing example of educational achievement.

I'm excited to announce that the school will be relocating to a brand new facility following the Christmas holidays. A tribute to the school will be held tomorrow night. This event will allow students, faculty, alumnae and friends the opportunity to reflect on the rich history that has characterized this institution and to celebrate that the school will finally have a facility that mirrors its reputation within our community. Congratulations.

I would also like to congratulate my constituent and friend Judy Kloosterman on her new position beginning in the new year as community developer in east Hamilton. Judy has given 18 years of unparalleled dedication to our community as a coordinator at CATCH, a group providing support for children and families in east Hamilton. She will undoubtedly bring the same spirit and enthusiasm in her new role. The people of Hamilton are lucky to have her working in our community. Congratulations, Judy. I look forward to continuing to work together for years to come.

LAKE SIMCOE REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I would also like to recognize the 60th anniversary of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. The authority's leadership in the restoration and protection of the environment and the health of Lake Simcoe and its watershed won it the 2009 Thies International Riverprize.

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority is an organization committed to science and research, protection and restoration, and education and outreach, allowing it to effectively respond to changes in our environment.

With the leadership of the mayor of East Gwillimbury, Virginia Hackson, serving as chair, the support of Gayle

Wood as chief administrative officer, and the commitment of many employees and volunteers, the authority has prevented an estimated 16.5 tons of phosphorus from reaching Lake Simcoe each year.

Since being established in 1951, it has come to encompass all of the municipalities bordering the lake, as well as several municipalities that are located in the watershed. It played an integral role in the development of the Lake Simcoe Protection Act of 2008, and has been recognized internationally.

I am certain the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority will continue to work hard to protect the sensitive natural resources located in the watershed, and will do so in collaboration with our community, municipalities, and the provincial government.

Congratulations on 60 successful years of preserving our environment.

RICK HANSEN INSTITUTE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to welcome our special guests from the Rick Hansen Institute and others from Ontario's spinal cord injury community, who are joining us today at Queen's Park.

Twenty-five years ago, a man with a dream and a vision set out to cross the globe in his wheelchair to increase awareness of spinal cord injuries. Rick Hansen, with his epic Man In Motion World Tour, crossed the finish line to a banner that read, "The End is Just the Beginning." Today the goal of the Rick Hansen Institute is to reduce the severity of injury and improve health care outcomes for all those with spinal cord injuries. Their goal is a world without paralysis after spinal cord injury.

I would like, on behalf of all of us here in the Legislature, to thank the Rick Hansen Institute, their Ontario-based researchers and their many, many volunteers who are helping those with spinal cord injuries lead fuller and more productive lives. We are very honoured to have you visit us here today at Queen's Park.

COMMUNITY CARE EAST YORK

Mr. Michael Prue: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a wonderful group in my community: Community Care East York.

Community Care East York was founded 40 years ago, in 1971, and 23 years ago, Community Care East York became the very first agency in Ontario to get a home care contract. They held that contract for some 15 years, until 2003, under the capable and wonderful leadership of Jean Greene.

Unfortunately, in 2003, through the competitive bidding process, they were not successful. But never to be undone, they retooled and kept community care going as a wellness, housing and health promotion body that helps seniors.

They will be celebrating their 40th anniversary on December 8 at the York reception hall at 1100 Millwood, in the riding of Don Valley West.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Woohoo!

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes. But it's bittersweet, because on January 1, 2012, they will be forced to amalgamate with WoodGreen services. They are doing so to protect their staff, and to make sure their resources are maintained and their 8,000 clients continue to receive service. We love everything they've done, we wish them well and we hope the amalgamation goes well.

CANADA WORLD YOUTH

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to recognize the 40th anniversary of Canada World Youth, a non-profit organization offering international educational programs for young people.

Over the years, 34,000 youth have taken part in exchange and international co-operation programs in over 67 countries. Right now young people from across Ontario are volunteering through Canada World Youth both in Canada and around the world. Their dedicated and passionate contributions to development projects and community building yield concrete and uplifting outcomes in the communities and countries they visit.

Specifically, Canada World Youth programs focus on the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, particularly in environment, health and gender equity.

Mr. Speaker, six youth from my riding of Ottawa Centre are currently involved in Canada World Youth programs. I would like to thank Zoé Bordeleau-Cass, Henry Fiegler, Jordan Bouchard, Cole Fischer, Sebastien Engelmann and Zachary Kershman for their participation in the program.

Canada World Youth continues to transform the lives of thousands of young Canadians by helping them to become active citizens and compassionate leaders. I invite all MPPs in this House to learn more about Canada World Youth and to encourage young people in your communities to consider an incredible experience like this.

DAVE GIONET

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Mr. Speaker, I believe that anyone who serves in the armed forces is a hero. They give up their precious time with family and sacrifice their lives so that we can live in a free, democratic society. All too often, our soldiers and veterans go unnoticed and unappreciated. We need to remember and thank them every day, not just once a year.

1510

I met a hero during the recent election campaign who lives in my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London. Master Corporal Dave Gionet served two tours in Afghanistan: in 2005 in Kabul and in 2007 in Kandahar. On his second tour in Kandahar, he encountered three IEDs, improvised explosive devices. On the first IED strike, he saved the life of an American soldier. During the second strike, Master Corporal Gionet saved the life of a fellow crew

member who had become trapped in their damaged vehicle. After freeing the driver, Master Corporal Gionet performed life-saving first aid despite the imminent risk of fire, explosion and enemy attack.

For his actions, Master Corporal Gionet was one of the first recipients of the Medal of Military Valour, awarded for an act of valour or devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy, and the Sacrifice Medal from Her Excellency the Right Hon. Michaëlle Jean, former Governor General of Canada.

McMASTER MARAUDERS FOOTBALL TEAM

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure today to rise and congratulate the McMaster Marauders football team on their dramatic Vanier Cup triumph and for returning the trophy to the province of Ontario.

Led by coach Stefan Ptaszek and MVP quarterback Kyle Quinlan, the underdog Marauders took an early lead and withstood a furious second-half comeback by a very strong Laval team. The lead went back and forth before Tyler Crapigna secured the victory for Mac in double overtime in what TSN analyst Duane Forde called the greatest game ever.

Earlier this afternoon, McMaster held a large celebration for the team that won the school's first national football championship. I want to congratulate the team, and specifically three players from my community of Oakville: wide receiver Robert Babic, who tied a Vanier Cup record with 12 receptions in the game, as well as wide receiver Trevor Reid and running back Stephen Kofi-Akuffo. Their contributions, along with many others' from communities throughout Ontario, helped McMaster bring the Vanier Cup right back where it belongs: in the province of Ontario.

TREK TO BETHLEHEM IN BALA

Mr. Norm Miller: It is often said it takes a whole village to raise a child. On this coming Saturday night, it will take the whole town to successfully stage the annual Trek to Bethlehem in Bala, Muskoka, a town of just over 500 year-round residents. I would like to pay tribute to one of the finest examples of community spirit in this entire province.

Patricia Gidley, chairperson of the organizing committee, tells me that at least one out of every five people in Bala contributes to making the town's Trek to Bethlehem a success. That includes those who voluntarily turn off their house lights along the route, others who make sandwiches for hungry visitors at the Bala Arena, volunteers who turn out to sing carols for hours on end at the community centre and many others who never get recognized. A small team of men with hammers spends all day Friday knocking together the sets that will come alive on Saturday night, and then shows up on Sunday to take it all down again.

This is the 19th year in a row that Bala has turned the circle of streets into a biblical village that tells the story of how Joseph and Mary travelled to Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago. Year after year, it has attracted hundreds of visitors from around Ontario.

The trek's success owes a lot to the organizing efforts of people like Patricia Gidley, Nan Allen, Jack Hutton and many others, but the real credit goes to the entire town of Bala. This year's trek takes place this Saturday evening, December 3, and I would like to encourage all members to come to Bala and congratulate the village of Bala on this great event.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Ms. Broten moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

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 minister for a short statement.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'll make my statement during ministerial statements. Thank you, Speaker.

ANTI-BULLYING ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA LUTTE CONTRE L'INTIMIDATION

Mrs. Witmer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to designate Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in Schools and to provide for bullying prevention curricula, policies and administrative accountability in schools / Projet de loi 14, Loi désignant la Semaine de la sensibilisation à l'intimidation et de la prévention dans les écoles et prévoyant des programmes-cadres, des politiques et une responsabilité administrative à l'égard de la prévention de l'intimidation dans les écoles.

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.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is a bill that is the first and only bill that focuses solely on bullying. It's a comprehensive bill that begins with the introduction of bullying prevention into the curriculum in kindergarten and deals with greater accountability and formal reporting processes. It does

address the concerns that we've heard from people in the province of Ontario.

ONTARIO SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR L'ASSOCIATION DES INGÉNIEURS DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Kwinter moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers / Projet de loi 15, Loi concernant l'Association des ingénieurs 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.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Mr. Speaker, this reintroduces Bill 148, a bill that received unanimous consent at second reading in the 39th Parliament. It doesn't alter the Professional Engineers Act, but it does provide the legislative authority for the society to be the advocate for the professional engineers.

PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE LIÉE AUX CHIENS

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act to amend the Animals for Research Act and the Dog Owners' Liability Act with respect to pit bulls / Projet de loi 16, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche et la Loi sur la responsabilité des propriétaires de chiens en ce qui a trait aux pit-bulls.

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.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Yes, Speaker, thank you. I'd like to also, at this time, say this bill is being co-sponsored by a member from the government side, the member from Welland—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Niagara Falls.

Mr. Randy Hillier:—Niagara Falls, pardon me, and also from the third party, the member from Highland—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Parkdale–High Park.

Mr. Randy Hillier:—from Parkdale–High Park.

This bill repeals provisions in the Animals for Research Act relating to the disposition of pit bulls under that act. The bill also repeals provisions in the Dog Owners' Liability Act that prohibit restricted pit bulls and provide for controls on pit bulls.

Speaker, this is generally referred to or commonly referred to as the breed-specific legislation or the ban on pit bulls. Thank you very much.

1520

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE JUIF

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to proclaim the month of May Jewish Heritage Month / Projet de loi 17, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine juif.

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.

Mr. Mike Colle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the co-sponsors of this bill, the member from Parkdale–High Park and the member from Thornhill, for agreeing to co-sponsor the bill.

What this bill would do, if passed: It's a very important time to appreciate and recognize the incredible contributions Ontarians of Jewish heritage have made to the building of this province. It's time to celebrate together their accomplishments, their trials and the great contributions they made to our province and country.

RESPECT FOR VOTERS ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RESPECT DES ÉLECTEURS

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act to promote respect for voters / Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative pour promouvoir le respect des électeurs.

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 would ensure MPPs remain accountable to their constituents. MPPs who decide to switch political parties mid-term would remain accountable to their constituents by forcing a by-election before crossing the floor.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Most definitely expresses the power of one.

Thank you.

MOTIONS

MEMBER FOR PICKERING– SCARBOROUGH EAST

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I believe there is unanimous consent that the member for Pickering–Scarborough East may speak and vote from her place while seated.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You've heard the motion. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ANNUAL REPORT, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2010 annual report of the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES PRÉVENTION DE L'INTIMIDATION

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: A week ago today I stood in this House to speak about the tragic impact bullying can have in our schools and on our communities. I stood in this House with a promise to our Premier, to the members of this House, to every Ontarian to look at what more government can do and should be doing to ensure our schools are safe and inclusive.

I stood in this House as a minister and as a mother with the hope that this Legislature could come together to make it better for students in this province. So today I am so proud to stand here to tell you that we are introducing legislation, the Accepting Schools Act, that, if passed, will make it better for students who are bullied and prevent bullying from happening in the first place.

Aujourd'hui, c'est avec une grande fierté que je me lève pour vous dire que nous présenterons un projet de loi qui, s'il est adopté, améliorera la situation des élèves qui subissent l'intimidation et, en premier lieu, empêchera l'intimidation de se produire.

It is incumbent on each and every one of us—government, teachers, parents, peers, the whole community—to find the pathway forward that allows every student to feel safe, included and welcome in Ontario schools. That's our commitment to Ontario's children and families.

I'm proud to stand here to tell you that the legislation I am introducing today clearly states that we believe that a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment, where all students feel accepted, is a necessary condition for student success; that we understand that students cannot be expected to reach their full potential in an environment where they feel insecure or intimidated; that we

recognize that a whole-school approach is required; and that everyone has a role to play in creating a positive school climate and preventing inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia.

Mr. Speaker, bullying is an underestimated and pervasive problem in our schools and in our communities. The statistics are clear. A 2009 survey of grade 7 to 12 students by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health found that almost one in three students has been bullied at school. A 2011 national climate survey by Egale found that 64% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students, and 61% of students with LGBTQ parents, felt unsafe at school.

We know that violence against women and girls remains a serious problem, and we know that discrimination based on race continues to persist. Discrimination based on disability remains as well. We believe that all students should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, family status or disability. That's why Ontario is so committed to making our schools safe, inclusive and healthy places for all students.

C'est pourquoi l'Ontario est à un tel point déterminé à faire de nos écoles des lieux sains, inclusifs et sécuritaires pour tous les élèves.

As a result of the important steps that we have already been taking, Ontario is recognized across jurisdictions as leading the way with aggressive safe schools legislation. Ontario's safe schools strategy provides students with the support they need to succeed inside and outside of the classroom.

Since 2004, this government has invested \$285 million in safe schools initiatives that are helping make Ontario schools some of the safest in the world. Ontario was the first province in Canada to require all school staff to report serious student incidents, including bullying, to the principal. Ontario also leads the way in building more inclusive schools, with a requirement that every school board have in place equity and inclusive education policies aimed at supporting all students. But there is more work to do to make our schools safe for every student—safe from homophobic bullying and other types of racist or misogynistic bullying.

Mais il reste du travail à faire pour que tous les élèves se sentent en sécurité dans nos écoles et pour protéger nos écoles de l'intimidation homophobe et d'autres formes d'intimidation fondée sur le racisme ou la misogynie.

Mr. Speaker, that's why I'm standing here today: to ask all members of this House to support the Accepting Schools Act. This legislation is the next step, but there are many more steps ahead.

If passed, the Accepting Schools Act will create legal obligations for boards to address bullying prevention and early intervention, progressive discipline, and equity and inclusive education. The proposed legislation will pro-

vide clear expectations and increase accountability for school boards and bullies, including making expulsion a possible consequence for bullying.

We will give teachers and staff the resources and training they need to intervene early and make those teachable moments matter. We're going to work very closely with experts and with our partners in education to make sure we get it right.

1530

For the first time ever, we are defining bullying in legislation so that every student, every teacher, every principal and every parent knows what we're talking about when we say bullying is not okay in our schools. In addition, the bill will designate the first week of every November to recognize Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in legislation, to encourage and support existing activities in boards and within communities to make clear that bullying must end.

The purpose of this bill is multi-faceted and speaks to all components of this very complex issue. If passed, this legislation will:

- create schools in Ontario that are safe, inclusive and accepting of all students;
- encourage a positive school climate;
- prevent inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia;
- address inappropriate student behaviour and promote early intervention;
- provide support for students who are impacted by the inappropriate behaviour of other students;
- establish disciplinary approaches that promote positive behaviour and use measures that include appropriate consequences and supports for students; and
- provide students with a safe learning environment.

That is our commitment to Ontarians. We want each and every child to feel safe, to feel secure, to feel free to be who they are in our schools every day and in every corner of the province.

That's why the Accepting Schools Act, if passed, will also create a legal obligation for boards and schools to support student activities and organizations that promote gender equity; promote antiracism; promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people with disabilities; and promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name "gay-straight alliance" or another name.

We are unequivocal in our commitment that Ontario schools will be places where all of our students will be supported, where all of our students will be loved for who they are. We want to do our part to end bullying in our schools, but we will not get there alone. We need the whole school community to be involved. We all have a role to play in helping to make our schools safer.

Nous avons tous un rôle à jouer pour rendre nos écoles plus sécuritaires.

We need parents, teachers, principals, community organizations and students to be part of the solution, just like so many are in so many schools across our province.

Mr. Speaker, there are remarkable things going on in our schools, led by passionate teachers, by inclusive and equity-focused students, by principals who care and boards who want the best for the students they serve. The work they are doing every day is making school a safer place for students. This bill, if passed, will give boards, educators and students the support that they need to keep making that difference in their communities and in their schools for all of our students.

We all have a responsibility to take action, and Mr. Speaker, I am proud that our government is accepting that responsibility. We can bring change by taking action and using powerful, positive words.

Monsieur le Président, nous pouvons effectuer un changement en passant à l'action et en utilisant des mots positifs puissants.

This proposed legislation is the action we are taking, but words also matter. We know about the power of words to create fear and pain, to spread hatred, homophobia, sexism and racism. But let's not forget the power of positive words: "I love you." "I believe in you." "I am proud of you." "You can do it." That's why I'm so proud of the words we are saying today to Ontario students. Together, we are going to make every school in every part of our province an accepting school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries?

Response?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise, on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus, to support anti-bullying measures in this Legislature. Specifically, I would like to congratulate the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, a former teacher, an education critic and a former Minister of Education, who has devoted many years of her life to strong advocacy on anti-bullying measures.

In particular, I'd like to thank her for her success in entrenching into law Bullying Awareness Week—my own daughter experienced and participated in anti-bullying week a few weeks ago—and to her I want to say thank you. I'd also like to thank her for the comprehensive legislation she introduced earlier today to prevent bullying in our schools.

Ontario has reached a breaking point with bullying in our schools. Moments ago on my BlackBerry, I read that we're not the only ones. In Quebec, a 15-year-old girl committed suicide today because of the history of bullying she had encountered—it's in the Ottawa Citizen and the National Post.

We know that intense bullying was a factor in preteen and teenage suicides in our own province just recently. And we know some students have opted to change schools or drop out of school altogether because they couldn't face another day looking at their tormenters.

We in this chamber know that bullying has changed an awful lot since we were in school. When cyber bullying came, it brought an entire new generation of Internet users into an experience that none of us had ever seen. Race-based, gender-based, sexuality-based, economic-based, and even red-hair and freckle-face-based bullying came with a new vitriol that none of us seated in this room have ever seen and never hope to see with our own kids.

When it comes to preventing bullying and protecting our children, my heart believes that every MPP in this chamber is on the same page. We have an opportunity to act and to put into law substantive initiatives that will protect school kids. We have a golden opportunity.

We have a minority Parliament. Each member's voice in this chamber is now equal. Together, we can improve legislation and, possibly in the spirit of co-operation, Mr. Speaker, we may actually want to consider something that I don't believe has been done since I have been in this chamber: taking an opposition member's bill and a government bill and merging them together to strengthen the bill.

We can signal to children that hope is before us and a solution is coming, and we have the means to work with others across this chamber to prevent bullying and the harmful effects it's having on our schools.

I just want to caution some members, however, in this new era. We have a serious issue, and it's making headlines. It requires a thoughtful solution, not just an ad hoc one.

I also want to suggest that in this minority Parliament there's going to be lots of opportunity to take political potshots, and we can play partisan games, but not on this issue. This issue is too important. Children's safety, their health, their well-being are too important for all of us to ignore. If there was ever an issue to cast partisanship aside, Mr. Speaker, it is this one.

So I say to the members in the government and to my colleagues in the third party, on behalf of the official opposition, we will be serious about passing anti-bullying legislation, starting, of course, with Mrs. Witmer's legislation and ending, of course, with the government's legislation, because we believe that measures included in both of those bills will make Ontario the leader in North America in anti-bullying legislation.

That is something every single member in this room can do, and we can do it together. Everyone ought to be serious about doing that, because once this legislation is passed, once this legislation becomes law, one child who is hiding under their bed, one child who has decided to take his or her own life or one child who has dropped out of school will be one child too many. It is up to all of us. So on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I offer an olive branch to work together and to support something that we can all get right.

1540

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my honour—indeed it's my privilege—to rise today and discuss this bill. I would say that in this chamber today there is no disagreement about

the scale of the problem before us and the gravity of the problem before us. Bullying is quite literally a life-and-death issue. There are immediate deaths and there is the scarring of personalities that people carry throughout their lives. So it is incumbent on this Legislature, on these members, to take this opportunity now to move forward on this issue.

It's unfortunate that it takes tragic events to move an issue forward into the light of day, into action on this floor. The member for Nepean–Carleton spoke very eloquently recently about a suicide that was bullying related. All of us, I believe, in this chamber were moved by that and will carry that with us into the debate on this bill.

We're at this point of opportunity; we're at a crucial point in the time and the life of the schools in this province. We in the NDP welcome the opportunity to debate this bill, to amend it, to make sure that what comes back to this House is legislation that will, in the end, deal with the issue and make a difference in the lives of children and families across Ontario. Homophobic, racist, gender-based bullying—all bullying—needs to become part of Ontario's past. It has to be cleared out of our future.

The bill before us will provide material for committee hearings in which we will listen to people, listen to their needs and listen to their solutions and—my hope, through amendment—make this bill one that can truly address the issues and the decisions before us.

This bill, as we've gone through it, for the most part seems to codify policies that are already in place. It raises up their importance, puts them into law so they have greater weight. It does not address a lot of new territory, but still, giving greater weight, greater authority: a useful thing.

The bill does raise a number of matters, a number of questions, and those were touched on by the minister very fleetingly in her remarks. Minister, there is no question that words matter. "Gay-straight alliance" is a very powerful term, a very positive term. We in this House need to know that those words and their power will be accessible to students in schools across this province. That step being taken will break a variety of barriers—barriers that need to be broken. We need to know that this reality will be able to speak its name in public in schools throughout this province.

We have to ask, and I expect that the government will bring this forward in the course of debate, how this bill meshes with strategy to address children's mental health issues. There are a variety of routes that lead to that tree of bullying. Children's mental health is one of those routes that has to be addressed, and I'm looking forward to hearing the government talk about how this bill will be integrated with the children's mental health strategy.

We want to hear, and I want the government to address, how teachers, principals and school boards will be given the tools, the training and the support to act on bullying.

All of us know teachers. All of us know the stresses that they deal with, the volume that they deal with and

the intricate personal issues that they must contend with in schools. It's not enough to tell them: Deal with bullying. They need the tools; they need the support.

We also will need to hear from the government on how those issues of poverty, poor housing and other social stresses will be addressed so that the bill becomes more than words on a page but has the force of momentum in society as a whole to deal with those things that cause bullying.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

ACCESSIBILITY IN THE HOUSE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to point out just something very subtle and a little change for all members, but in particular on the government side. There's a set of steps at the back of the room to accommodate, and I would just bring that to your attention, to make sure that you're not used to walking in a straight line—there's a set of stairs there. I don't want to see any tumbles. I just thought I'd bring that to your attention. Thank you very much.

It's now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

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."

The names on this petition come from Windermere and Commissioners Road in west London. I will sign this and I will ask the page to have the member from London West sign it as well.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

“Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service...; and

“Whereas,” since October 2009, “insured PET scans” are performed “in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

“We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Sebastian to bring it to the Clerk.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: “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 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 affix my name, Mr. Speaker.

TAXATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this 900-name petition coming from the people of Nickel Belt. It reads as follows:

1550

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Christian to send it to the Clerk.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I’m pleased to table this petition on behalf of my constituents in Ottawa Centre.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I attest to this petition and send it to the table via page Yousef. Thank you.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents, which would include Heather Rutherford, the chair of Clarington Wind Concerns. I want to pay respect to the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, Todd Smith, for the work he’s done. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming that 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” for protection;

“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 these findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m pleased to submit this petition entitled Temporary Replacement Workers, and I’ll read it:

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

“Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.”

I respectfully submit this petition, will affix my name to it and give it to my good friend Theodore to submit to the Clerk.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: On behalf of my constituents in Huron–Bruce, I’m pleased to present the following petition:

“Whereas the 200-foot-high CAW industrial wind turbine being built in the middle of Port Elgin residences and cottages does not comply with the provincial law requiring 550-metre setbacks (to preserve people’s health and safety); and

“Whereas it was rejected by the democratically elected municipality and local residents, who were not adequately informed about the project;

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

“To immediately halt construction of the turbine and require it to be moved to a site that does not violate

provincial legislation as passed under the Green Energy Act in 2009. We also petition that area residents be adequately informed about the siting and not surprised by sudden construction of a wind turbine.”

I support this petition, and I affix my signature.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim Wilson: 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 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 agree with the petition, and I will sign it.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I too have a petition relating to the siting of wind farms. It is 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 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 affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Robert Bailey: 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 USA and Europe; and

“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; and

“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 at 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do 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 that petition, affix my signature and send it down with Yousef.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have 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;

1600

“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.”

Speaker, I support this petition and affix my name to it and send it down with Andrew.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Speaker; just under the wire.

“Petition to Restore Medical Laboratory Services in Elmvale.

“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 will sign it. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 29, 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: I'll be sharing my time with my colleague the honourable member from Barrie.

First of all, let me acknowledge for a moment what an honour it is to be here at Queen's Park and thank the people in Prince Edward–Hastings who put their faith in me to be their representative and their voice in the Ontario Legislature. I can assure you that I've already begun to make my voice known.

I'd like to thank our former representative, Leona Dombrowsky, who spent 12 years working to try and make Ontario a better place. I wish the former Minister of Agriculture, Environment, and Education all the best in the next phase of her life.

It took a tireless effort by many people, but I couldn't have made it here without the love, support and dedication of my beautiful wife of 12 years, Tawnya. She's a high school teacher at Moira Secondary School in Belleville, where, by the way, the junior football team, the Moira Trojans, just won the National Capital Bowl for the first time in the school's history. With that win, I won a jug of maple syrup from Leeds–Grenville from our colleague Steve Clark, whose school from Brockville unfortunately came out on the losing end of that game. I'd like to congratulate the coach of that team, too: Todd Crawford. He's from the famous Crawford sporting family from Belleville. Congrats to the entire east-end Belleville school on their historic season.

Tawnya and my two little girls, Payton and Reagan, are the shining lights of my life. Anybody who knows me knows that. As many of you know, it takes a family effort and a community effort to win a seat here in the Legislative Assembly. My wife was there with me on many occasions during the campaign over the summer months. My two little girls saw every single summer fair and festival that you can imagine, from Maynooth to Milford and all points in between, and it cost me a lot of money in rides with the carny shows because the kids were there; they're eight and 11 years old. You can imagine the votes that Tawnya won me with her beautiful smile, so there you go.

Before I talk a little bit more about my family and how they inspired me to seek this office, I'd like to thank the members of my community, who worked extremely hard to help get me here. My campaign manager is Frank Hendry, and he is at the top of my list. He worked tirelessly on my campaign, and he worked tirelessly on many other campaigns over the years. I know that this victory was probably his most satisfying, because we knocked off a 12-year veteran of the Legislature and a three-time cabinet minister, and that's no small feat. In fact, an incumbent member has never lost in the riding of Prince Edward–Hastings, so we broke ground; that's for sure.

I'd also like to thank my co-manager, David Joyce, who has been a friend for many years dating back to the old Belleville Waterfront Festivals of the past. They were a great time in the 1990s. Paul Kyte and his wife, Jennifer, have been tremendous supporters, and Ken and

Janet Harnden have been incredible volunteers and friends. I'm happy to have their youngest daughter, Ashley, now working with me at my constituency office as an assistant in Belleville.

It's amazing how a campaign can bring people together and they become friends as well. A gentleman who recently moved from Monte McNaughton's riding into Belleville was happy to join my campaign. His name is Murray Angus, and he played a very important, vital role in my campaign and getting me elected. I appreciate his efforts. Mitch Heimpel, whom I didn't know until March of this year, worked like a dog over the summer months on my campaign, and he's now working like a dog for me here at Queen's Park. He's working like a dog up in my office right now, pumping out a press release, I'm sure.

Jack Alexander, Mona Tumon-Lyon, Daniella Barsotti, Amy Doyle, Heather Smith, CJ Miller and Twyla Adams pounded the pavement in Belleville with me. Bill Goodman, Gail Fox, Henri Garand, Ian Hanna, Alison Walker, Gerry Mayer and Gerry Mathis minded the Prince Edward county store during the election and hit the streets there. In the north, Gary Kelly, Kim Bishop, Tracy McGibbon and the royal family of Bancroft, Lloyd and Muriel Churchill, helped me out as well. There are a lot of people I could name, and I only have 10 minutes, so I will skip the rest. But I appreciate their efforts and, of course, all my sponsors and donors as well.

I had the support of a few former members of this House as well. A couple of them were able to join me here on November 4: Former Quinte MPP Doug Rollins and a former member for Hastings–Peterborough, Harry Danford, were active members in my campaign, and Gary Fox, a former member from Prince Edward–Lennox–South Hastings, was there for advice whenever I needed it as well. I thank them, and I know that a couple of them were extremely pleased to come down here for my swearing-in ceremony and meet up with some old friends like the Clerk, Deb Deller.

I'd like to thank the member of Parliament for Prince Edward–Hastings, Daryl Kramp, his wife, Carol Anne, and their family for their guidance and friendship as well.

I congratulate all the members in this 40th Parliament for their successful elections.

I've called Prince Edward–Hastings home for about 20 years now. It's one of the most diverse ridings in the province: from Prince Edward county and its beautiful sand-covered beaches, growing wine industry and thriving arts community, to historic Belleville, with its 1800s vintage city hall, nationally recognized Quinte Ballet School and, of course, the Belleville Bulls of the Ontario Hockey League. We've got the rolling farmland and the cheese factory of Hastings county, and the rocky shorelines and pristine lakes in North Hastings. As a proud Maritimer, I can tell that you that Prince Edward–Hastings is actually bigger than Prince Edward Island, where I spent many a winter playing junior hockey. The

weather is better in Prince Edward–Hastings than it is on Prince Edward Island.

When I moved to Ontario from Riverview, New Brunswick, back in the early 1990s, I did so not to escape the Maritimes—I love the Maritimes; it's a great place to live—but I came to Ontario to pursue a broadcasting career, because Ontario was the land of opportunity. This is where the jobs were, and I had dreams of one day being on TSN, not the Ontario legislative channel. But I'm happy to be here now; that's for sure.

I enrolled at Loyalist College, a great school. It was one of the top media schools in all of Canada and still is to this day. I was at Loyalist College for a few months when I got a job at Quinte Broadcasting, owned and operated by the Morton family for more than 65 years now. I've spent 18 years there, most recently as the news director at that radio station. The late Myles Morton, his wife, Elizabeth, and their children, Bill, Virginia, Steve and Cynthia, provided me with the opportunity to grow as a broadcaster and as a community leader as well as a community volunteer. For 16 years, up until this summer, I woke up at 3:30 in the morning every day to go in and read the morning news. Then I would work all day long, and I would usually call the Belleville Bulls hockey games at night on TV as well. So I will work hard for the residents of Prince Edward–Hastings, because I have for the last 16 years.

I also became involved in numerous charities, like Operation Red Nose. It was great last week that Rick Watt was here from Operation Red Nose Quinte. They drove over 1,600 people home during the holiday season last year, both those parties and their vehicles, during the Christmas season. So it was great to see Rick here. I've volunteered on that now for many years.

1610

My parents, Ray and Sharon, still live in New Brunswick. Although they were a bit sceptical of my decision to jump into politics—they watch a lot of Fox News—they were proud to be here in this building earlier this month for my swearing-in ceremony and I know they'd be proud to be here today as well. The excitement on their faces when the polls and ballots were being counted on October 6 at the historic Belleville Club in downtown Belleville—it was a night that I will never forget. It was great to have my sisters Cheryl and Pam there as well; Cheryl from Nashville and my sister Pam from New Brunswick.

During the election, I heard often about the need for change in the province, especially in rural Ontario, where the wishes of many residents were being ignored. The Green Energy Act stripped municipalities of their decision-making powers and nullified the voice of our rural communities. Unless we're successful in stopping it this week with my private member's bill, there's the chance that the south shore of Prince Edward county will soon have an industrial wind factory on it. The community has made it very clear that it wants no part of this, but it's being forced upon it by a government that won't listen. Residents that have built their dream homes in

Thurlow and throughout the riding are seeing solar panel farms constructed on land that was once a beautiful forest or a meadow, without any say in the process.

Madam Speaker, given that the member for London West managed to work me into his comments this morning during question period, I feel a need to perhaps pay him a similar tribute this afternoon. The member for London West likes to go on about all the jobs that this fairy-tale energy policy is creating. It would simply be nice if the member for London West would get his facts straight. It was 60,000 jobs created last week, 50,000 on Monday, and today it was 20,000. It's not surprising that the government has made the member for London West their representative when they speak for an industry that aims to generate a lot of hot air.

I just presented a petition earlier today on behalf of some residents of London West. I came here happily to be the spokesperson for the people of Prince Edward–Hastings. I didn't know I was going to have to be the spokesperson for the people of London West as well, but I'm happy to do so and present a petition on their behalf.

Over my career as a broadcast journalist, I had the opportunity to spend time with a number of politicians at various levels of government and different political affiliations. I intend to be a politician who listens to his constituents and acts on their behalf. A week ago we sat in the House and listened to a speech from the throne that contained little vision and didn't address the needs of the residents I've spoken with in Prince Edward–Hastings. The government doesn't seem to realize what has just occurred in the previous election. This government, despite being seriously reduced in size, made few, if any, impactful statements in its throne speech. In fact, Dalton McGuinty's speech made little or no mention of the job crisis facing our province.

I have much more to say and hopefully many days and years to say it. I will sit down for now.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Barrie.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to address my colleagues in this House. The opportunity to represent the people of Barrie is nothing but a great honour and privilege.

During the early days of putting the Barrie riding association back together again, my skills as a professional mediator were put to the test and utilized to bring a strong team that carried me through my nomination process to where I stand today.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my family, starting with my parents, Bob and Heather Jackson. They grounded me and showed me how to never give up. My brother Greg has always been by my side without any questions. However, perhaps those who have paid the highest price and sacrificed the most for my political adventures are my wife Joanne and my young children, Abbey and Will. I thank them especially for their patience, understanding and support over the past few years and certainly over the past several months. I know it has not been easy for them

I had one of the best campaign teams in the province, led by the matriarch of Simcoe county, as the Speaker would know: Sharon Carson and her daughter Kimberly Carson, a mother and daughter team that was no match for any of our competition. My core team of volunteers included Arif Khan, Sue Christensen, Neil Giesendorf, Paul Dumolin, Sylvia Mayes, Ralph Knapp, and Jackie and Fred Melville, just to name a few who were there since before day one and never let up and helped us knock on close to 50,000 doors and install thousands of lawn signs in Barrie. Thank you, again, to you all.

I come from a family with deep roots in Barrie and our province, going back to our days as United Empire Loyalists. Currently, I'm raising my young family, the fourth generation, in our community. Civic duty has been strongly instilled in me since childhood, nurturing a rich tradition of community service that I'm proud to maintain and continue through involvement with organizations such as Hospice Simcoe and the Barrie-Huron Rotary Club.

I've also served as a Barrie city councillor, which facilitated a wealth of knowledge and insight that I expect will be fundamental to my role here at Queen's Park. I'm proud to represent the people of Barrie the best way I know how.

As a councillor, I worked hard on championing a safe parks and streets strategy, affordable housing for seniors and people living with disabilities, as well as addressing an issue of critical importance to Barrie: the doctor shortage.

Through my time serving as a councillor I gained the greatest respect for public service. Near the end of my last term, the decision to move into provincial politics was a very natural progression for me that would enable me to further serve my community.

In my younger days, I had the pleasure of working at Queen's Park as a legislative assistant. I often spent time walking the halls of this beautiful building that oozes history from its walls, wondering if I might have the opportunity and the privilege to serve the citizens of Barrie in this very room; and here I stand. Being here now is a goal I've long held, and I fought hard to get here.

I look forward to helping the residents of Barrie establish more jobs, and greater access to higher education and health care that better serve our community. I plan to apply my professional skills as a mediator to bring people together to solve problems, as well as valuable insights gained on the Barrie city council, to best serve the people living in our ever-expanding and beautiful city.

Barrie residents said that they wanted to see change in our job climate. We will work hard for that change. Small business in Barrie is big business. Some 75% of all the people who work in Barrie work for companies that employ four or less employees. We need to encourage those businesses to be the employers that will employ 10 people next year and 20 people the year after that.

I think of Moore Packaging or Barrie Welding, which started out in a garage with two employees and now

employs 200 to 300 people. What a great example of what can be done if we clear the way by reducing regulatory burdens and red tape, and get small business doing what they unequivocally do better than government: create jobs.

Our path to this seat here was guided by our need to do whatever we can to improve Barrie's ranking as the second-worst unemployment rate in the province. Just a few years ago Barrie was one of the most prosperous, fastest-growing communities in the country. It's still growing, but people have to go outside our community to find work more and more. I look forward to working with our federal member and members of our city council to rectify this imbalance, and do it with real jobs that are sustainable and that can stand on their own value and quality of what they do, and will last into the future.

Barrie residents said that they wanted to see change in the delivery of health care. We'll work hard for that change. We'll collaborate with the Royal Victoria Hospital to attract more doctors and health professionals. There are 30,000 people in the city of Barrie who do not have a family physician, and that is entirely unacceptable. It's an example of government not living up to its responsibility to deliver efficient health care to all residents, and this imbalance is exacerbated by the fact that Barrie's status as an underserved area was stripped last year, drying up physician recruitment funds. This is inexcusable.

I look forward to seeing the Liberal plan—should they choose to share it—to fund the operation of our brand new hospital expansion that will employ thousands of people. We don't want to see another grand building with no operating budget to keep beds and surgical suites open. I want to make sure this project remains at the forefront of government priorities.

Barrie residents said that they wanted to see change in the availability of higher education. We will work hard for that change. Barrie is home to one of the best colleges in the country: Georgian College. But our economy and our residents need more. We are one of the largest cities in the country without a university. It's clear that the boost we need to build a stronger economy in Barrie, attract new business and new talent is a university campus.

I was a graduate of Georgian College but had to move away to complete university studies at York University. Even though Barrie has a relatively young population, university participation is up to 10% less than the provincial average and there are significantly less university graduates. No doubt this imbalance will be mitigated with our own university campus, accessible to all residents.

I have been and always will remain a strong advocate for a new university campus in Barrie to serve the needs of businesses and students in central Ontario. I'm pleased that the government has copied our party's promise to work with Barrie to establish a university presence here. Now we need to make sure that we see this promise through. The demand and will are there. Let's get the job done.

1620

Integrity is an important lens. It's the lens that the people of Barrie will view us all through. I vow to be accessible and listen to my constituents. Too often, politicians talk without listening. It doesn't matter much what we say if we don't listen first, does it?

I've outlined my vision for Barrie, my hometown, but in reality my vision needs the vision and the beliefs of my constituents to make it work. The people of Barrie need actions, not words, and they hired me to put words into action and work for them. I intend to do that.

I'm proud of our leader, Tim Hudak, my colleagues in caucus, and I'm proud to work with all of you towards a common good that we were all sent here to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions? Yes, the member for—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Essex.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to start by congratulating my colleagues the two new members from Prince Edward–Hastings and Barrie. Congratulations.

It's wonderful to be sitting amongst some rookies and great to hear their passion about their ridings, their passion about having the honour of sitting in this place, as well as presenting some of the challenges that both of their ridings face. They're not unlike some of the challenges that I believe maybe all of our ridings face: certainly a lack of good-paying jobs; that exodus of young people from our communities; the need for more post-secondary education opportunities; and challenges surrounding health care, something we're certainly all passionate about in this House. I think there's a common theme there surrounding issues that we may find consensus with.

To my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings: I'd like to let him know that I visit his riding each and every February for an annual ice fishing weekend with my cousins and my uncles. About 20 of us go to my aunt's cottage. I've caught the largest pickerel I've ever—pickerel is what we call them, walleye is what they call them in the States. It was 11½ pounds. I'll show you a great picture of it. It's world-class fishing in your riding, and I certainly intend on continuing that tradition.

In the Deseronto area, they also know me almost by first name at the Knights of Columbus there, because that's our first stop as we go over the big bridge and into the Picton area at North Port.

It's a wonderful area. I know how passionate you have to be for the people of that riding, because it is wonderful. It's worth protecting. I know you're bringing about some issues around the Green Energy Act. Certainly, we all have some concerns about that, and I look forward to working with you toward some common resolutions with that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Bill Mauro: Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to offer a few comments on the remarks from the members from Prince Edward–Hastings and Barrie.

Speaker, I think I'll begin by first congratulating everybody in the province—or, quite frankly, all over the place, I suppose—since it's the last day of Movember. I know I just talked to the member from—let me just get the riding right here—Renfrew? Is that it? No, there's more to it than that. Just Renfrew?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke; he's going to shave that duster off tonight. He's participated in Movember for the full month, and I congratulate him.

It holds a special place in my heart. This is obviously about men raising money for prostate cancer and the like. I've introduced private members' bills twice here in the Legislature regarding enhanced PSA coverage for men when they go see their doctors. On the PSA test, there is now an ability for enhanced coverage—the doctor can now check a box, whereas before he could not—so that you can get that PSA test actually paid for should the doctor believe that you have a chance, that you might have or if there's a family history. So there's a little bit more discretion for the doctor when it comes to the PSA test for men.

Anyway, I wanted to flag that and congratulate everybody who has taken part in this fundraiser. Maybe Sidney Crosby will shave his, too. His needs a little work.

Many of the speeches in response to the throne speech have talked about the Green Energy Act. Some people then go on to link the green energy industry to the price of electricity in the province of Ontario. I've read a couple of great articles that have appeared in the Thunder Bay paper in the last number of months, and I would assume around the province as well, in terms of how absolutely disingenuous that argument is. The total, at this point—and I think even when it's fully rolled out, the total cost that the green energy industry will have as an impact on your bill—I think it's this Martin Regg Cohn who's now appearing in the papers who has got it pegged at about 0.3% in terms of the total impact on your hydro bill. I just wanted to—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Thank you, Speaker. My time is up.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege today to respond to two new members of the Tim Hudak caucus who bring a lot of energy, knowledge and experience to this august place, but the way they got here is also a story in itself.

When I talked to the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, he is a professional broadcaster and, as he said, he was a news anchor. Really, in his role he was watching this place for some time. Some would argue that that's what brought him here. He saw the road that Ontario was on and wanted to make a difference, so I commend him.

In his remarks, he talked about his commitment to his community and his family, which is a pure fit with our caucus members, I can tell you. But he did manage to defeat Leona Dombrowsky, respectfully, who was hard-working. Perhaps she lost a little bit of contact with her riding because she didn't get re-elected. It's a formidable job to take a minister out as well during an election, so it really is quite an achievement.

The member from Barrie, who had worked here at one time as a staff person, a research person, went on to become a councillor in Barrie—highly respected. I did meet him at one time through issues with the expansion, I think, of Barrie—and you were involved in that issue. But he brings that kind of perspective to it as well. You might suggest, too, that he actually—Aileen Carroll was a minister federally, as well as provincially, so no small task to replace a minister, and I think that's part of what you achieved yourself.

When you look at what their themes were, they're trying to make a difference. They were looking at what the people of Ontario were saying, which was that they were looking for change. That's what I heard, the passion in their voice to make a change for families and have some respect for families, and that's basically the message that Tim Hudak has for this place as well. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'd like to express my congratulations as well to both the member from Prince Edward–Hastings and the member from Barrie. I know that it's a big struggle, especially when you're new in the field of politics, to win, and it's an amazing accomplishment.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask the member for Durham to—

Mr. John O'Toole: Sorry, Chair. I'll stand up—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): No. We have a speaker.

Please continue.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's a great accomplishment. I applaud your work and your success. I also applaud the fact that you recognize those who brought you here. I think that's a very important theme, that we remember who put us where we are, the people: not only the volunteers, our family and our campaign teams but also the constituents, the residents, the people who we are here to represent. I applaud you in recognizing that and recognizing the people who sent you.

I think it's very important, particularly with the newer members, that we set a new tone. I see it already, particularly with the newer members, that in this House it's our duty to work together. We've been given a mandate, and the mandate is that it is a minority government, and in this minority government it's incumbent upon us to work together to get results for Ontarians.

I see in the new members a spirit of camaraderie and a spirit of co-operation, and this spirit is something that I

think we can all learn from and all emulate in our activities, in the way we express ourselves here in the House. I encourage all the members, the older members as well, to learn from this spirit of co-operation, this spirit of camaraderie. Hopefully, it will inspire you in your activities and the way we communicate in this House, moving forward. I think that's what Ontario and Ontarians want to see, and I hope that's what we can do today and moving forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Prince Edward–Hastings has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you again, Madam Speaker. Thank you as well to the members from Essex, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Durham and Bramalea–Gore–Malton for their remarks. I trust that I can count on the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan for support for my private member's bill tomorrow on restoring powers back to the municipalities, since I know the wind turbine issue is a big issue in his community.

1630

I would like to point out that there are a number of other renewable energy projects out there besides wind and solar. There are a couple of them that have been sitting on a shelf for the last eight years that have been proposed for my riding of Prince Edward–Hastings, and I look forward to bringing them forward and working with the government over the next several months to make these happen.

The new warden of Hastings county, Terry Clemens—he's actually being sworn in tomorrow, and congratulations to Mr. Clemens—is supporting a giant game-changer at the old Marmora mine site. It's a pumped storage project. It's four times the size of Niagara Falls. It would produce 400 megawatts of power and create real jobs in an area that badly needs them. The member from Peterborough has been there. He has seen what an unbelievable project and game-changer this could be for Hastings county and Peterborough as well.

I've also met with representatives of the North Hastings timber industry and the mayor of Bancroft numerous times over the past several months to discuss a tremendous renewable energy opportunity there that has been sitting on a desk for eight years. It's a biomass facility allowing members of the timber industry to dispose of their scrub brush, wood chips and bark to create renewable energy while at the same time creating and sustaining jobs in an industry that really needs a lifeline from this place right now. They're losing jobs; mills are closing. We need to provide them with a new future, and this biomass could be it.

Congratulations to my colleague the honourable member from Barrie on his election. I look forward to working with you over the next several years.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'll be sharing my time with my colleague from the riding of Timiskaming–Cochrane, so

I'll be using my 10 minutes and sharing that with my colleague.

Before I begin, I have to take some time to thank those who made this possible, as my colleagues did. It's very important to recognize those who put me here today.

There's family that obviously made great sacrifices to give their time and their love and their support to assist in making this a reality. There are friends who sacrificed many long nights and many long days. There are volunteers—many activists from the unions—who supported the campaign and took a chance in a riding where no one ever thought the NDP would ever win. I have to thank all those volunteers, all those supporters, from the bottom of my heart. There's no other way to say it: Without you, I would not be here. So thank you so much.

I have to particularly thank some members of my campaign team. The campaign manager, Rowena Santos, worked tirelessly. I almost felt like she was the candidate, with the amount of zeal and passion she worked with.

I also have to thank co-manager Pat McCoy for his tireless work. We called him the real McCoy, and we pulled it off.

I also have to thank my good friend, law school classmate and CFO in two elections, both federal and provincial, Gurlal Kler, for his tireless work. He really deserves the credit for a position that is very important, which never has the fame or prestige it should deserve. Thank you to Gurlal Kler.

I have a special thanks that I have to give, and this is to the youth. If anyone followed the campaign, I have to say that my campaign was very unique in that the primary drive, the primary volunteer work base, was youth, and I'm talking on a day-to-day basis. We had 100 youth who would come out on weekdays and 200 youth who would come out on weekends—200 young people. And I mean young people: I'm talking about the ages of 12 to 17. Kids who couldn't even vote came out to the campaign in droves. It was remarkable, it was inspirational and it was unique.

We had a great deal of media coverage on this point, and people asked me, "Why is it that there are so many youth in your campaign? When we talk of times when there is less and less voter participation and voter turnout, why are these youth, who can't even vote, coming out in the hundreds to your campaign?" And I answered, a little coyly, "I have no idea." But in all truth, it was the very same youth who came out in droves who initially encouraged me to run. I had no real political aspirations. I was a criminal defence lawyer with—without sounding too conceited—a rather successful criminal practice, and I was content.

I would work with the community. I had positions where I would work with youth groups who were involved in the peace movement, youth groups who were working on freezing tuition fees, youth groups involved in immigration matters, and I would work with them and provide free legal seminars. I have always believed in the passion and the energy and been inspired by the potential of the youth. It was these very same youth that ap-

proached me, just weeks before the federal election, and said, "We want you to run." I was a little taken aback; I had never considered running in politics. And they were adamant. I don't know if you know young people; they can be very stubborn at times, and very persistent and very persuasive at times.

So it was these young people that sat me down and said, "Listen; we want you to run," and I agreed. I decided to run because they wanted a voice. So what I did, and what I hope I can continue to do, is, I gave them a space so that they could express their voice. If you give youth or if you give anyone a space, you can truly see them flourish.

I'll share one quick story about a volunteer of mine. He was a young volunteer, very shy, and he came to the campaign office and said, "I want to work. I believe in you being the voice of youth, but I don't know what to do. I know there's door-knocking and there's phone-calling, but I'm nervous." I said, "Listen; whatever you feel like," so he said, "Okay, I'll start on the phones."

He started making phone calls. His confidence builds. He said, "Listen; I think I can go out knocking on doors." He knocked on doors, and he actually knocked on the incumbent's door. The wife answered, and he very respectfully said, "Listen, I know that your husband's obviously the incumbent and running, but I think that Jagmeet Singh is a great candidate and you should support him." It took a lot of guts, and it showed this young man's potential. A young man who was too shy to even speak on the phone was able to knock on the door of an incumbent and persuade them, or try to persuade them, to secure a vote. It shows that young people really have a lot of potential; they just need a space to have that potential flourish and grow.

So I want to particularly thank the youth, the young people, who encouraged me to run. I will be your voice, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your support and your encouragement.

I represent Bramalea–Gore–Malton. Actually, before I talk about the riding, I'd also like to take the time to thank my predecessor. Dr. Kuldeep Kular, my friends from across the aisle will know, was a representative for two terms, represented Bramalea–Gore–Malton to the best of his abilities, and I respect the fact that he fulfilled his duties and was a parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of Health for a number of years as well. I thank him for his work in the community and thank him for his work in the riding.

Bramalea–Gore–Malton is a very diverse riding, particularly with a very unique background, a wide diversity of cultures, religions, a large South Asian population, and some of the best Indian food, Punjabi food, you'll ever find. Come out to Bramalea–Gore–Malton and we'll dine you to your heart's content.

It's an area which has a lot of issues as well. Despite being a very vibrant, hard-working community of diverse background, there are a number of issues that plague the area. There is a lot of hope. The community is hard-working, there's unity despite the diversity, but there are

some issues that the community faces, and I'd like to highlight some of them. I think it is my duty to highlight these issues and address them moving forward.

We all know that times are difficult. It's becoming harder and harder to make ends meet for a lot of families. In Bramalea-Gore-Malton, what compounds this issue, what makes this issue even harder, is the fact that auto insurance is the highest not only in the province but the highest in the entire country. Auto insurance in Brampton is the highest in the country. Simply for residing in Brampton, simply for having that postal code, regardless of your driving record, regardless of your tickets and accident claims, the highest insurance rates are paid by people in Brampton. It's simply unfair, and something needs to be done.

The other issue that people in Bramalea-Gore-Malton express and I'm committed to working on during these difficult times: Employment is a big issue, but in Bramalea-Gore-Malton, it's particularly the issue of temporary job agencies. The issue is that when times are tough, precarious work makes those times even more difficult.

1640

What we see in Bramalea-Gore-Malton is many people—we don't fault job agencies for finding someone work or maybe taking a fee for finding that work, but we do fault job agencies for, year after year, never transitioning individuals into full-time work, not providing any benefits and not providing any security of employment. For year after year, the same employee works in the same factory at the same position but never gets a full-time job, and half of his or her wages are taken away by the company. That's shameful. That's unacceptable. That's something I'd like to work to change.

Applause.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you. And I ask all my colleagues in this House to work together to make that change, because people deserve to have full-time good-paying jobs.

The final issue that I'd like to address is health care. Health care, we all know, is a big issue that faces all Ontarians. It's a concern that's across the board.

In Brampton, a city which is fast approaching 500,000 in population—in a city of that size, there is only one hospital servicing that entire region. I know cities. I grew up in Windsor, where the population is approaching 200,000, in and around that, where there are two full-time hospitals and a third facility which provides some medical care as well. In a city of 500,000, one hospital is simply not enough. The residents of Bramalea-Gore-Malton and particularly Brampton deserve and demand at least two hospitals, and that's something I think we should work to implement.

There has been promise after promise that's been broken with respect to the Peel Memorial hospital. At first, there was a promise not to close it, then there was a promise to rebuild it. Now, their promise is that it will be destroyed and rebuilt. Something has to be done. The

citizens of Brampton deserve two hospitals at a minimum.

There has also been a promise to implement a community health centre, which is a great initiative, and I applaud that initiative. But the problem is that it's a promise. If that promise is not fulfilled, then it will leave the people again disillusioned with their government.

So I urge the government and I urge all my colleagues here today: Let's make sure we fulfill our promises. That's what we've been sent here to do. Thank you so much.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: Speaker, it's a great honour to be able to rise in this House and speak on behalf of the good people of Timiskaming-Cochrane. They have bestowed that responsibility on me, and I intend to treat it with the greatest respect.

I would like to thank, first and foremost, the person who is mostly responsible not only for our electoral success, but for all the great things that have happened in my adult life: my wife and partner, Ria, the mother of our four children, and right now the main operator of our dairy farm. Our children Steph, Alex, Dana and Vicky are the lights of our lives, and Oma is the glue that holds it all together.

Although it's my name on the office door, we all know that elections are not won by one person or even by a big family effort, but by a group of people, a team, and we had a great one. There are too many to name. For every post that was pounded, leaflet that was dropped and call that was made and countless other tasks that were completed, I would like to thank them all from the bottom of my heart. They know who they are. We shared laughter and tears, and it's been an honour to work with them.

The great riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane has been represented by David Ramsay for longer than I have been able to vote. Having worked with him on some issues, against him on others, and having run against him in an election campaign, I know that he was a strong representative for our area and I wish him well.

There is a current member of this House who has had a great impact on my political life: the member for Oxford, known around our home as Uncle Ernie, my mother's brother. I have enjoyed many discussions, political and otherwise, with him. Although we often disagree, I have a great respect for his political and personal convictions.

I have served 12 years on township councils, four years on the board of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and four years on the board of Englehart hospital, but I learned about politics as president of the Temiskaming Federation of Agriculture at the time when the city of Toronto and the government of Ontario decided that an open pit mine at the head of our watershed would be the ideal place for Toronto's garbage. I was involved in the Adams mine battle for more than a decade.

Our fight to protect our watershed peaked when, as the president of the federation of agriculture, I sent a letter to Premier Eves stating that we had proof that the evidence on which the MOE had approved the site was inadequate. I was promptly sued by the proponent. The critical analysis of the approval that the federation of agriculture commissioned was released, and the political process that created the Adams Mine Lake Act was begun. The lawsuit against me was dropped shortly before the writ was dropped in the 2007 election, the election in which we came within 600 votes of defeating Minister Ramsay.

It was in the Adams mine years that I met folks like Charlie Angus, Gilles Bisson and Jack Layton. I decided that if I ever ran for a partisan office I would run alongside people like those, who took a chance and believed in me. Here I am, happy to be serving alongside Mr. Bisson and our leader, Andrea Horwath.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And us, too.

Mr. John Vanthof: And all the other NDP.

There are 34 municipalities in my riding, each one unique in its own way. Here's a six-stop tour to understand the people of Timiskaming–Cochrane. Although my riding is five hours away, the first stop is right here in Queen's Park: a display case by the west door that contains a vein of silver from the Keeley mine. The description on the case could describe what has happened in my riding and a lot of the north. Riches are discovered, be they gold, silver or chromite; a boom develops; wealth is created; the vast majority of it leaves the area; the boom collapses, and we, the permanent residents, are left to deal with the aftermath as best we can. Fortunately, we are right now in a boom time. Mines are being opened, communities are reawakening, and the companies can't find enough employees in my riding. When I knocked on doors four years ago, these same communities were struggling with no hope in sight, and according to my Liberal opponents at the time, resource extraction was a sunset industry. Now the only mention of the north in the throne speech is the Ring of Fire—sunset indeed.

The second stop is the miners' memorial in Kirkland Lake. Not only is mining boom and bust but it is hard, dangerous work, and this captivating structure salutes those who have given their lives extracting wealth from the Shield, the wealth on which much of this province was built, the wealth that is once again flowing from Kirkland Lake Gold and soon will be flowing from Aurico in Matachewan and Detour Lake outside of Cochrane.

The third must-see in my riding is a massive log crane that dominates the skyline of the town of Iroquois Falls. Its purpose for decades has been to transfer logs into the Abitibi paper plant. It is a good representative of our forestry sector. The crane will soon cease to operate, since the plant is switching to wood chips, while the logs leave to be processed outside the province, where electrical costs are lower.

The fourth stop is Temagami, a region known worldwide for its natural beauty. Its namesake lake is certainly one of the most beautiful in the province, and it repre-

sents a landscape that supports a large tourism sector. To us, Temagami also represents a more sombre period in our history. The Temagami land claim has taught us all that we have to respect each other's claim to the land on which we all depend. Temagami was the beginning of the continuing tug of war between the rights of those who have lived here for generations and those who live in other places but think they know better.

The fifth stop on the tour is a whistle stop. The Ontario Northland Railway cuts through my riding and is responsible for much of its development. It was Ontario's development road, and it could resume that role again in the future. My constituents remain shocked that the Metrolinx contract was not awarded to the ONR, and it puts into question the government's true commitment to diversification in the north.

The sixth stop is near and dear to my heart. It is the view that you see when you crest the hill that overlooks the Little Clay Belt. After travelling through several hours of Canadian Shield, the valley opens up to 200,000 acres of beautiful Ontario farmland and an equal amount in Quebec: home to modern agricultural dealerships, grain elevators and, of course, Thornloe Cheese. My riding also has great agricultural areas around Sturgeon Falls, Matheson and Cochrane.

1650

The people of my riding—anglophone, francophone, First Nation and others—share a common bond: We love our area and are proud Ontarians. The fact that our economy has always been boom and bust poses some unique challenges. In good times, people come, youth stay; but in bad times, the youth leave and the remaining population is largely senior—seniors who can't afford to renovate their houses to take advantage of a tax credit, seniors who are more worried about paying the next month's heating bill and the HST that has been tacked on it. Even when boom times return, their position sometimes becomes more perilous when living costs skyrocket but their income is stagnant.

The provincial government doesn't create mining booms, although they like to take credit, nor can they avoid conditions that cause collapses, like what we have seen in forestry, but they can take steps to take full advantage of the boom or mitigate the bust.

The Ring of Fire is an incredible opportunity. Hopefully we can learn from our past mistakes and realize the full potential of this development for all Ontarians.

It's an honour to be able to speak on behalf of my constituents and work on their behalf. I'd like to thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Bill Mauro: The minister of everything.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I get more heckling on my own side. Thank you, to the opposition, for being kind to me.

I want to commend the folks, because one of the things that I'm hearing is not a passion just for the constituencies that people are representing—and I want to commend the members who have spoken—but also a passion for Ontario. I think we sometimes have to see past stereotypes in this place and get to know each other.

My passions in this province, even though I represent the most urban downtown seat in the largest city in Canada, even though my political history has taken me to two other provinces—my fondest childhood memories were in my friend from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell's riding. I spent my summers learning how to milk cows as a city kid in Montreal when my father nearly ruined his marriage when he bought half a bull for artificial insemination—if I can use that word in the House—which turned into an entire dairy farm, which became my and my sister's major summer preoccupation.

My other fond memories are—I'm very proud, because most of my family lives in Sudbury, and that's where I spent a lot of my life, with my aunts. But there are tragedies that we're all aware of. None of my uncles made it over 52 because they all died of respiratory illness as a result of their work. My aunt, who just turned 92, lives in Sudbury in Wanup—and I should say a shout out to my Aunt Anne and a happy birthday. She was a widow, a union maid, who led all of the widows all the way to the Supreme Court to get pensions for women who were miners. She was a rather extraordinary woman who is one of my role models. So I hope we take this time.

Natural gas prices have crashed. They're half what they were. We need to have a very candid conversation about things like sales taxes and the choices that we make before we bring bills forward. So I'd like to say to those members that I would like to hear some of the things that you have said in opposition, and be listening to them, because I think that was the message. I hope I have some time to hear—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments and questions?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: First, I'd like to congratulate my colleagues in the third party for their first-time election. I'm a first-time member of the House, and it's quite a thrill. We do share so many things with our party and our ideas.

One of the things I liked to hear from the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton was working together. I think that's very important. We have to do that because people are asking us to do that, and that's something that we have to work towards.

To the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, I come from a small town, and certainly you don't. Monkton, where I come from, we don't use signal lights there because people know where you're going anyway, so we don't do that. In fact, we know when strangers come to Monkton because they're the only ones that do use the signal lights. That's where I come from. But I've been to your riding many times in my past, and it is a diverse community.

To the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane: I, too, will be working with uncle Ernie, the member from Oxford. We share similar interests. I was raised on a dairy farm for part of my life. We don't own that farm right now, but it's part of my history. I still live in the country. I'm four kilometres off a main road, so when I come to the Legislature, Speaker, I always bring part of my riding with me, and it reminds me who I represent.

Anyway, congratulations to both of you. I look forward to working with you in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions? The member for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's really a pleasure and an honour to officially welcome my two colleagues from Bramalea–Gore–Malton—a historic win for our party—and from Timiskaming–Cochrane. It is so wonderful to have someone who is as passionate about agriculture as I am, being from the riding of Essex.

I'm learning about my two colleagues here as much as you are. I didn't know that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane had family in the House, which is interesting. So, welcome to the family, I guess; this is wonderful.

I just want to point to some of the things that they mentioned—

Mr. John Yakabuski: When he gets older and wiser, he's going to be a Conservative.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Maybe if he becomes senile he may—

Laughter.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: We're glad to have these two members as it is. They bring a lot to the table: a passionate advocate for agriculture, and a criminal defence lawyer, a young person.

I think the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton hit on something that we should all really pay attention to. He attracted a large amount of youth to his campaign. As a subtle reference to his success—being humble, as I know, my good friend is, you mentioned that you weren't sure why they came to you, but it's because you believed in them and they, in turn, believed in you. I think that's a message that this government should pay credence to. We should be believing in our youth in this province. We should be investing in them. We should be hearing their concerns around post-secondary education and job opportunities. They have the message.

I'm just so thrilled to have these two members as colleagues, and I know that we're going to work very well together.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments and questions? The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Certainly it's a pleasure to rise and make a few comments on the speeches by two of our new colleagues.

To the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, congratulations. However, on this side of the House we were a little dismayed. The physician caucus here was reduced

from four members on this side of the House to three, since you were the winner in your contest in your riding. However, what I heard from you were some very positive comments about your predecessor, and for that I certainly thank you. I heard from your remarks that you had some very positive interests in community health centres and other issues that are important to you and, of course, to your constituents whom you represent.

To the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane: Many of us had the pleasure to go up to your riding for the International Plowing Match a couple of years ago. Truly, for me, it was the farthest north I had ever been in Ontario. It was a pleasure to be there, and to hear a little bit about your background and your dedication to your community.

What I'd like to say in general is that it's clear that we do have many issues in common in this House, apart from the passion for our individual ridings but also for the issues that matter most to our constituents. I certainly hope, going forward, that this will be expressed in coming together in this House to support legislation and, obviously, to listen to each other. This is certainly something I heard from my constituents. After the election results were broadly known, what I heard over and over was, "Make this government work. We've had enough elections. You people get your act together."

I look forward to working, certainly from what I heard from—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Response?

1700

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much. I'd like to thank all of my colleagues. I thank the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, the member from Perth–Wellington, my colleague the member from Essex and also the member from Oak Ridges–Markham. Thank you so much for your responses. I appreciate the kind words.

Hearing a little bit about my colleague's experiences—being born in Moncton—I should share: I have a very interesting background in terms of my history in Ontario. I was born in Scarborough. When I was about a year old, I was shipped out to Punjab, India. I was there for about a year and I came back. My father was accepted to Memorial University, so I lived in St. John's, Newfoundland for a bit. So any fellow Newfoundlanders, I've experienced the beauty of Newfoundland and the stark winters and brief but beautiful summers. Then I grew up in Windsor; most of my childhood was in Windsor. So I can relate to my colleague from Essex, and my colleague here from Windsor West. I think we have a lot more in common than we have different. Sometimes we may get caught up in our differences, but when it really comes down to it, no one is here for any other purpose but to make Ontario better and to do their best job representing their constituents.

Actually, a colleague from the Conservative Party said to me, "You know, some people think that we're scary because we're Conservatives." I was about to agree but

he said, "Listen, I'm here for the same purpose as you. I want to do the best job possible for my constituents." I believe him and I believe we're all here for that same purpose, so let's get the job done. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further debate? The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will be sharing my time with the colleague the member for Willowdale.

In this response to the speech from the throne, I think we need to look particularly closely at what this document is all about. It is all about moving Ontario forward. It is a plan for jobs and the economy. I find it a particularly balanced and prudent approach. It details the turmoil in our economy in terms of the global situation and the impact that that global situation has on us here in Ontario, so that even though with good management over the last several years, with our strong financial institutions, clearly, the population in Ontario is undergoing considerable anxiety about the future. What we have here is a serious plan for the serious times that we're living in. It really does focus on Ontario's strengths and seeks to expand those strengths and, in the process, in fact create jobs.

What's more important to me is perhaps that it reflects very closely what I heard during this recent election campaign. Many of us like to talk about our ridings, and I certainly am one of those. I have one of the most diverse and, I would say, most exciting ridings in the province of Ontario. It is comprised of well over 200,000 people. There were some 166,000 electors or voters in the last election in Oak Ridges–Markham. Across the north part of the riding, it is rural: the Oak Ridges moraine, the headwaters of the rivers that flow down into Lake Ontario and, in fact, down towards Lake Simcoe—a beautiful, very green and pleasant place. In the south end, Markham, Richmond Hill and now even Whitchurch–Stouffville are growing dramatically.

When I was knocking on all those doors in the urban areas, I was fascinated by who came to the door and what their concerns were. In many cases, I will simply say they were newer Canadians. They were people, very often, who had lived in this country for something between 15 years and the present time. Many times I found in fact that there were three generations living under that roof.

The concerns at the door were the ones that I see we have responded to so well in this throne speech. Their concern, as with many new Canadians, was that their children have the very best opportunity to have a happy, successful, productive life, and they were very clear that in order to achieve that, they would need the very best public education system.

They were prepared to acknowledge that our government has, in fact, made many, many strides when it comes to what we've done in education. Of course, the rollout of full-day kindergarten was incredibly popular. I found that people were somewhat dismayed that their

school still didn't have the opportunity for their kids to start at age four, but they were looking forward to it.

They were very concerned about the future. There are certainly many people in my riding who are finding that post-secondary education is a burden—middle-class families wondering how they might be able to afford to have their kids obtain that post-secondary education—but they also were incredibly aware of how important it was for them to do that. They knew that this is where the knowledge economy is headed, that skilled jobs were what their kids would be fighting for, and that they needed the very best preparation. So our proposal—our commitment—to reduce post-secondary tuition by 30% was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm, and we have made that commitment in this throne speech.

Many of us met with our local colleges yesterday. My riding is home to the King campus of Seneca College.

Interjection: That's a great college.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's a fabulous college—a beautiful setting, actually, right on the Oak Ridges moraine.

Our government has already made a commitment to some massive expansion on that campus—\$43 million—an additional 1,450 student spaces at that college. Certainly, officials from Seneca yesterday wanted to impress on me if there was any way our government, with its infrastructure plans, some \$35 billion over the next three years—they wanted to be in line for that expansion at the earliest possible opportunity.

When I knocked on the door and I found a grandparent opening the door, perhaps at home babysitting younger children, it struck me very forcibly how important it was to keep those seniors in their homes for as long as possible. Again, we've been spending the last couple of days discussing the healthy home renovation tax credit for seniors. I know this is going to be incredibly popular. In many families, there's a major stigma in their loved ones—their seniors—going into long-term-care facilities. They are very, very desperate to keep their grandparents in the home for as long as possible, and this kind of home renovation tax credit will assist families in doing that.

Of course, the other aspect of that particular initiative is the opportunity to increase jobs. As I was walking around Markham and Richmond Hill, I met many, many tradesmen, and they were particularly pleased with any opportunity that would stimulate the home renovation business.

Another aspect that is very important to my community is GO train service. GO buses, but also GO trains, are incredibly vital to all the commuter traffic. I actually have five GO train stations in my riding. There is a commitment from the Ministry of Transportation for a sixth, with the extension of the Richmond Hill line. The idea of two-way, all-day, seven-day-a-week GO train transit was something that people were just ecstatic about.

Having looked at our plans, we know, given the ridership, certainly at the Markham and the Mount Joy GO train stations, that we have achieved the ridership that

will make this a viable and economic prospect for GO and for Metrolinx.

1710

It's not all just about what we're intending to do. The throne speech is building, in fact, on what we have spent the last eight years doing, and that is rebuilding our public infrastructure. In my riding, which is growing so rapidly, it is not just all about transit. It is obviously about roads; we have repaired bridges, we have repaved. That is not only obviously improving the quality of life of our residents with these improvements, but it is creating jobs.

Now, in the statement made by the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton, he also mentioned that he had so many young people involved in his campaign. I was extremely fortunate. My volunteers started at about grade 8 and I had many high school students. What I was so pleased to see was in fact their sense of optimism for the future. They understood, many of these young people, that Ontario was a great place to live in. They knew that they were getting a wonderful education. What I think was even more important was that they wanted to get involved in the political process at a very young age. So when we do bemoan the fact that perhaps the voter turnout was not as high as we wished, I was so pleased to see such enthusiasm from younger people who I know are going to reenergize our political system. Whether they be supportive of the third party in Bramalea or solid Liberals in Oak Ridges-Markham, this all bodes well for the future.

So, Madam Speaker, I would simply like to say that I find this a blueprint for our way forward that is going to meet the needs of my residents in many different ways. It is a very prudent plan. We know we have to be very cautious about expenditures, but we also need to build a better Ontario. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Willowdale.

Mr. David Zimmer: Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand and speak on the throne speech. I've been reflecting on the throne speech since it was delivered, and it seems to me that the two big challenges that the throne speech raises are both the challenge about what we're going to do about the economy, the economic situation that Ontario finds itself in—through no fault of its own, I might add. It is a combination of the situation on the world scene; it's a combination of the situation in the United States, our major trading partner. In fact, our own institutions are in really quite fine shape, but we live in a world where we find ourselves dependent on our export markets.

The other challenge is the challenge of confronting these issues in the context of a minority Legislature, and that presents its own challenges.

First, let me say a word or two about the context of the economic situation that we find ourselves in. Ontario's economy is essentially a manufacturing economy. Other parts of Canada—in the west, they have fisheries and wheat, potash in Saskatchewan, forestry products in BC;

on the east coast, they have fisheries and oil and gas; Quebec has minerals. But Ontario is a manufacturing economy. We export 85% of what we manufacture in Ontario and the vast bulk of that 85% goes to the United States.

In addition to that, there has been a significant drop in revenues because of the worldwide economic downturn. So we find ourselves with about 25% fewer revenue tax dollars coming in, which has created the deficit of something in the order of \$16 billion.

The challenge for this Legislature is to manage our affairs and to manage our economy in such a way that we can reenergize our manufacturing system so we can build up our exports and we can export to the United States, Europe and other economies.

There has to be a plan to do that. The plan that we have come up with—the broad strokes have been set out in speech from the throne, some further details following a day later in the economic update, and the real, real detail will be in the budget speech coming in the new year.

But suffice it to say that one of the principal things that we've done is the HST, which is designed to aid the manufacturing economy. That's why the federal Conservative Party supports the HST. That's why Jim Flaherty, the Minister of Finance and a former Ontario Minister of Finance, supports the HST; in fact, has initiated it. That's why all of the economists and all of the businesses, large and small, are keen and very supportive of the HST. They know that it is going to help to revive our manufacturing economy. If that happens, if our manufacturing economy gets on its legs, that means jobs, that means people are paying taxes, that means companies are paying taxes; that means we've got all of the tools and the revenues that we can spend on health care, education, infrastructure and the other things that we want to do. That's the economic challenge.

The other part of the challenge is, how do we meet that economic challenge, how do we get legislation through, how do we get initiatives through in the context of a minority Legislature?

The people of Ontario have sent 54 opposition seats and 53 Liberal seats. I think that's a statement from the people of Ontario that they want all three parties to get together in a non-partisan way and tackle these problems. That's the other challenge. How do we meet that challenge? That means that there has to be some goodwill on the part of all parties, opposition and government parties, to meet these challenges to revive our economy.

The best way we can do that is to adopt a truly bipartisan approach. We may have some differences in the details of how to execute that approach, but I think that all parliamentarians, all legislators in this House, in this body, have got the best interest of Ontario at heart. While we may have some differences of emphasis and some difference on the details of what we want to do, it behooves us, because that's what the people of Ontario have told us. They've sent us to this Legislature—we're about equally divided here—and they've said, "Work

together. Work together to revive Ontario's manufacturing economy."

We've taken it a step further in that we've reached outside of this Legislature and have asked an independent economist—a distinguished economist, the former chief economist for the Toronto-Dominion Bank, a former senior federal official in the Department of Finance in Ottawa, a man of great experience and great integrity—to give us an outside view of what we can do to reform the way we deliver public services in Ontario; that is, health care, education, infrastructure and the like.

I think the political parties in this chamber, the Conservatives, the NDP and the Liberals, working together, along with the assistance, the advice and the consultation of an outside commission, the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Service, as chaired by the economist Don Drummond, will put some ideas, put some suggestions and put some initiatives on the table to reform the way we deliver public services.

I think it's incumbent, again, on all members of this chamber, be they Liberal, be they Conservative, be they NDP, to perhaps take that report as a common starting point, sit down and say, "How can we implement some of the ideas that we expect will be in that report? How can we merge those or make those compatible with some thoughts that we have on the Liberal side, some thoughts that we have on the Conservative side and some thoughts that we have on the NDP side?" I think that's what the people of Ontario are telling us.

1720

After the throne speech and after the economic update, I can tell you that the tone of the telephone calls and the meetings I had in my constituency office in Willowdale told me this: "David, we recognize we're in very difficult times in Ontario. We recognize that somehow we have to rebuild our manufacturing economy. You've got a minority Parliament, you've got the Don Drummond report coming out. Please"—they implore me—"please work with all members of the chamber, work with the Don Drummond report when it comes out and do your very best to restructure and get our manufacturing economy back on track."

In essence what the people in Willowdale were telling me is: "We expect a different tenor in the chamber. We expect more bipartisanship. We expect less ideological fervour from all parties." That's what my constituents in Willowdale are telling me. That's what they are expecting of me.

I dare say that when the next election rolls around in a number of years—2015 or whenever—that they're going to look back and they're going to say to me as the MPP from Willowdale, "In a minority government, did you bring good judgment, balanced judgment, a sense of fair play to the other parties, a sense of fair play to outside advice, a sense of bipartisanship to do what we sent you, as a Liberal, and what we sent members of the other political parties—the NDP and the Conservatives—to this Legislature to do?"

I think it is a real call for constructive, collaborative and bipartisan negotiations, and a relationship to rebuild the economy. That's what the people of Ontario want us to do. That's what they expect.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I listened to the member from Willowdale talk for the last five minutes about co-operation and how it's necessary for the members of this House to co-operate. We hear those words a lot from the Premier. Maybe the member for Willowdale should tell the Premier what he's hearing, because what we're hearing from Dalton McGuinty is anything but. He talks about co-operating, but he refused to accept one recommendation from either ourselves or the New Democrats when it came to the throne speech. He says, "You know what? We want to co-operate, but my definition of co-operation is, you do it my way or we're not interested in talking about it." That's the Liberal way, Madam Speaker, and unfortunately that's exactly what the public is upset about.

We just had an excellent bill last week from the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, Mr. Mantha, that would have given people across this province some relief from home heating bills by removing the HST. "No can do," say the Liberals, "because that's not what we want."

So co-operation doesn't mean the three parties here working together, according to the Liberals. What it means is us just bowing down to them and agreeing that they are the masters. Well, that's not going to happen. That's not what the people in Ontario said on October 6. They voted in a minority government.

They didn't win a minority government; they lost their majority. That should be a message to them, and they should shed some of the arrogance they had in the last Parliament. But I can see that that's not going to happen.

One of the problems with this government is that they don't understand how to manage money. We hear from them, "Oh, that's a spend issue, that's a cost-cutting issue." There was \$68 billion in spending when this party took over; \$124 billion now. Learn how to manage money. Assess your priorities. That's what needs to be done.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to respond to the two likeable Liberals, one from Oak Ridges-Markham and the other from Willowdale. There's so much to say nice things about, but there's so much to disagree on as well. Particularly to the member from Willowdale: He talked about the idea that we need to have a truly bipartisan approach, and then he said that people in his riding expect a different tone. And it's all true. But, you can't overlook the touch of irony and humour in his remarks, because as the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke said today and I have said for the last two days, you lost that opportunity but the other day, last week. Because, if you're truly talking about a bipartisan approach, when the other parties agree on

something, surely you expect the other party, the only remaining party, to say, "Hmm, maybe there's something there; if they agree, and some of our own folks agree, maybe we should, in the spirit of co-operation and bipartisanship," which the member from Willowdale just expressed—"maybe we might just have to say, 'Hmm, we don't agree with them,' but why don't we just say, 'Let's do it'? Let's do it because there's a different spirit of co-operation going on."

The Minister of Colleges and Universities is shaking his head. I don't get it. You can't say on the one hand, "We've got to work together," and on the other hand deny what the other two parties are saying. You just can't do it.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Why is it that you can stand up and say, "We have to have a bipartisan House here," when it suits you, but when it doesn't suit you, you say, "Well, we just can't, because we disagree"? Do you understand the irony in that? Because I'm crying out with laughter every time you do that. You've got to shape up here—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments? The member for Peterborough.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Well, thank you—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order. We have a speaker. The member for Peterborough, you have—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Madam Speaker, could I get my two minutes back?

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Well, it's interesting. I did listen very—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to just wish you my sincerest congratulations at being back in the chair. You always do a great job.

Let me say, I listened very carefully to my colleagues the members from Oak Ridges-Markham and Willowdale, and one of the things they touched upon was the Drummond review. I think Don Drummond is needed back in Ottawa, because I read this story this morning in the National Post; I don't usually read the National Post, but it says, "Huge Growth in Public Servants under Tories." It says here: "However, the number of public servants has soared over the past decade ... especially during the ... six years the Harper government has been in office.

"Between the end of "Program Review" and 2010, the federal public service population increased by 39 per cent and is now 13 per cent larger than what it was two decades ago," according to a briefing that was made to the gazebo man from Huntsville, the Honourable Tony Clement. So we have—

Mr. Randy Hillier: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: This debate has nothing to do with the provin-

cial House. All they're talking about is the federal House. This member is out of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask the member to confine his remarks to the debate here.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I will, Madam Speaker, and I apologize. I got a little carried away, but they did mention Mr. Drummond, who is the former Deputy Minister of Finance in Ottawa.

But let me say that the two members from Willowdale and Oak Ridges–Markham talked about the throne speech. They talked about our need to show some restraint as we move forward. They talked about our seniors' population that will be able to take advantage of the 15% tax credit, whether it is the seniors themselves or people that want to modify their homes for their mom or their dad—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know what? Listening to the member from Willowdale just reminds me of that powerful Liberal word once again: befuddlement. The member was reflecting on the throne speech and this terrible situation we're in that, of course, they had no control over—just completely beyond their control. But, Madam Speaker, what are the first two bills that this Liberal government brings into the House after recognizing the terrible and dire economic situation we're in? They bring in a bill to have \$80 million in new spending with the southwest Ontario development fund and the eastern Ontario development fund.

1730

Another bill that they bring in is the home renovation tax credit. And we don't even know how much that's going to cost us. We have no idea what the uptake will be.

So here we have a dire economic situation, and the member from Willowdale is reflecting and scratching his head about how they're going to fix it. Well, they're going to spend more money.

Listen, Madam Speaker, I have to read this from the National Post, from George Jonas: "What happened to the once prosperous province of Ontario, now a quarter of a trillion dollars in debt? In a word, government—and not just any government, but eight years of an interventionist, social-engineering kind of government; one that last week, having been insufficiently chastised by the voters, delivered itself of a throne speech, essentially promising more of the same." More spending, more spending, more intervention, and the member from Willowdale is going to reflect about, how did this happen, how could this possibly—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

The member from Oak Ridges has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to thank my colleagues from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Trinity–Spadina,

Peterborough, and Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington for their comments—in some cases, perhaps, a little bombastic and extreme.

However, I would simply like to reiterate our conviction on this side of the House as we move forward that we have presented a balanced and very prudent response to the economic situation we find ourselves in.

We are building for the future. We're going to guard the health care and education systems that we have in this province, that our constituents rely upon and have told us that they want preserved and protected. In order to do that, clearly, we have to look at all opportunities for efficiencies and for cost savings.

I would simply say that a number of comments have been—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Madam Chair—have alluded to the fact that a private member's bill presented by the member for Algoma–Manitoulin was voted against by this side of the House.

I think that our determination on moving forward is dependent on fiscal prudence. In fact, it appears to me that we have adopted a far more fiscally conservative approach than the official opposition in the way we wish to move forward. We have made very careful commitments in terms of investments in the future, but we are very mindful of the very difficult economic situation that we find ourselves in.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and congratulations on your appointment as deputy Speaker in the Legislature. It's nice to see you in the chair again.

I'm pleased to join in the debate this afternoon on this throne speech. There has been some cantankerous behaviour between the two, Madam Speaker, but I'm sure you'll get them all settled down. I won't stir up anybody; I'm sure not.

I'd like to start off by thanking the voters of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for the honour they bestowed upon me by returning me to the Legislature here at Queen's Park, and for the trust and confidence they've shown in me. I certainly will work very hard on their behalf. I appreciate that opportunity again.

I'd like just to extend my sincere thanks to the many volunteers who worked tirelessly over those long—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I would ask the member for Peterborough to come to order.

Ms. Laurie Scott: And we start it again.

Anyway, during the last campaign voters across the province certainly sent a strong and a clear message to us. They were no longer satisfied with the status quo, especially rural Ontario. We saw their reaction to the Dalton McGuinty Liberal government of the past eight years.

When the House reconvened on October 22 with the speech from the throne, I was hopeful—minority government here—that maybe we could see some new and innovative ideas in the throne speech, a little more creativity; maybe even have listened to the opposition leaders and their parties and maybe work together a bit before the throne speech came. But I didn't really see that in the throne speech.

The throne speech clearly failed to address the needs and the concerns that we were asking for. If you look at the recent election, it was 63% of the voters in the province that decided the current direction of the McGuinty government was not what they wanted. That's a pretty strong message. I hope the minority government Liberals are listening to that.

We have the crushing debt of \$16 billion, a billion more than it was even during the election. Then, in the throne speech they announced \$2.5 billion in new government spending—but that is exactly what the government did: They decided to spend. As my colleagues have said, they've got a little bit of a spending problem. I think there are help lines for that. We're trying to guide them, but.

The home renovation tax credit, for example: digging an even deeper hole. I mean, the government claims the tax credit will be funded by lower spending on existing business support programs and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, as well as lower-than-forecast costs for tax-related expenditures in the Ministry of Revenue. So, I mean, that's a lot of stuff, but in other words, they over-budgeted in one area and are hoping to use this to pay for the tax credit. There's no saving or cost-cutting. So the so-called relief for seniors to spend at least \$10,000—in my riding there aren't many seniors that have that kind of money to spend on renovations. They're trying to pay their bills and put food on the table. The irony is that the same Dalton McGuinty government has slapped the HST on home renovations, making them even more expensive.

I know my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke mentioned drunken sailors yesterday. I couldn't believe that we were thinking along the same lines. Sometimes that happens. But to say that they are spending like drunken sailors would certainly be an insult to drunken sailors.

Interjection: No offence.

Ms. Laurie Scott: No offence, but really.

Tim Hudak, the leader of the Ontario PC caucus, offered specific, concrete proposals to help rein in this disgraceful—and it is disgraceful—mismanagement of taxpayers' dollars, and that was a message that was sent in the election. When you compare it to the private sector wages, public sector salaries are clearly out of whack. The legislated mandatory freeze on the salaries of government employees would help to bring spending under control and set a positive example for Ontarians that this government finally understands the seriousness of the situation. But the Liberals didn't listen to that. They are actually going to be laying people off. The mandatory

wage freeze is actually a much better way to handle this. But anyway, you decided against that. You're going to be laying some people off.

The apprenticeship system: We offered reform of the apprenticeship system, saying it would create 200,000 skilled trade jobs that are desperately needed in our province. The member from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, who has been a champion of apprenticeship ratios—I myself have brought in motions and member's bills before about apprenticeship, to modernize it. That would have helped the skilled trade shortage that is coming down the pipe and that we all know about. I talked to tons of young people in my riding, and they can't get into the apprenticeship roles they want to get into. They can't fight the unions sometimes. The ratios are so out of whack. The small businesses can only help them so much because the ratios are so out of whack. They'd like to help more of them.

When you see other provinces modernizing their apprenticeship systems, making the ratios one-to-one as opposed to anywhere from the three- to five-to-one that we have with some of our trades, and then our young people leaving to go to other provinces to get the training because they want to get into that field, it's quite tragic. For years we've tried and tried, but no, the Liberals decided to do the College of Trades.

There's been a lot of discussion in the last two days about apprenticeships and the College of Trades. When they have a board where five out of the eight potential members of the board are union bosses or former union bosses, they're handing that back over to a special interest group: the union bosses. That is not what they need to do; that's not what they should do. It's outrageous. You're going to hear us continue on that. Change the ratio to one-to-one. You're making it too hard for our young people to enter the trades and the skilled trade shortage is coming down. It's just unacceptable and irresponsible of this government.

1740

You know, the government maintained—the Working Families union. We saw that in the election, the \$9 million, \$10 million worth of ads that Working Families advertised against Tim Hudak. I mean, really, it's just outrageous. It used union money. I actually had union members in my riding who were so upset their union dues were used for partisan advertising and they never said that that was okay. It's absolutely outrageous what was done for the Working Families Coalition, and we'll still be talking about that, I'm sure, until the next election.

Hydro costs: No question, the hydro costs are a huge issue across the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I said before that people are selling their houses. Some seniors just can't afford those bills anymore. Families can't stay in their homes. I know in the northern part of the riding, they're actually having woodlots put out so people can actually bring logs of wood to deposit so volunteers can cut wood up to give it to people to heat their homes for the winter. It's a serious situation.

We in the PC caucus joined with the NDP. The member from Willowdale said, "Work together." Well, we did last week. We worked together to support the NDP motion to take the provincial portion of the HST off the home heating. That would have helped a lot of people in my riding. So maybe the member from Willowdale has some influence again and the government will decide to bring that forward as an actual law, which would be good to see, because that's what the people wanted. They needed some relief so that they could stay in their houses.

I receive letters, phone calls, emails all the time—desperate people, people who phone in. And the smart meters: Ever since the smart meters came in, all of a sudden they get a bill and it's \$3,000 because "You owe us that from when." Customer service, you're on hold for four or five hours. It's just outrageous that Hydro One asks them to read their meters. It's their responsibility to go out to see if the smart meter is working, not to leverage more bills onto people and not verify or justify where the bills have come from.

I just had one again the other day. It was \$12,000. These people said that they can't afford it. They're working for \$12, \$13, \$14 an hour, and all of a sudden there's an extra \$12,000 bill.

The farmers have to get up. They say that at 3 o'clock in the morning they've got to get that milking in before the peak kicks in at 7 a.m. I don't believe agriculture was mentioned in this speech from the throne. That was a chance to reach out to rural Ontario and they didn't take it, Madam Speaker.

That is the situation we have out there. We wanted relief for people, tax relief; the provincial portion of the HST not only off their hydro, but off their home heating. And we did try, as I said, last week, but they would not show real leadership or listen to the people of Ontario when they said, "Enough is enough. Your spending is out of control. I can't live in my house anymore. Forget about putting money away, I just can't pay my bills or put food on my table."

Health care was mentioned and I hope—the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is here—that we can work together on some health care initiatives, because rural Ontario has some very different and very real problems as compared to the urban centres.

I met with the LHINs, the chair, the board of directors—not the board of directors, but just the chair and the CEO—and expressed the repeated frustration from my service deliverers in the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. Geography is, no question, a problem, but the amalgamation of some of the services is really going to decrease the services that they receive. I know that they're amalgamating the Canadian Mental Health Associations in Lindsay and Peterborough right now and we're quite scared, up in Lindsay and north in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, that there will be less services. I know that is certainly what the minister does not want; we've had many, many discussions about mental health services. So I think we all have to work together to do a much better job of delivering those

services—and yes, geography is a challenge, but we have the service providers that are capable of doing it. We need to be out of the box, maybe funded a little differently or have leeway in rural Ontario for funding.

I'll mention the EMS and the non-urgent transfers, especially for ambulance services, the costs that are incurred sometimes when an ambulance has to take a patient out to the GTA, especially, or some type of specialized service. That leaves them short an ambulance in the area. They do their best to cross-cover, but it is a real situation that's hurting their budgets. So I've brought that again to the attention of the LHIN. Some of it is not their responsibility, but they have to know the whole health care package out there and the challenges that we have.

Again, the funding should be allowed to be different, depending on our priorities in rural Ontario. Those are a couple of examples of where I think that we can make a difference, that we should work together to make the difference, because one size does not fit all. I'm hoping that we have some progress on that because I'll certainly be speaking a lot more on it at every opportunity I can get.

In the throne speech, they certainly mentioned the Green Energy Act. Well, that was a little bit of an uproar in my riding, to say the least, in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. Forcing industrial wind turbines on to unwilling communities created a huge firestorm. I know that we're going to be addressing that tomorrow in private members' business, but it was a huge firestorm in my riding, and they were right—no local input.

One of the wind turbines is actually on the Oak Ridges moraine. For heaven's sakes, you can't hardly put up a tool shed or cut down your tree without a whole bunch of permits, yet they're going to put an industrial wind turbine 40 storeys high on the Oak Ridges moraine. It's outrageous.

I'm very proud of the member from Prince Edward–Hastings for bringing that part of the planning authority in his private member's bill back to the Legislature tomorrow, in the second week in the Legislature. I know that many people from the riding are coming to support him. You can cancel wind turbines in Scarborough, cancel power plants if you want to, but do the people in rural Ontario actually mean less? Is their health care of less value to everybody here?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Careful, Laurie—

Ms. Laurie Scott: We called for a moratorium, on health and wind turbine concerns.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's a good question.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It is a good question, though. It's a good question because there are very different reports, and we just said, "Moratorium until we get the proof and the studies being brought forward." There are lots of cases that I can make for health studies.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Come on, Laurie. You're a nurse. You know about evidence.

Ms. Laurie Scott: There's lots of evidence for you, if the minister's worried about evidence.

They pitted neighbours against neighbours. That's a horrible thing to do. That's bad policy. When you can't do it in a proper process and have the municipality stand in with the Planning Act to discuss these green energy projects, that's horrible. That's what you get. You get communities fighting against each other, neighbours fighting against each other. It's just not good policy. We were proudly standing with those people opposed to the wind turbines coming to their areas, and we'll be proudly standing with them again tomorrow.

Jobs are a big issue up in Haliburton–Kawartha–Lakes Brock. I have some of the lowest household incomes in the province of Ontario. They need to have an economy that's going to generate jobs. We wanted to bring some tax relief for small businesses so they have confidence to invest in their business, confidence to hire that extra person to work in their stores.

We were promising to do that if we could get in government because we needed to give people faith. We need to have a competitive province to attract jobs. You know, 100 private sector jobs an hour that we're losing I believe is what we're up to in the province. Our economy is getting worse. People are scared. They're not confident to spend money, and some of them, as I said, are in very tough times. They can hardly stay in their houses if they could pay their hydro bills and put food on the table.

We wanted to stimulate the economy. The 407 expansion—the Liberals messed around with that completion date two or three times. We needed it to come to 35/115. They kept delaying that. If there are potential companies coming or industry that wants to come, they're looking at the overall plan. We needed that done as soon as possible, the 407 to 35/115. The Liberals had to deal with the federal government; they missed that deadline. They're making it—2020 was your last thing, but maybe it's even longer than that now. Maybe the member for Peterborough can tell us.

We needed the 35 four-laning brought in. They needed some infrastructure. You need to spend money wisely when you're in government. The wasteful spending that we have seen—not making good investments to the riding, as I mentioned those two large infrastructure projects. But you've got to make wise investments to stimulate the economy. Meanwhile, your spending has gone up by 80% in the last eight years. Are we any better off? We're not. The investments weren't wise.

Just even little things that you could change around, like the—

Interjection.

1750

Ms. Laurie Scott: I didn't hear what he said. Anything you could change around, even the MNR. We heard a lot from the little local fish hatchery people up in Haliburton. We've had the fish hatcheries in Haliburton—volunteer-run fish hatcheries. They do a lot of the MNR work. They're being taxed by this government as industrial polluters. Why would that happen? Why would you do that? Why wouldn't you work with the local Haliburton hatcheries that are in our communities,

as in Haliburton? I know many of the other Liberal members have them. Why would you tax them as industrial polluters? Things like that that you can make changes to that would help our communities and help tourism and fishing in our area, help out the MNR who, according to Environmental Commissioner—he was very critical of the government's doing business in the MNR and the MOE. Things like that, getting the communities engaged, do not cost the government a lot and stimulate our local economies—and for the greater good, when I speak of the fish hatchery.

Madam Speaker, I think that the McGuinty government, by not accepting our amendments so far—maybe I still hold out hope that they will accept our amendments to put a cap on the private sector, a wage freeze, to have the apprenticeship system changed, to update it—I know the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is here and I know he's listening intently; you may have heard it a few times this week—to change that ratio to 1 to 1 to make it easier for our young people to get into the trade of their choice, but because there's a skilled trades job shortage coming, which we've heard about and heard about, to stop that bottleneck. Those are the types of things you could do and what has been called for. I know that he's probably going to mention the reports that are out there, but we have consulted a lot with the trades for years and years, and the apprenticeship ratio is what we've heard that they need to change.

The province of Ontario needs to have a government that's going to spend their money responsibly, especially in these hard economic times, so that the taxpayers have faith that the government is making some positive changes instead of just squandering lots and lots of money on programs that aren't effective, aren't getting them any more health care.

I know the new member from Barrie mentioned the underserved area, the changes that occurred. That certainly happened in parts of my riding. It doesn't help us, in our communities, to attract doctors. We do think some of the health care things that have been changed—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: You've got more doctors now than you had before.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm just about to finish.

Interjections.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I was going to pay you a compliment, if you'd let me.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Member for Peterborough, you're not in your seat.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was just going to say that we've seen some positive things with the family health teams and community health centres that are in the area, but when you take an underserved designation out of a large part of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, that does present a bit of a challenge to attract doctors. That's a negative. So some things are working better, and I applaud them; I'm not shy at that. Some things aren't working as well and could

work better, and I hope that the minister will listen to some of the changes that we'd like to see take place.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My time is up.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to first of all congratulate the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock on her election. I know that I am very honoured—it's an honour and a privilege to be elected to the Legislature and to be serving my constituents. I know that you share that honour as well.

I listened with great interest to some of the things that you talked about and I have to say that I agree with a lot of it. A lot of what you were talking about—you're talking about how the constituents in your riding have been affected by eight years of McGuinty reign, kind of a reign of terror for many of us in the province—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Speaker—oh, I'm not in my seat—I would ask you to rule on the issue of “reign of terror,” because that conjures up some very—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

I'd ask the member to withdraw the comment.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm sorry. I withdraw the comment.

Well, let's just say that many areas of the province are left grappling; I'll put it that way.

I know that you were talking about how, in particular, rural Ontario has been affected, and I can say in my riding of Kenora–Rainy River, that is both rural and northern, that we feel particularly affected. It was also very telling, talking about the 63% of voters who rejected the McGuinty Liberals, and that's of the people, we have to remember, who actually came out and voted. There is a real problem, Madam Speaker, with losing the faith of the electorate. I think that what we need to do is we need to work together so that we can restore that faith, earn that trust in the voters. To do that, as I said, we have to work together, and I look forward to that. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thanks very much. I've just been doing a running tally from the opposition. Week one, Madam Speaker: \$12 billion in new spending that you guys want—two hospitals in Brampton, repairs in Cambridge, a new college, \$140 million in Barrie—\$12 billion. Whatever happened to “need to have” and “nice to have”? Things that we've been living without for—\$12 billion. I can't wait until next week. Is it \$24 billion? This kills me.

The other one I love: The Green Energy Act is like on a poster somewhere—I don't know—in your offices on a dart board. Transmission lines: Why don't we take transmission lines and allow municipal councils to decide where transmission lines are? Have you read the health problems associated with heavy electrical lines through agriculture? I will send you about 15 pages that I looked at, with research being done. You've never worried about transmission lines.

Automobiles: I live half a block from the Gardiner freeway, where everyone in the GTA runs by my door. I'm waiting for the people from my friends over there to come and talk to me about car exhaust being—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I was going to say—sorry.

Interjection: No, keep going.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Okay, I'll keep going. Sorry.

The other thing is—this kills me—the rural bias. I represent, they estimate now, somewhere between 160,000 and 180,000 people. Before redistribution, my constituents will be over 200,000. My constituent gets half of a vote to a third of a vote for most other constituents in this province. You never hear me whining about it. You hear me talking about my days in a small farming community in eastern Ontario, and how I have to care about the people in Alexandria as much as my friend Grant does. You guys are just precious.

So how are you going to balance the budget? This is the new reality, kids. You're part of the team. You can't do this anymore. We have to balance the budget with you—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Comments? The member for—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Mr. John O'Toole: You drank all the Kool-Aid.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): You're not in your seat, member from Durham.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Excuse me?

The member for Huron–Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, I worried for a very long time that rural Ontario had lost its voice, and I'm so glad to see that its voice has come back to Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. Laurie, on behalf of Tim Hudak, the PC caucus, and actually the entire assembly, it's great to see you back here. You're going to do a great job on behalf of all of your constituents. You're focusing on jobs, relief for families and cleaning up the waste that has become the norm over the last eight years, which is shameful.

Rural Ontario actually has spoken volumes in the sense that there is a real change of tide, and we hope, through your voice, people start hearing and listening about the priorities that are important.

You spoke about the economic issues in your riding; you spoke about the worry about health care; you spoke about the worry about jobs, and I believe that you have the demeanour and the will to work together with people and you'll lead by example. I don't hesitate in saying that.

With that, I think that I would like to thank you for drawing to attention here today that the throne speech shamefully and totally ignored rural Ontario and Ontario's number one industry, which is the agri-food

industry. It was absolutely shameful and we need to start taking a look at what really is the substance of this province.

1800

You also raised the issue of green energy, and yes, we need local autonomy back. We need to be working together, and tomorrow I look forward to speaking to that in more detail with you.

Again, congratulations on your win. It speaks volumes. The Haliburton area, Kawartha Lakes and Brock welcome change and we welcome—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to congratulate the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock on her election, and I'd like to follow up on some of her comments, particularly that the only thing that got less mention in the throne speech than northern Ontario was agriculture, and that is a shame.

But there's another thing that—and we all knocked on a lot of doors. We all knocked on a lot of doors in the last little while, and one thing that I find galling is that we seem to have tax cuts for corporations with no strings.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: And risk management for farmers with no strings.

Mr. John Vanthof: Hey, hey, I'm not talking about—yet we've got the healthy homes renovation tax credit for seniors, with lots of strings, where they have to spend \$10,000 to get \$1,500 back.

I knocked on the door—and several; lots of doors—of a gentleman in Thorne. He was about 80, and he came to the door in his walker and he could use something like that in his house. But what he told me, he says, “John, my monthly cost of living to run my house and everything is \$1,800, to run everything in this house”—

Interjection: What?

Mr. John Vanthof: This is northern Ontario.

Interjection: No firewood?

Mr. John Vanthof: When you're 80, it's a hard time cutting and splitting firewood, my friends, believe me; if you've ever tried it.

His monthly income was \$1,400 and his savings were almost gone. Now, how is he going to benefit from the healthy home seniors renovation tax cut?

Mr. John Yakabuski: He's not.

Mr. John Vanthof: He's not. And what is the proportion, if you could please—if someone on the government side could please come up with the figures of how many, what percentage of seniors can participate in this program—tell us that—and, of the ones who can, can actually pay for it themselves.

Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'd like to thank the members from Kenora–Rainy River, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Toronto Centre and my colleague, of course from—what was that?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Huron–Bruce.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Huron–Bruce. I'm getting all these names back down here—for listening to the debate and participating back.

I think that, as much as the Minister for Training, Colleges and Universities didn't really hear the message, we'll keep repeating it for you about the trades. It is true; it is a passion of mine, so I won't be quiet about it. But anyway, we'll have those discussions and we'll try to make those changes with that.

You know, we talked a lot about seniors. I do have one of the highest populations of seniors in the province of Ontario, and those stories that we are seeing about the hydro bills, the heating coming up in the wintertime—their fears are all very true. The fact of the jobs, the need for more jobs; more ideas that we have to stimulate jobs in rural Ontario and specifically in my riding that I'm speaking about today. We're going to keep pressing the government to make those changes. We need people to succeed in rural Ontario, or else the rest of Ontario doesn't succeed.

So we think that the government should spend money very differently. We're going to be saying that. The home renovation tax cut does not equal the relief on their hydro bill or their home heating bill that we had proposed from taking the provincial HST portion off that.

We're very concerned about the health care issues that we have in rural Ontario. I mentioned before that I have people talking to me every day with ideas, which is a relief because we have people that care in the communities and they are saying that government money is not being spent the right way for rural Ontario.

I've worked in the city also. It's not used enough there in certain things, that we can transport it over to rural Ontario's ideas. So I think that we can work a lot with that: No less health care in urban Ontario, just some more health care in rural Ontario. So thank you, Madam Speaker.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1805.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
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	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of 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
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
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	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	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	
Munro, Julia (PC)	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
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
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	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	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	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	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
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	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	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

Continued from back cover

Rick Hansen Institute	
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer	220
Community Care East York	
Mr. Michael Prue	220
Canada World Youth	
Mr. Yasir Naqvi	221
Dave Gionet	
Mr. Jeff Yurek	221
McMaster Marauders football team	
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn	221
Trek to Bethlehem in Bala	
Mr. Norm Miller	221

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Accepting Schools Act, 2011, Bill 13, Ms. Broten / Loi de 2011 pour des écoles tolérantes, projet de loi 13, Mme Broten	
First reading agreed to	222
Anti-Bullying Act, 2011, Bill 14, Mrs. Witmer / Loi de 2011 sur la lutte contre l'intimidation, projet de loi 14, Mme Witmer	
First reading agreed to	222
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer	222
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers Act, 2011, Bill 15, Mr. Kwinter / Loi de 2011 sur l'Association des ingénieurs de l'Ontario, projet de loi 15, M. Kwinter	
First reading agreed to	222
Mr. Monte Kwinter	222
Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 16, Mr. Hillier, Mr. Craitor, Ms. DiNovo / Loi de 2011 modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait à la sécurité publique liée aux chiens, projet de loi 16, M. Hillier, M. Craitor, Mme DiNovo	
First reading agreed to	222
Mr. Randy Hillier	222
Jewish Heritage Month Act, 2011, Bill 17, Mr. Colle, Mr. Shurman, Ms. DiNovo / Loi de 2011 sur le Mois du patrimoine juif, projet de loi 17, M. Colle, M. Shurman, Mme DiNovo	
First reading agreed to	223
Mr. Mike Colle	223
Respect for Voters Act, 2011, Bill 18, Ms. Jones / Loi de 2011 sur le respect des électeurs, projet de loi 18, Mme Jones	
First reading agreed to	223
Ms. Sylvia Jones	223

MOTIONS

Member for Pickering–Scarborough East	
Hon. John Milloy	223
Motion agreed to	223
Annual report, Chief Medical Officer of Health	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	223

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Anti-bullying initiatives / Prévention de l'intimidation	
Hon. Laurel C. Broten	223
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	225
Mr. Peter Tabuns	225
Accessibility in the House	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	226

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Wind turbines	
Mr. Todd Smith	226
Diagnostic services	
Mme France Gélinas	227
Wind turbines	
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette	227
Taxation	
Mme France Gélinas	227
Child custody	
Mr. Yasir Naqvi	227
Wind turbines	
Mr. John O'Toole	227
Replacement workers	
Mr. Taras Natyshak	228
Wind turbines	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	228
Wind turbines	
Mr. Jim Wilson	228
Wind turbines	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	228
Lyme disease	
Mr. Robert Bailey	229
Wind turbines	
Mr. John Yakabuski	229
Health care funding	
Mr. Jim Wilson	229

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Throne speech debate

Mr. Todd Smith	230
Mr. Rod Jackson	231
Mr. Taras Natyshak	233
Mr. Bill Mauro.....	233
Mr. John O'Toole	233
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	234
Mr. Todd Smith	234
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	234
Mr. John Vanthof.....	236
Hon. Glen R. Murray	237
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	238
Mr. Taras Natyshak	238
Ms. Helena Jaczek	238
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	239
Ms. Helena Jaczek	239
Mr. David Zimmer.....	240
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	242
Mr. Rosario Marchese	242
Mr. Jeff Leal	242
Mr. Randy Hillier	243
Ms. Helena Jaczek	243
Ms. Laurie Scott	243
Ms. Sarah Campbell	247
Hon. Glen R. Murray	247
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	247
Mr. John Vanthof.....	248
Ms. Laurie Scott	248
Debate deemed adjourned.....	248

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 30 November 2011 / Mercredi 30 novembre 2011

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2011, Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan

Mr. Peter Shurman	199
Mrs. Julia Munro	203
Mr. John O'Toole	204
Mr. Steve Clark	206
Mr. Michael Prue	207
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn	207
Mme France Gélinas	208
Mr. Phil McNeely	208
Mr. Peter Shurman	208
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	209

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Rick Bartolucci	209
Mr. Ted Arnott	209
Hon. John Gerretsen	209
Mr. Reza Moridi	209
Mr. Yasir Naqvi	209
Mr. Bas Balkissoon	209

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Apprenticeship training

Mr. Tim Hudak	209
Hon. Dalton McGuinty	209

Apprenticeship training

Mr. Tim Hudak	210
Hon. Dalton McGuinty	210

Economic development

Ms. Andrea Horwath	211
Hon. Dalton McGuinty	211

Mining industry

Ms. Andrea Horwath	212
Hon. Dalton McGuinty	212

Apprenticeship training

Mr. Garfield Dunlop	213
Hon. Glen R. Murray	213

Public transit

Mr. Jonah Schein	213
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	213

Economic development

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza	214
Hon. Brad Duguid	214

Economic development

Mr. Norm Miller	214
Hon. Rick Bartolucci	215
Hon. Michael Gravelle	215

Securities industry

Mr. Michael Prue	215
Hon. Dwight Duncan	215

Renewable energy

Ms. Helena Jaczek	216
Hon. Christopher Bentley	216

Pan Am Games

Mr. Rod Jackson	216
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	216

Anti-bullying initiatives

Ms. Andrea Horwath	217
Hon. Dalton McGuinty	217

Post-secondary education

Mr. Grant Crack	217
Hon. Glen R. Murray	217

Anti-bullying initiatives

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer	218
Hon. Dalton McGuinty	218

Home care

Ms. Cindy Forster	218
Hon. Deborah Matthews	219

Diabetes

Mr. Jeff Leal	219
Hon. Deborah Matthews	219

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

Mrs. Julia Munro	219
------------------------	-----

Events in Hamilton East–Stoney Creek

Mr. Paul Miller	220
-----------------------	-----

Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

Ms. Helena Jaczek	220
-------------------------	-----

Continued on inside back cover