



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 7 December 2011

Mercredi 7 décembre 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 7 December 2011

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mercredi 7 décembre 2011

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 POUR
DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Ms. Broten moved second 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): Further debate?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I rise today to speak up and speak out on behalf of the more than two million students in our publicly funded education system.

Like you and I, each one of these students is unique. Despite these differences, we all deserve equal respect and acceptance for who we are.

As adults, as parents, as members of our communities and as a government, we have a responsibility: a responsibility to work together with other parents, students, teachers, school board staff and community agencies to make sure that our children are celebrated for their differences and not bullied because of them.

We all need to be committed to creating a positive school climate and an education system where everyone—and I mean everyone, Speaker—feels welcome and safe. Letting even one child suffer because of bullying is one too many.

The McGuinty government has always had an ambitious education achievement agenda and we have had great results because of this.

Le gouvernement McGuinty a toujours eu un programme ambitieux sur le plan de l'éducation, et nous avons remporté d'extraordinaires succès en conséquence.

We have taught our children the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy, and we have seen positive results in student achievement and a climbing graduation rate. But we now need to focus on teaching them about positive relationships.

Research tells us that students who feel welcome, accepted and connected to school are more likely to suc-

ceed academically. Findings about the effects of rejection and bullying on young people are clear and consistent. Rejection, exclusion and estrangement are associated with behaviour problems in the classroom, lower interest in school, lower student achievement and higher dropout rates.

Sadly, we also know about the devastating effects it can have on students' well-being.

This is a personal mission for me, not just as the new Minister of Education, but as a mother of two boys who have just started grade 1. As a parent, I want to know that my children are safe and protected when they walk through their school doors each and every morning, and throughout the day.

As Minister of Education and as an Ontarian, I want to know that this is the case for all children in Ontario. Children spend many hours a day in the classroom, where the personal dynamics between children, their socio-economic differences, their racial and cultural differences are all tucked under one roof.

Les enfants passent beaucoup d'heures par jour dans une classe où leurs différences personnelles, leurs écarts socioéconomiques et leurs différences raciales et culturelles sont tous réunis sous le même toit.

How students learn to engage with their peers in school will largely determine how they engage with their colleagues in the workplace, their neighbours in the community and fellow citizens in a greater society.

C'est seulement en créant des écoles plus sécuritaires, plus tolérantes, que nous pouvons assurer à chaque élève la possibilité d'apprendre et de réaliser son plein potentiel.

Think about it for a moment, Speaker: How productive could you be at work if every day you were worried about being pushed around by your co-workers? Do you think you could concentrate during a meeting if you knew that at lunch you would be surrounded by bullies the moment you stepped outside? How can we expect our children to succeed in school if these are some of their concerns? Children cannot be expected to get good grades and participate in school activities if they're in an environment where they feel insecure and intimidated.

Bullying requires attention from all of us because it remains such an underestimated and pervasive force in our schools. A 2009 study from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health revealed that 29% of Ontario students reported being bullied at school. That means nearly one in three kids, if not more, have likely experienced some form of bullying. That's a staggering number of young people who have been persistently physically or emotionally teased, taunted or hurt by others.

We also know that bullying is often a precursor to other violent behaviour. This is not acceptable in our schools or in our communities.

In terms of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in schools, girls were much more likely to report having received sexual comments, unwanted looks or touches, and having parts of their body commented on or rated. This is not acceptable.

In a survey of grade 9 and 11 students, researchers found that 27% of female students admitted being pressured to do something sexual against their will, and more than 29% of female students responded that they had been the victim of unwanted sexual contact. This is wrong and must end.

Harassment and aggression are also major issues for students confronted by homophobia. A 2011 national climate survey found that 64% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer students, and 61% of students with LGBTQ parents, feel unsafe at school. These numbers speak volumes and are haunting. That's nearly two thirds of the LGBTQ students suffering from homophobic bullying.

We all know too well the impact bullying and homophobia can have on students. In some cases, students feel like there is no way out other than to take their own lives. We must all take concrete action to create another path, one of hope, happiness, safety and acceptance for these students.

The numbers tell us part of the story, but it is the devastating personal stories that bring into focus the need for us to take immediate action. As a mother, my heart goes out to the families and friends and especially the parents who have lost a child. No one wants to know what it feels like to lose a child, a nephew, a grandchild, a cousin, a friend, especially at such a young age.

Speaker, we cannot stand by and let other students suffer like this. We can tell students that it will get better, but that's not enough. We need to start making it better right now.

These stories, the numbers and the complexity of the issue tell us that we're facing a significant challenge. Our province is wonderfully diverse, but we must combat racism in all its forms. Bullying faced by our First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth as a result of lack of acceptance and inclusion in our schools and communities must end, as must other forms of racism.

0910

Speaker, as easy as it is to identify the stark consequences of bullying, the shape and nature of bullying are much harder to define. That's because bullying is a complex social issue that often relates to the difficulties students face at home and outside of schools. It manifests itself in different ways, many of them devastating. Whether it be physical, verbal, social or Internet-based, we need to do more to ensure that each and every one of our students feels safe and welcome at school.

Que l'intimidation soit physique, verbale, sociale ou basée sur Internet, nous devons faire plus pour que chac-

un de nos élèves se sente en sécurité et bien accueilli à l'école.

And doing more about bullying means not only supporting those who are the victims, but also finding ways to reach out to those who are doing the bullying. Children who suffer prolonged victimization through bullying as well as children who use power and aggression as bullies may experience a range of psychosocial problems that may extend into adolescence and adulthood. Whether bullied or a bully, it is important to recognize the likelihood that there are kids on both sides of the equation who need our help.

Mr. Speaker, we believe in a strong education system and we believe that that strong education system prepares all young people to become positive, contributing and respectful citizens in our diverse society. A healthy, safe, inclusive learning environment is a necessary precondition for that and for our students to succeed in school so that they can go on to find meaningful work in the workplace.

The students in our schools today are people who will, in future, be treating our illnesses, growing our food, fixing our cars, teaching our children and creating our laws. We will trust them to get us from A to B safely by maintaining our roads and bridges and steering our public transit. We will look to them to keep our economy strong and competitive, come up with innovative ideas to protect our environment and keep us on the cutting edge of technological change. They are our future. Investing in our school system is an investment in our future: our personal futures and the future of the province. Our government has an ambitious education agenda to build a strong education system that will help prepare students for the future.

Earlier this week, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada—CMEC—released the results of the 2010 pan-Canadian assessment program. The results showed that Ontario students are ranked among the highest achievers in the country. Ontario students were the only group to perform above the Canadian average in all three areas of math, reading and science. In fact, Ontario students scored significantly higher than the Canadian average in all three subjects and were first when it came to reading. They were the only students to perform above the national average in that area.

Our full-day kindergarten program will continue to improve educational opportunities for our kids, giving them more chances to succeed. It will better prepare them for grade 1, and also later grades and beyond the classroom. We have lowered class sizes, put more resources into the classroom, invested in teacher learning and development and put in place innovative programs like the specialist high skills majors and dual credits. All of these programs are helping to increase student achievement and close the gap for students who are struggling. They are making us a world leader in education.

The most recent results from CMEC are just one example. Our students continue to perform well on international tests. I am proud of our students and the edu-

cators and staff in our schools. Je suis si fière de nos élèves, des éducatrices et éducateurs et du personnel dans nos écoles. They are clearly achieving great things. We want to see that continue.

Mr. Speaker, to achieve our education priorities, it is essential that all schools provide a safe, inclusive environment in which students can learn, grow and develop. La sécurité dans nos écoles est une condition de base de la réussite des élèves et du rendement scolaire.

It empowers the members of the school and broader community to contribute to eliminating these kinds of behaviours. A positive climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted.

Mr. Speaker, we have always taken school safety seriously. Since 2004, we have supported safe school initiatives that create safe and inclusive school environments. We have funded bullying prevention training for teachers, principals and vice-principals so that they can better recognize and deal with bullying.

Our partnership with the Kids Help Phone helps ensure students who are bullied have someone to talk to, a partnership which we have recently renewed. And our support for Kids Help Phone has resulted in the hiring of more counsellors; the training of over 100 professional counsellors about bullying prevention; the development of a unique educational and informative bullying website; and increased bullying prevention and awareness among kids through school posters, TV spots and MSN Messenger.

By offering kids anonymous, free and confidential advice, Kids Help Phone provides a safe place for young people to go and discuss their problems. Students can contact Kids Help Phone by telephone or go online 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

When we first came into office, we brought together the safe schools action team, a team of safety and education experts, to look at bullying prevention and review the previous safe schools legislation. They based their recommendations on conversations and feedback they received from hundreds of people around the province, and using these recommendations, we introduced Bill 212.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Members, there are too large sidebars over there. Could you take it outside, please? I'm having trouble hearing the speaker. Thank you.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Thank you, Speaker.

Using those recommendations, we introduced Bill 212. The bill amended the Education Act to add bullying as an infraction for which suspension must be considered, and replaced mandatory suspensions and expulsions for students, except in limited circumstances, with the requirement that principals and school boards consider mitigating and other factors before students are suspended or expelled.

This means that now, when making decisions, principals and boards must consider factors like the safety of

other students; whether racial or other forms of harassment were involved; whether the behaviour was related to a disability; and the age of the student. This helps them determine the appropriate response to student behaviour.

Bill 212 also requires programs for students who have been suspended or expelled. Students who are on a long-term suspension or expulsion are now given additional supports to continue their learning and get them back on track. For example, this could include anger management or substance abuse counselling.

The legislation also requires that the boards' procedures are transparent and timely so that parents are appropriately involved in suspension and expulsion processes.

Following that, we introduced the Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act, the first legislation of its kind in Canada. Bill 157, as it is also known, means all school board employees are required to report incidents of bullying to the principal, and principals are also now required to contact the parents of the victim.

We also directed school staff who work directly with students to respond to and address inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nepean–Carleton and the member from Etobicoke Centre, would you please take your discussion outside.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Speaker, we also directed school staff who work directly with students to respond to and address inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour, including bullying, when it is safe to do so.

Since 2004, our government has invested \$285 million in safe schools initiatives that are helping make Ontario schools some of the safest in the world. As part of our safe schools strategy, we have put more resources into the system and we are helping boards fund more psychologists, social workers, child and youth workers, attendance counsellors and other non-teaching professionals.

We've been encouraging boards to build partnerships with community agencies like child and family services, again to help connect students and families with the support that they need.

In 2009, we introduced our equity and inclusive education strategy, following extensive consultation with representatives from public, Catholic and French-language school boards, the teachers' federation and leadership associations. Student representatives and equity and inclusive education experts were also consulted. The Ontario Human Rights Commission provided input and continues to play a significant role in supporting the implementation of the strategy.

La stratégie aide les éducatrices et éducateurs de toute la province à mieux cerner et régler les préjugés et les obstacles systématiques au rendement et au bien-être des élèves.

0920

The strategy is helping educators across the province to better identify and address discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to student achievement and well-being. These barriers may be related to gender, race, ethnic

origin, religion, socio-economic background, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation and other factors.

It also recognized that several factors may intersect to create additional barriers for some students. We have received strong support for this strategy, and now, for the first time, every school board in Ontario has an equity and inclusive education policy.

We're also working with boards and a diverse range of education and community stakeholders to provide training and resources to support the effective implementation of safe schools, and equity and inclusive education strategies.

We've created an online registry that provides information about programs and resources that schools can use to help prevent bullying and promote safe and inclusive schools, and to this day the registry continues to grow with new ideas and information to help schools get started.

Boards are also required to conduct a school climate survey of their students once every two years. They are encouraged to survey teachers, school staff and parents. The surveys must include questions on bullying and harassment related to homophobia, gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

To support this requirement, the ministry developed sample climate surveys, available on our website. These surveys have also been expanded to include questions about equity and inclusive education, to help schools better understand the thoughts and feelings of their students about their school's safety and learning environment. The survey results help schools make planning decisions about how to prevent all forms of bullying and harassment and promote safe, accepting, inclusive schools.

Speaker, one program that I'm particularly proud of is the urban and priority high schools program. It supports 34 high-needs high schools in urban areas that face challenges such as poverty, criminal and gang activity, and a lack of community resources, to develop programs in partnership with their communities. These schools are offering programs in five key areas: nutrition, such as breakfast and lunch programs; student leadership engagement, including grade 9 orientation camps and leadership training; lunchtime and after-school programming, such as intramural sports, music ensembles, special interest clubs and summer camps; staffing, which could include additional student success teachers, social workers, child and youth workers; and improving student achievement initiatives, such as helping all students afford the basics of school life, including class trips and transportation.

Schools are reaching out to students and their families, working to develop a safe and positive school climate where the school and engaged parents are critical to creating an environment where students can succeed.

Speaker, we also need to talk about what's happening online, because that's affecting our schools every day. Speaking with students, we developed a resource for kids to get them talking about online respect and responsibility. We need to tackle head-on the impact information and communications technology has on our schools and

our communities. We want students, parents and school staff talking about how kids are using this technology and how we can ensure that cyber-communities are respectful and safe ones. That is why we provide guidance to teachers about how to engage students in these discussions in school.

We cannot ignore the bullying that takes place in these online forums and through different kinds of technology. It has a different nature: It can be posted anonymously, it can spread quickly, and it's not always easy to take down or remove. Most importantly, Speaker, it allows the bully to follow you home or continue to attack you in the quiet of your room at night.

Everyone—government, educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community—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.

To support parent engagement at school and at home, the ministry introduced its parent engagement policy and introduced an amended regulation 612 in 2010. We've developed a number of parent-focused resources to help provide parents with the resources they need.

One of the most popular is our bullying prevention pamphlet for parents. It tells parents what to watch for, what to do and where to go for help, and we have made it available in multiple languages. Whether their child is being bullied or has been bullying others, we want to make sure parents know where they can go for help.

Through our government's grassroots Parents Reaching Out grant program, parents are developing local initiatives to foster and sustain safe, welcoming and respectful school climates.

In 2011-12, nearly 30% of the school council PRO grants have been awarded to support bullying prevention and safe schools initiatives, including bullying-related initiatives, Internet/cyber safety initiatives for parents and informing parents of safe schools policies and initiatives.

St. Jerome School in Kirkland Lake, for example, invited parents to attend an evening information session to teach parents how to recognize and prevent bullying. An expert spoke to them about bullying behaviour and the role that they, their children and staff play in creating a safe school.

École élémentaire catholique Sainte-Marguerite-Bourgeoys in Brantford invited parents and students to a play, *Quand tu vois rouge*, *When You See Red*, and it also took part in a discussion that followed on how to prevent bullying.

W. Erskine Johnston Public School in Kanata used their grant to host a bullying awareness workshop and seminar where a guest speaker spoke to parents about cyberbullying, as well as the differences in how girls and boys bully.

These are just a few of the great parent-led projects which have taken place to address bullying and support a positive school climate. Preventing bullying and making our schools inclusive is something that we, as Ontario

citizens, are working on together, and I want to thank everyone for their hard work.

Parents aren't the only ones working on creative projects. Across Ontario, SpeakUp projects are helping students engage both academically and socially by leading projects that they design and implement with the support of their learning communities. During the 2010-11 school year, more than 255 SpeakUp projects from across Ontario focused on school safety and bullying prevention.

Great work was done at Rainy River High School in Thunder Bay, Redstone Public School in the Barrie region and Sacred Heart School in the Ottawa region, where speakers—one who survived a suicide attempt—were brought in to speak to the school about self-esteem. In another instance, they established a team of student recess leaders who could help create a positive and active schoolyard.

Another program was called Girl Power, and invited grade 7 and 8 girls to spend time together, strengthening their self-esteem and leadership skills so that they could improve their school culture. These are just a few of the great examples and projects that our students are working on.

Effective bullying prevention requires a comprehensive, sustainable and community-based approach, and that's why I'm proud that we require a safe schools team in every school. These teams are comprised of members of the school community who work together as a team at the grassroots level to make their schools safer.

Last year, we introduced the Premier's Safe School Awards to recognize the innovative work of safe schools teams, and a few weeks ago, during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, I had the opportunity to meet with several of last year's award winners.

One of the schools I visited was Eastdale Secondary School in Welland. There, they took a whole-school approach to address bullying by encouraging more students, parents, staff and community members to take part in building a school where everyone could feel welcome.

The amazing thing about Eastdale is how positive the staff and students were about solving this complex problem. They know full well that there are no good guys and bad guys; today's bully can be tomorrow's bullied, and a bystander the day after that. But they don't hesitate to say that this is a problem with a solution. Kindness and compassion are fundamental parts of our character, and empowering these qualities through education is key to reducing bullying. That's what I saw at Eastdale Secondary School.

I also visited the award recipients at Saint Paul Catholic High School in Niagara Falls, and they told me about the positive changes that have come about thanks to their social climate committee. Whether it's been through music classes, where students wrote and professionally recorded songs to promote safe schools, or administering social climate surveys to identify where improvements could be made, they worked hard to change the perception of bullying and to create a safe and inclusive environment. Their efforts were so successful that other

schools in the region have approached staff for advice on what they can do to get similar results. These are the kinds of collaborative efforts that really make a difference.

Last week I visited another school, Northern Secondary School, where students and staff are working together on programs and initiatives that celebrate the school's diversity. Whether it's by joining a gay-straight alliance or equity committee or becoming a peer mediator and mentor, they are showing others that Northern Secondary takes safe, equitable and inclusive schools seriously.

0930

While we are proud of the steps we have taken and those that our schools have taken, we realize that more needs to be done. Students need our support, not just the victims but also the students who are doing the bullying. We must change behaviour and change the culture.

Mr. Speaker, for me to stand here and say that bullying can easily be eliminated would simply be unrealistic. The importance of bullying awareness and prevention requires more from us than empty promises and hollow rhetoric. That is why last week the McGuinty government introduced new legislation to help make our schools safer and more inclusive. We believe that all students, staff and community members 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, disability or other factors.

Students cannot be expected to reach their full potential in an environment where they feel insecure and intimidated. That's why Ontario is so committed to making our schools safe, inclusive and healthy places where all students feel accepted. This is more than a "nice to have," Mr. Speaker. It is a necessary condition for student success and well-being and for the future prosperity of our province.

As a result of the important steps that have already been taken, Ontario is recognized across jurisdictions as leading the way on safe schools. But there is more work to do to make our schools truly inclusive and safe from bullying, and that's why Ontario is moving forward with a comprehensive action plan to get results on this issue. New legislation is the first step, but we have a real opportunity to make a difference on a very serious matter. It is our responsibility to show students, teachers, parents and the community that bullying, harassment and discrimination are not acceptable and will not be taken lightly.

Our proposed legislation, called the Accepting Schools Act, if passed, would help schools become safer and more welcoming. Our goal with Bill 13 is to change attitudes and behaviours, and to change them for good. Attitudes and behaviours influence our judgment and guide our actions. Without changing them, we will achieve nothing substantive or sustainable.

We have come a long way in making our schools some of the best in the world, but we cannot leave a single student behind, and I am asking those who have the privilege to serve in this Legislature today to join me

in this important endeavour. As legislators, we're in a unique position to make positive changes and to influence others. We must act for the sake of our children. We all need to demonstrate our commitment to acceptance, inclusion and student safety. We need to act to help ensure everyone feels welcome, safe, included and respected in our schools.

Students are hearing that it will get better. This legislation is part of how Ontario is going to start making it get better right now. It's just one part of a comprehensive action plan that I believe will make a meaningful difference on the ground for students in all of our schools.

The Accepting Schools Act, if passed, would introduce tougher consequences for bullying and hate-motivated actions. If passed, the proposed legislation would provide clear expectations and increased accountability for school boards and bullies, including making expulsion a possible consequence for bullying.

Il exigerait que toutes les écoles soutiennent les élèves qui souhaitent mener des activités qui font la promotion de l'équité entre les sexes, de l'antiracisme, de la compréhension des personnes handicapées et des personnes de toutes les orientations et identités sexuelles, et du respect envers celles-ci, y compris des groupes portant le nom d'alliance gai-hétéro ou un autre nom.

It would require all schools to support students who want to lead activities that promote gender equity, anti-racism, understanding and respect for people with disabilities and people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including groups with the name Gay-Straight Alliance or another name. We know that these kinds of activities help students find support, and send a clear message about inclusion and respect.

If passed, the legislation would legally require boards to have policies on bullying prevention and early intervention, progressive discipline, and equity in inclusive education. It would add a definition of "bullying" to the Education Act so that everyone could clearly understand and recognize it. It would designate the third week of every November as Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, to encourage and support existing activities in boards and within communities to make clear that bullying must end.

Boards would be required to report on progress against goals for establishing a positive learning climate for all students, which would create greater transparency and accountability. The act would also require organizations using school property to follow standards consistent with the provincial code of conduct. The provincial code of conduct sets clear standards of behaviour for individual school boards to follow. It includes fundamental beliefs, like: Everyone has a responsibility to promote a safe environment; all members of the school community are to be treated with respect and dignity; everyone has a responsibility to resolve conflicts in a way that is civil and respectful; everyone is expected to resolve conflict without using violence.

These changes to the legislation would be a part of our commitment to make sure we're taking a whole-com-

munity approach to making our schools more inclusive. If passed, this proposed legislation would help create schools in Ontario that are safe, inclusive and accepting of all students.

However, we know it's not enough to propose a new law, and that's why, as I said, this legislation is one part of a comprehensive action plan to address bullying in our schools. The other steps recognize that we all have a role to play in making our schools safer, and that schools and school boards alone are not responsible for addressing these complex societal issues.

The other steps will build on Ontario's comprehensive efforts since we began our mandate in 2003 to prevent bullying and create a positive school climate. We will focus on integrating mental health supports in schools as part of Ontario's 10-year mental health and addictions strategy, and our focus on children's mental health over the next three years; and continue support for Kids Help Phone.

The growing need to support kids with mental health challenges is clear. Mental health issues aren't identified early enough, and when they are, wait-lists for services are too long. We're seeing far too many children and youth suffering in silence and families reaching out for resources, help and comfort. If we're going to talk seriously about leaving no one behind and supporting student achievement, then we need to do better when it comes to mental health and addictions. We will build on the work that we started in that regard over the last year.

As part of the plan, we will also create an Accepting Schools expert panel, to provide advice about resources that focus on the whole-school approach, including prevention and early intervention. We will also direct Ontario's curriculum council to report back next year on strengthening equity and inclusive education principles and bullying prevention strategies across the curriculum and suggesting ways to support this learning in Ontario schools.

As part of our action plan, we will also look at launching a public awareness campaign, which will stress that all Ontarians have a role in preventing and ending bullying. I am pleased to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we're not alone in thinking this way. We have heard many words of support from our partners on this plan. They recognize that we have more to do and that we need to work together, stand up together and say together that bullying is not acceptable in our schools.

Francine LeBlanc-Lebel, president of the Ontario Teachers' Federation told us, "The Ontario Teachers' Federation is strongly committed to bullying prevention and to ensuring that every student in Ontario has a safe environment in which to learn and develop. We are pleased that the Ontario government is moving forward in promoting the safe schools agenda through the Accepting Schools Act."

Hirad Zafari, public vice-president of the Ontario Student Trustees' Association-l'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario, said, "We are pleased that the government has recognized and is

addressing the severity of all forms of bullying within our schools. By promoting a safe and inclusive school environment, we are taking an important step in ensuring student success. We are glad the education community is taking real action to make a difference in Ontario.”

Gordon Floyd, president and CEO of Children’s Mental Health Ontario, said, “Whether it is based on gender, race, sexual orientation or disability, bullying can have a tremendously negative impact on a child’s mental health. By addressing bullying in our schools we can prevent mental health issues in the long term.”

0940

Kevin O’Dwyer, president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association, said, “OECTA has a long and proud history of striving to achieve equality and justice for all of our students. School cultures need to be sensitive, welcoming and responsive to every student. Our members will be pleased with the efforts of this government to ensure students get the support they need to succeed, promote understanding, and prevent bullying.”

Mr. Speaker, these are just a sample of the words we have heard from our partners.

There is clear interest across the province in taking a comprehensive, whole-community approach to this very serious issue. It’s clear that we all have a role to play in standing up against bullying. We can no longer stand by and tell our children that bullying is just a part of growing up. We need to become empowered members of the school and broader community and eliminate these kinds of behaviours. We’re committed to an education system where all students, parents, school staff and members of the school community are welcomed, respected and inspired to succeed.

I think we can agree that Ontario’s children are our most precious resource. I think we can also agree that they cannot concentrate on learning if they’re worried about being bullied or do not feel safe and included at school. Our schools must support inclusive, safe and healthy learning environments where all students feel accepted.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress again that everyone—government, educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community—has a role to play, and we have an opportunity now. We have done some great work, but we need to do more. Bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia are not acceptable in our schools. What are we teaching our children if we do not stand up now?

I want to stress that everyone here can make a difference. I’m sure most of you have heard the familiar story of the Pink Shirt Day. A young boy was being bullied at school for wearing pink. Instead of being bystanders, other students took a stand. They bought and distributed pink shirts for their schoolmates to show their support for the bullied student. What a strong message to send.

That’s the power of a simple action and simple words. I know it’s not always easy for bystanders to stand up to

bullies, but these students have shown us what a difference it can make. There are incredible things happening in our schools and classrooms, on playgrounds and sports fields across the province.

Il y a de merveilleuses choses qui se produisent dans nos écoles et salles de classe, sur les terrains de jeu et de sport dans toute la province.

I am proud of the work our teachers, parents, students, staff and community agencies are doing.

Je suis si fière de ce que font nos enseignantes et enseignants, les parents, les élèves, le personnel scolaire et les organismes communautaires.

But if there is even one student feeling threatened, afraid, unwelcome or unaccepted, our work is not done.

S’il y a un seul élève qui se sent menacé, qui a peur, qui ne se sent pas bien accueilli ou accepté, notre travail n’est pas achevé.

No one said doing the right thing is the easy thing, but a concerted effort is required by all of our partners to make safe and caring schools a reality for every student in Ontario.

Building a positive school climate requires a systemic focus on developing healthy and respectful relationships throughout the whole school community, among and between students and adults. Doing this work requires a sustained, long-term commitment to changing a school’s culture.

We have two million unique students in our publicly funded education system, and that means we have two million unique reasons for taking action and taking action now. This will take a sustained effort every day and every minute of the school year.

Our young people need to know that it’s not okay for them to be abused, threatened or bullied. They need to know that, as adults, we will speak out; we will stand up for them. We will work as hard as we can to get them the supports that they need.

We are role models for the children in our lives, and they look to us, as adults, as teachers, as parents, as community leaders. They’re watching what we say and what we do, and they’ll learn from our actions. I want my two boys to know, today and every day, that I love them for who they are, and I want to teach them to stand up for who they are, to be treated with respect and to treat those around them with respect.

I want all students in our schools to know that they are welcome and supported. It’s not okay for them to be bullied. It’s not okay for them to feel unsafe at school. I want them to know that there are adults that they can go to and peers that they can look to for support.

Small actions may not seem like much at the time, but these are teachable moments. We are building a brighter Ontario. Our actions speak volumes, but so do our words. Mr. Speaker, I reminded the House last week, when I introduced this legislation, about the power of words. The power of words to create fear, pain, spread hatred, homophobia, sexism and racism is obvious, and that is what we are all working so hard to combat.

But I think it's so important that we remember the power of positive words: "I love you"; "I believe in you"; "I'm proud of you"; "You can do it." Each and every one of us has what we need to make a difference in our schools, in our communities and in our province.

It's been so important, to me and to our government and to our partners on this important initiative, the broad range of support that these initiatives have received, and I think it's important to acknowledge in this Legislature those groups who have stepped forward to be part of those who are working hard to ensure that we will develop and build a community of safety, a climate of acceptance in our schools. I want to read and share with the Legislature some of that support.

This is from Helen Kennedy of Egale Canada: "We need to ensure lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered students are provided with the support they need to succeed. By mandating in law that schools provide these students with a peer support group, GSA or other similar group, if requested, the province is taking a huge step forward and making a real difference for vulnerable students."

This is from Jeremy Dias, who started Jer's Vision and who I will have the privilege to join at an event later tonight: "Students need a peer support group to deal with bullying based on homophobia, transphobia and discrimination of all kinds. By working with boards to provide a Rainbow Alliance, GSA or other similar group, the province is ensuring students will get the support they need."

This is from a youth advisory committee member to Jer's Vision: "As lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and queer students in schools in Ontario, we sometimes face challenges from our schools and community to run initiatives that make our places of learning safer. This new initiative will make it easier for us to learn in a safe and respectful environment."

And, Mr. Speaker, we received support from Nancy Kirby, the president of the Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees' Association, and this is what she had to say: "Ontario's Catholic school boards have a history of nurturing school environments that are caring and respectful places, where students are taught to embrace and respect the uniqueness and diversity of all people regardless of race, disabilities, gender or sexual orientation. We therefore welcome this legislation and its emphasis on strengthening bullying prevention and supports for all students affected by and concerned about bullying."

This is what Catherine Fife, the president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, had to say: "Ontario schools are respected around the world. We are on a positive path to inclusive, caring learning environments where the rich diversity of our students can thrive. We must maintain our focus on keeping our schools safe and free from bullying. This requires effective resources and the concerted efforts of the province, school boards, staff, parents and students—the entire community."

Benoit Mercier, président, Association des enseignants et des enseignants franco-ontariens, had this to

say: "Our members are committed to eliminating bullying inside and outside of our schools. The government's efforts will allow the school community to respond quickly and effectively to any acts of bullying."

Ken Coran, the president of OSSTF, added this: "Ontario's education workers are on the front line of bullying. They know the impact it has on students and need the tools to act. This legislation gives educators the flexibility they need to stop bullying before it begins."

Serge Demers, the chair of the Ontario Association of Deans of Education, added his support, and he said, "Research evidence in Canada, and around the world, shows that when young people feel their schools are safe, welcoming and inclusive, they are more likely to succeed academically. Ontario's faculties of education support all measures that promote the well-being and success of students."

0950

Speaker, I mentioned the other day that we were joined in the Legislature by Mary Gordon, the founder and president of Roots of Empathy. As many in this House will know, Roots of Empathy is a program where students are taught to be empathetic. A young baby is brought into their classroom and they learn to experience the emotion of an attachment and an understanding of caring for someone who can't necessarily respond to you in verbal communication. It's a program that has been recognized around the world.

This is what Mary Gordon had to say about the work that we're undertaking here in Ontario right now: "I wish to commend the Premier on his comprehensive approach to the pervasive challenge of bullying. The new legislation is sweeping in its engagement of all players and provision of consequences. This legislation builds on the underlay of evidence-based bullying prevention programs such as Roots of Empathy and gives direction and definition for administrators, teachers, social workers, guidance counsellors, parents and students. Not only will students be supported by informed and empowered adults, they will be part of the solution."

Speaker, I talked earlier in my remarks about what young girls face in our schools and the unfortunate harassment that takes place. I've had a chance over the years to work with Clare Freeman. She is the former chair of the Domestic Violence Advisory Council. Clare had this to say: "Reducing a youth's vulnerability through inclusive practices, especially in the area of gender identity and sexual orientation, is key to reducing bullying inside and outside the classroom. I am delighted that the government is taking strong action that will directly benefit and protect these students."

Earlier in my remarks, I had an opportunity to talk about the fact that racism must end and that many of our students in many of our schools have come to Ontario from all around the world, and that's really what makes our province such an amazing and wonderful place. But it also makes it incumbent on all of us to be vigilant and to put an end to racism, and we need to do that work every single day in our schools.

Kirk Mark, the president of the Canadian Alliance of Black Educators, had this to say: “The Canadian Alliance of Black Educators applauds the government of Ontario’s Ministry of Education for its tenacity of purpose by providing guidelines and supports to boards of education, as part of its continuing progress in safe and inclusive schools, in order to enhance student success and parental engagement.”

Speaker, I also want to highlight the important work being done in elementary schools across the province. I’ve had a chance over the past months to attend many elementary schools and see first-hand the amazing work that they are doing, creating a climate of acceptance and intervening and teaching the students in their schools about how to interact in a positive way with one another.

Some of the schools have developed programs that are much like the United Nations of the school. The students have a role and a responsibility to engage in helping fellow students in the schoolyard and in the hallway engage in a positive way. They do some of that peace-keeping work, and it’s important work that’s done.

Sam Hammond, the president of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, had this to say about the work that we are now all doing together: “Ontario’s elementary teachers welcome the plan to directly address bullying of all kinds, especially bullying related to gender identity. The commitment to provide teachers with the necessary training and resources related to early intervention will have a positive impact at the school level.”

I think what Sam has to say is really important, because as I said in my remarks, teachers and schools are doing amazing work across the province, but what many teachers tell us is that they’re looking for more support to understand how to interact with a student at that teachable moment, how to change behaviour and teach students about positive relationships.

We’ve done a lot of work with respect to the three Rs—reading, writing and arithmetic—in this province, and we’re very, very proud of the success that our students are making. We know that now we have to continue our important work with respect to the fourth R, that of relationships. Teaching our students to interact with each other in a positive way, being patient, teaching patience, teaching empathy, teaching compassion, teaching respect and understanding in our schools and in our hallways will, no doubt in my mind, have a positive influence on our communities at large.

As I reach the conclusion of my remarks, Speaker, I want to highlight the important role that all of us, beyond those in this Legislature, can play on this important initiative. And I want to highlight the level of interest that exists in tackling this important issue.

You only needed to pick up any newspaper or watch any TV station over the last number of weeks to see first-hand the desire in the broad community to have an important conversation about how we tackle bullying. We have had so many victims and perpetrators come forward with their stories, anonymously and otherwise, whether in print or in the broader media. We’ve had fam-

ilies come forward and talk about the signs that perhaps they saw and missed, the moments where they didn’t intervene. It’s a big teachable moment for all of us to learn and understand the impact of bullying.

The stories are too broad-ranging and too many to mention all of them, but I want to highlight one of them. For those of you that have an opportunity to see the articles that have been written by Catherine Porter where she talked about having lunch with her bully, it was a powerful example of how we can see an interaction between a moment in time and how it would impact you for many years to come.

Catherine Porter in her article talks about having been in school and an incident of bullying that, frankly, seared in her mind and remained with her for decades upon time. Much later in life—very recently—she had an opportunity to interact with one of the young girls, now an adult, a successful adult, a mother. Catherine talks about how she remembered vividly every detail of that moment, it affected her so negatively.

For the young woman who had been on the other side of the equation, she remembered it a little bit. She talked about how it was only conduct in passing that she had done that, and she was really very sorry and apologized for it. If you haven’t had a chance to read that article, you should. What that article did was prompt many, many Ontarians to write about their past interaction, how they felt, and I think it reminds us, Speaker, that although every day—and unfortunately, it is all too often we read stories in the newspaper or see on the nightly news tragic, tragic circumstances that result from bullying, where, unfortunately, young people have seen no other way out but to take their life.

What we now are having an important conversation about is how for so many Ontario students the impact—Catherine Porter is a successful individual, a newspaper writer, a mother herself, but it affected her in a very negative way. I think if we all think about our lives, we can think about those moments that we remember where we were severely negatively impacted by someone’s behaviour—a moment, an incident. We know that takes a little bit of the lift out from beneath our wings; I guess in some respects you can say it in that way. If we’re trying to build up our students, our children to ensure that they are successful adults who can achieve great things, we don’t want to tie weights around their ankles. We want them to be able to accomplish everything that we dream of for them.

I think it’s so important, as we go on this journey here in this Legislature, as we have conversations across the broader province, that we do two things: that we say no to the bullying, say no to the words that create that fear and pain, that spread hatred, that we absolutely say it is not acceptable and it must end and it will end. We will take every step to each take our personal responsibility to make sure that happens. We need to work hard to combat that.

1000

I think it’s also incumbent upon each of us, Speaker, to recognize that we have a role to play every single day

in using positive words, in saying things and reminding others about what they have to offer the broader community; in looking, perhaps, in our classroom, in our hallway or in our workplace, to look to the person who might be a little bit less engaged in the group, bring them into that group and tell them that you want them to be there, that you believe in them, that you're proud of them and that they can accomplish great things. If we do that, Speaker, and we work as a collective, as a community in Ontario—we have built such an amazing place here in Ontario in which to live. We have a wonderful school system where our students are achieving great things. We are leading around the world and we have brought people from all around the world to be here. Now, we can continue to build upon that, to make sure that every single school in Ontario on every single day when that school door is open is a safe and accepting school, and that it is a safe and accepting school for every single student who walks through that door, no matter their personal characteristics. Then we can take what we will create in our schools into our broader community, into our locker rooms, into our community centres and into our communities as a whole. And then, when we've done that work, we will have all accomplished something that we can be very, very proud of.

I look for the support of this Legislature to see Bill 13 passed, to see the Accepting Schools Act come into place. I know that we will see great things transpire if we, in this Legislature, take the important step and move this initiative forward. Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to rise on debate in this chamber about something that's near and dear to my heart and so many others. Anti-bullying has certainly received a lot of attention as a result of some tragedies that have happened across our province and, of course, throughout Canada, with young people taking their own lives because of bullying and other factors, like mental health.

I'm pleased, in the city of Ottawa, that we have a number of groups that are really trying to reach out to young people and let them know that it does get better. The first group I want to mention is No More Bullies. It's—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The clock is not running. Thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One of the groups that I want to mention and commend is a group called No More Bullies. It is run by Stu Schwartz, Stuntman Stu—he's listening right now—and he's on Majic 100. His entire group goes to schools to tell kids it gets better and that they shouldn't be bullied. He works with Angie Poirier and a number of other colleagues throughout the radio station network in the Market Media Mall in Ottawa. I've come to know a little bit more about them. They've asked so many local community celebrities, whether they're politicians or hockey

players or other media personalities, to simply write on their hand, "No more bullies," post a picture on Facebook or Twitter and share that so kids know that it really does get better when you get out of school.

Another group that works in the city of Ottawa is called the Bengals football club, run by Dennis Prouse. Their slogan is don't be a bully, be a Bengal. They actually reach out to kids who are bullies in the school system and they try and arrange for them to become football players so that they're actually channelling their energy into something positive for our community. I think that Stuntman Stu and Dennis Prouse need to be commended for being so innovative.

I've also met with some other great community organizations not from the city of Ottawa. In fact, yesterday I met with the York Region Anti-Bullying Coalition as well as the London Anti-Bullying Coalition, and they're doing remarkable things. They're actually creating something that we need to happen in Ontario. They're creating a mechanism whereby we're actually tracking these instances so that we can build safer communities, particularly safer school communities.

There are a lot of great grassroots organizations out there, Mr. Speaker, whether they're No More Bullies or whether they are Bengals against bullying—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently for the full hour as the minister spoke. I want to commend her on her speech, not only for the length of it—because I think it was an important topic that needed to be discussed—but also because she wove through it the problems that we all know exist and many of the solutions, the people who talk about it, the people who need to be heard, particularly our young people, our teachers and those in the education system.

I want to commend her for bringing forward and introducing this bill into the Legislature. It's certainly an idea whose time has come. One need only read the newspapers, watch television programs to see the innovation, as my colleague from Nepean—Carleton had to say, that's taking place out there, that parents, teachers and children are all receptive to this idea in a way that we would not have thought possible just a few years ago.

The only disappointing thing I can say is that with the climate that exists there and with the goodwill that is almost universal in this province, we need to do everything possible and not shy away. We should not be afraid of those who don't want to use the words Gay-Straight Alliance. We should be championing that and we should be telling the naysayers that this is what we expect and that these are the words that have to be used.

I also think the minister and the government should take to heart many of the excellent recommendations that were made by the member from Kitchener—Waterloo. I did not hear that in the speech. But I think that if we are to truly do justice to this issue, if we are truly to help those who need the help, our young people, then we have to take those ideas from the member of Kitchener—

Waterloo, and we have to be bold enough to tell those who are afraid of the words Gay-Straight Alliance that they will be used in our schools.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I, too, would like to make the same comments that my colleague from Beaches–York has made, commending the minister on taking the time to actually address all of the issues but not shying away from the things that we need to address.

I would also like to commend the member from Nepean–Carleton for yesterday, for standing up so vigorously in defence of her position and ensuring that people know where she stands. I think it was commendable.

I would also like to say to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo that it's by working together with the two bills that we'll be able, together, all of us in this House, to find a way to stop this kind of discrimination against our children and our young people—for everyone, for that matter.

It's absolutely a non-partisan issue in many respects because it is something that's insidious in our society. I remember for many years when people used to say, "Well, boys will be boys and girls will be girls." I'm sorry; that's past. You cannot tolerate that kind of behaviour, no matter where it comes from.

So to stand up and make sure your voice is heard is commendable. We need to accept and respect that from every member in this House. That's particularly important. But also, we need to know that we don't have ownership of this. It belongs not to Liberals, not to Conservatives and not to the NDP. It belongs to each and every one of us.

As I said yesterday, we have a responsibility and an obligation to be respectful and to ensure that the young people who go to our schools feel safe, feel welcomed and know that they are not going to be discriminated against because of their religion, their race, their colour or their sexual orientation. That's our responsibility by working together, and I believe people of goodwill can do that. I think that was proven very much so by a very public stand from everybody in this House yesterday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Mr. Speaker, I've certainly been encouraged by the comments that have been made by the three people in response to the presentation this morning.

I was very encouraged in February 2010 when I introduced, on behalf of people in the province of Ontario—and I stress that it was them coming to me and telling me we had a serious situation that needed to be addressed—the private member's bill, which is now going to be part of this bill, that focused on declaring the third week in November as Bullying Prevention and Awareness Week.

At that time, I was really encouraged because the then Minister of Education, Leona Dombrowsky, and the Premier, the Liberal caucus and the NDP caucus all recog-

nized that this was a non-partisan issue. Nobody has a monopoly on this issue. We've all been approached by individuals who have been bullied, families who have suffered, and teachers and community members who are passionate about this issue. My colleague from Nepean–Carleton indicated how many great groups are out there working hard to address this issue.

So I hope that as we move forward, we will not look at this as an issue that is owned by any one party, any one person. We all need to do what is appropriate. We need to pass the legislation as quickly as we can, but we also need to make sure that in doing so, we listen to the amendments and suggestions to strengthen this bill.

I think we need to keep in mind as well that this is not a political issue. And I want to just read what was posted on the CTV Ottawa website by a young man called Ryan in response to what happened here yesterday. He says:

"This is not a gender issue. This is not a sexuality issue...."

"Bullying is not a political issue.

"When I walk to school every day terrified to make that last step inside the building ... I am thinking, 'Is today the day I finally leave this horrible world?' and 'I hate myself so much....'"

He just tells us to move forward and get the job done together.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Education has two minutes to reply.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank the members from Nepean–Carleton, Beaches–East York, Etobicoke Centre and Kitchener–Waterloo for joining in the debate this morning.

Today was the first day of debate on the second reading of this important piece of legislation, and it is a bit perhaps out of the ordinary to take a full hour to talk about the contents and the journey that we've taken as a province. But I did so because it's an important journey, a journey that all of us in Ontario have taken and a journey that all of us will need to continue to take together.

I want to reiterate in this House and say that we look very much to the advice that we will get from those in this Legislature and around the province. It is our commitment to make this piece of legislation and the comprehensive action plan that surrounds it the strongest plan that we can, to take the advice and to move forward. We do not own this issue exclusively in this chamber, but we have a large responsibility and a significant responsibility to take.

I met even yesterday with a group of parents who wanted to talk about some of the advice that had been received in the member from Kitchener–Waterloo's private member's bill and how they had a sense of the importance of some of the initiatives that were placed in that. I've said repeatedly, inside and outside of this chamber, Speaker, that we'll look to all of the advice. We look to the advice from the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo. We look to the advice of the many colleagues in this chamber who have served as trustees, who have served as

teachers, who are parents, who are active community members.

We call upon Ontarians to work with us to develop this strategy, to work with us to make sure that this piece of legislation is the best it can be, and most importantly, to work with us to change the culture and create a positive and accepting climate in every single school in Ontario and in every single community in Ontario. This involves all of us. It's a lot of work. Let's get to work.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): This House is now recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Tim Hudak: I want to welcome to Queen's Park today Ottawa City Councillor Allan Hubley and his wife, Wendy Hubley.

Speaker, as members here know, Allan and Wendy are dealing with a tragedy the depth of which none of us, as parents, could ever contemplate. Their 15-year-old son Jamie tragically ended his life, struggling with depression in the face of bullying in his school.

Allan and Wendy are here today showing tremendous courage, meeting with MPPs of all parties. I know that Lisa MacLeod, Jack MacLaren and myself look forward to our meeting later today about anti-bullying and what we can do in Jamie's memory. I ask members of the chamber to give a warm welcome to Allan and Wendy, and salute their incredible courage.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Monsieur le Président, ça me fait plaisir de présenter aujourd'hui M^{me} Nicole Thibault, qui est la mère de Danica Davies, la page qui va être la capitaine aujourd'hui. Alors, je voudrais lui souhaiter, à Nicole, la bienvenue ici.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome all of Sebastian Gayowsky's family to Queen's Park—Sebastian is our page from Don Valley West: Ted Gayowsky, his dad; Susan Karnay, his mom; Anna and Christopher Gayowsky, his sister and brother; and Mary Karnay, his grandma from Oshawa. Welcome.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce two people that are visiting me today: my mom, Susan McNaughton; and a former riding member from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Jack Biernaski.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I'm very pleased to introduce two very special people who are in the gallery today: Diana Alpeza and her father, Ivan Barbarich, who are here to watch the proceedings. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to welcome to the House a good friend of many members of the Legislature and mayor of the city of Thunder Bay from 2003 to 2010, Lynn Peterson. Welcome, Lynn.

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: I'd like to welcome André Capaldi to Queen's Park today. André is the president of the University of Windsor Students' Alliance and has

been here in Toronto on behalf of his role on the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. Welcome, André.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Speaker, it's my pleasure to welcome my friends from Richmond Hill visiting Queen's Park: Steve Lynett, Carol Lundy and Paul Lundy. Please join me in welcoming them.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased to welcome Jade Goulet to the House today. Jade is the girlfriend of a very important member of my team, Colin Le Favre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I guess I didn't steal anyone's thunder, but that well-known Canadian, a person that has brought great credit to our community and really loves to take a good, hard shot at politicians, Rick Mercer, is here in our gallery today. And I will tell you that it's not beyond the Speaker to take advantage of his ability to see what happens in question period. But anyway, thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Well, he will be kind to me; I know that.

SPECIAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2010 annual energy conservation progress report, volume 2, from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, entitled *Managing a Complex Energy System—Results*.

WAYNE BUTT

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also beg the indulgence of the House to inform the members on a matter respecting House staff. Most of us have known Wayne Butt. Our access coordinator for many years indeed, Wayne has ever been present at the door, stage-managing this chamber since 1990. His eagle eyes, his hardy snap of the finger—which is probably the loudest in Ontario—and his infamous BlackBerry radar have become so much a part of this place that it's hard to imagine that it could be done without him.

However, there is something we are about to find out: Wayne has decided that it is time to retire and to take such good leisure time upon himself. As such, this will be, in all likelihood, his last week in this House.

I am told that it was nothing we said as members and nothing that we did, although sometimes you'd better check the ring of your phone because it's very loud. Wayne is just ready to explore a new phase in his life.

While he will no doubt be ably replaced by Bruno, who has got the order down but is still working on the finger snap and who many of you have met over the last few weeks, this House will very much miss Wayne and his very iconic finger snap. Just before you do go, we want to hear one.

Please join me in expressing our gratitude to Wayne for his service to the people of Ontario.

Applause.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Hey Dalton, he's got a pension. See what could happen if we had one?

Laughter.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I haven't called you to order yet.

Just for old times sake, Wayne, could you grace us with a couple?

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before we go on, one last comment: Wayne has told me that Bruno is getting lessons on his secret of how to get it that loud. We look forward to Bruno's improvement.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question to the Premier: Can you inform the members of the assembly when you first received the first draft of the 2011 auditor's report?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for his question and, I think more importantly, I want to thank the auditor for his good work.

1040

The auditor, as you know, sir, comments on the workings of our government on a regular basis. We always welcome those reports. We always carefully review the advice offered therein, and we always go to great lengths in order to adopt the recommendations put forward. I want to say that we received this particular report with that same sentiment, Speaker, and we look forward to moving on many of those recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I don't think, with respect to the Premier, I received an answer on when precisely he received the report, and I think I know why. Premier, you would have received this report months ago, as would your cabinet ministers. That's the way things work. Some ministries then respond and it's included in the report.

So I ask you, given that you clearly had a draft of the auditor's report months ago, why were you saying things that the Auditor General had actually debunked in his report that was sitting on your ministers' desks? By way of example, you had claimed many times—you and your members—that the Auditor General had signed off on the way you handled the debt retirement charge on the hydro bills, but that is not in keeping with the facts.

Premier, why did you say things that you knew were not in keeping with the facts?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'll try to get to the nub of it, Speaker. We have a different perspective. We do not have a common view with respect to some of the values

that we attach to some of the initiatives that we are pursuing.

For example, our clean energy plan is more than just an economic plan; it's a statement of our values. Through that plan, we are saying we value clean air, we value the health and well-being of our families, we value the tens of thousands of jobs that that plan is creating and we value the fact that together we're laying a foundation for future prosperity for our children and grandchildren so they can work in the renewable energy sector.

So again, I say to my honourable colleague and I recommend to him that he look beyond the economics—they're important—and look at the values that inform our policy too.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Speaker, this is about the honesty of the Premier of the province of Ontario. This is about whether people can actually trust what the Premier says when he had this report months ago that debunked many of his claims he made during the election campaign day after day and since.

By way of example, on page 124 of the Auditor General's report that the Premier had months ago, the Auditor General indicates that \$8.7 billion has been collected in debt retirement charge revenue, when the Minister of Energy said, when it was announced, that it was a \$7.8-billion residual stranded debt.

Day after day, time and time again, Premier, you and your ministers said the auditor signed off on your numbers. He in fact did not. So, Premier, why did you tell the people of Ontario over and over again something that you knew was not true?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, again, we have a parting of ways when it comes to the values that we attach to our green energy plan that extend beyond the pure economics. On the matter of the economics themselves, though, Speaker, our plan is very strong. We're talking about 50,000 new jobs. We're talking about 30 business investments. We're talking about \$26 billion of private money being invested in our province. That's what we're talking about there.

But beyond that, we are saying we value clean air for all our families, we value the health and well-being of our families and we value the creation of new jobs, including those that I celebrated yesterday in Windsor at CS Wind. We also value the fact that we are doing everything we can to lay a foundation for prosperity for our children and grandchildren so they will not be working in fossil fuels but, rather, renewable technologies.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: The value we're talking about here is telling the truth. We're talking about the facts. We're talking about transparency. You, Premier, now three times refused to tell me when you received the Auditor General's report. You had it months ago, yet you said things over and over again through the

campaign and since that you knew were not in keeping with the facts. So maybe you have a parting of the ways on values; the value is the truth, and we expect the Premier to actually occasionally be honest with the people of the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Tightrope walk towards the impugning of telling the truth, so I would ask you to be very cautious. Next time, I'll call you out of order.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll move on to point number 2 on this argument. You sent out a press release on November 10, claiming that you made \$1.8 billion in exports from electricity, but on page 112, the Auditor General says the complete opposite: that you actually paid New York and Quebec \$1.8 billion to take our power. Why the difference in what you said and what you knew was the truth?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I think my honourable colleague in fact understands that he is comparing apples to oranges. But, again, it comes down to a fundamental difference in terms of values. The least expensive thing that we can do in Ontario to ensure that we have an adequate supply of electricity is to import coal from other jurisdictions, shovel that into a furnace and turn a blind eye to the consequences that has on our environment and the health and well-being of our families. That's the least expensive thing that we can do to produce electricity in Ontario.

We're making a different choice. There is a cost associated with that; we accept that. That's why we put in place a clean energy benefit that is reducing the cost on all of our hydro bills by 10%, Speaker. As a—I'll sit down there, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Let me, in the next chance that the Premier rises—let me give him another chance here. This is the fifth time I've asked you when you received the Auditor General's report. I know you receive it months in advance—and, Premier, this is not comparing apples to oranges; this is the truth. The truth is the truth; the facts are the facts. The Auditor General, on page 112, said that between 2005 and 2011, "Ontario received \$1.8 billion less for its electricity exports than what it ... cost electricity ratepayers of Ontario." In short, the auditor says that we have subsidized Quebec and New York \$1.8 billion to take our power.

The Premier had those facts before him, yet on November 10, they put out a press release saying the complete opposite, saying that we made money on it. Speaker, that is not in keeping with the truth. So I ask you, Premier, when you're saying something that you know is not in keeping with the facts, why should any of us believe a word you say anymore?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, my honourable colleague will know that in fact there is kind of a to-and-fro when it comes to selling and importing of electricity. He may know that last year we came out ahead by \$335 million. He may also want to recognize that, since 2006,

we are ahead by \$1.8 billion. And he may want to acknowledge that under the last two years of their government, we paid \$900 million net to import electricity into Ontario.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, there you go again. You're saying something that has been debunked by the Auditor General, that was made in black and white to the media and to the public two days ago, but you had it months ago. So I want to get back to basic facts here. You received this report months and months ago, yet you said things, during the campaign and since, that you knew had already been debunked by the Auditor General. Another example: You sent out 15 press releases—count them, 15—boasting about 50,000 jobs that never happened, that the auditor says were part-time jobs at best, and that were tremendously exaggerated, we all know.

So, Premier, not once, not twice—three times you've said things that you knew were not in keeping with the facts. Why should we trust a word you say when you dismiss out of hand what the Auditor General said and what you knew months and months ago?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I thought we had a pretty important conversation about this particular policy during the recent election, and we had an opportunity to put our positions forward—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: —and present them to the people of Ontario. I thought the people of Ontario, on this issue in particular, were pretty decisive. They said yes to clean air, they said yes to new jobs, and they said yes to building a new foundation for prosperity that moves us beyond dirty fossil fuels into an exciting clean era of energy from renewable sources like the wind and the sun. I thought the people spoke very forcefully, very decisively and very directly on this matter, and I would encourage my honourable colleague to accept that.

1050

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. For households that are paying more than ever to keep the lights on, the auditor's findings make for pretty scary stuff. Either the Premier thinks it's time to actually clean up the mess in Ontario's deregulated electricity system or he's happy with a system that leaves families and businesses paying the highest electricity rates in the entire country. Which is it, Speaker?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I welcome the question from my honourable colleague. I'm not sure of the basis for that last statement in that question.

What I can say is that we've worked hard, given what it is that we inherited: an electricity system that was in disrepair, an electricity system which had begun to fail us. There were brownouts; there was a blackout.

It turns out those wooden hydro poles don't last forever. You've got to continue to invest in the system itself, so we've invested in some 5,000 new kilometres of transmission, thousands of megawatts of new generation.

Yes, Speaker, we are seizing an exciting new opportunity. We are investing in renewable electricity. We are creating thousands of new jobs and cleaning up our air at the same time. We are positioning ourselves to be at the forefront of an exciting new industry in all of North America. We want to do more than just supply ourselves; we want to export to the United States of America.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the government has created an alphabet soup of electricity agencies that spend millions in developing plans and billions signing private power deals, only to scrap the plans and leave ratepayers with the bill.

If the Premier is so committed to this status quo, he should at least share with us how much his private power schemes are costing us. Will he instruct the Auditor General to review his cancelled private power deals in Oakville and Mississauga?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We are moving as quickly as we can—and as thoughtfully as we can, at the same time—to ensure that we have all the electricity we need to power our economy, our schools, our hospitals and our homes.

We did something that had never been done before: We put before the public a 20-year power plan. We sought comment from experts and the public alike, and we put in place a plan that will ensure that we have all the power we need to power this economy and meet our long-term needs. I would encourage my honourable colleague to consult that plan.

We understand that there's a cost associated with this. You cannot refurbish your nuclear plants, you cannot put in place, as we have, seven new gas plants, you cannot expand capacity at Niagara Falls without there being a corresponding cost. That means there's going to be an increase in our bills. That's why we've put in place the clean energy benefit that reduces those bills by 10%.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, au contraire, Speaker. I would submit that today in Ontario we have a power authority that has no real authority to make power plans; we have an energy board that isn't allowed to protect consumers; a publicly owned generator that isn't allowed to build renewable power projects; and some of the highest electricity rates in the entire country.

The Premier wants to defend the status quo that isn't working. Will he call the auditor today and ask him to look into the private power boondoggles, the hot mess, that he has created in Oakville and Mississauga?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, as my honourable colleague knows, she can put any kind of request before the Auditor General. As she knows as well, he and his office can pursue anything they choose to pursue. Far be it from me to direct him on these matters.

But I would ask that my honourable colleague lend her support, at least in principle, to the adoption of renewable energy here in Ontario. It would be nice—traditionally, that part of the political spectrum was supportive of progressive policies that moved us away from fossil fuels into harnessing the power of the wind and the sun. It would be nice for Ontario families to know that they're on their side when it comes to clear air, new jobs and supporting green energy policies in Ontario.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. Last May, the finance minister told this House: "I am most proud of our record on auto insurance and how we've held the rate of growth on costs in auto insurance, because that's what matters to people."

Does the Premier feel the same sense of pride as his minister in the wake of the Auditor General's report?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand and report a few facts to my colleague opposite. First of all, with respect to auto insurance, this is the one government in the last 21 years that has actually held the rate of increase at approximately the rate of inflation. Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker; that's the reality. The leader of the third party can make statements.

The auditor correctly pointed out that Ontario's rates are among the highest in the country, as they have been for most of the last 50 years. Why? We have a population of 13 million people. We have more roads. We have more factors that influence that. They're difficult to manage; I agree.

There have been plans, for instance, in the past to create public auto insurance, and the government of the day flip-flopped and said, "No, we're not going to do that. We're going to stick with the system." They made a difficult choice at the time, Mr. Speaker, recognizing the realities of our insurance market.

We have done a good job on insurance. There's more to do. We welcome the auditor's report, and we—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the auditor reveals clearly that this government has dropped the ball on following up on fraud, for example, but on the other hand is protecting juicy profits for the insurance companies. Their priorities are in the wrong order, I would submit.

Everyday people are lucky if they're getting a raise at all in today's economy. Why is the government giving insurance companies guaranteed, huge, juicy profits year over year over year?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, here are the facts: Our auto insurance rates have gone up at the rate of inflation since 2003. In fact, over the first six years of our government, they actually came down, Mr. Speaker. There's no doubt that that has changed in the last couple of years.

Under that leader's party's governance, rates went up 26%. That's the reality. In the last two years of the Conservative government, rates went up 43%.

There's no doubt that there's more to do. We appointed the task force on fraud in the last budget. We received their interim report last week. We've made it public. I look forward to the leader of the third party's comments with respect to the recommendations in that report, which are fairly sweeping. That is an area we have to move on. We will continue to make the choices that keep auto insurance affordable for Ontarians and give them more flexibility in designing their—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario families are the ones feeling the squeeze. Wages are falling, jobs are disappearing and households are paying more to keep their lights on—more than any other person in the country. People in Ontario are paying more. And they're paying more and more and more to keep their cars on the road.

We have a government, of course, that insists that everything is just fine. Will the Premier and his minister take a practical step today and tell families that he is going to start rolling back the guaranteed profits that are driving up insurance rates for drivers in this province?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have put forward to the people of Ontario a number of initiatives to help them with the cost of living. There's one before the House now: the healthy homes renovation tax credit, which will help our senior citizens. I invite the leader of the third party to support that initiative.

We did the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit: 10% off of people's bills, including the tax portion of their bill, to help them as we transition to a cleaner, greener economy. We created the Ontario Child Benefit, something that helps families of modest means with their children; it represented a large tax cut. We welcome your continued support on that. We have laid out a tax plan for jobs and growth that is helping this economy move forward. We cut personal taxes for 93% of Ontarians; unfortunately, the leader of that party voted against it.

We'll continue to represent and do things in the best interest of all Ontario families.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. The Auditor General has told us that hydro rates will go up 8% every year, and 60% of that increase is due to wind and solar projects. Those skyrocketing hydro rates are of great concern to Ontario families and industry.

1100

Speaker, let me read you a statement that takes this to the next logical conclusion: "I submit I am not going out on much of a limb when I say there is a direct correlation between Hydro's rates and our rate of unemployment in Ontario. As the rates go up, so will the rate of unemployment."

Premier, do you agree with the statement, considering you were the author?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, to the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Look, it's very—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The cheapest thing to do—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sit down, please. The question's been put. Let's hear the answer.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The cheapest thing to do is to burn coal. And for many years, that's what they wanted to do across the aisle. You burn coal, but you never consider in the cost in human suffering to those with respiratory ailments—more than \$4 billion a year alone.

We've made a different choice. We decided we're getting out of coal to clean up the air and improve the health of Ontarians. We also decided with our renewable energies that we'd create jobs here in Ontario for the benefit of families. It's working. We're thousands of jobs ahead. We're going to clean up the air and support good jobs—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My supplementary again is to the Premier. The Auditor General confirmed there are no 50,000 jobs in renewable energy; in fact, 30,000 of the jobs claimed will be temporary. He went on to say that for each green energy job, it costs \$300,000, and for each job created, two to four jobs are lost in other sectors. Now, Speaker, that rang true in the city of Timmins, where 787 Xstrata employees lost their jobs when the company moved to Quebec for cheaper energy.

Premier, will you admit today that the Auditor General got it right: Your green energy plan is driving up the cost of hydro bills while killing thousands of private sector jobs?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It's not correct at all, Speaker. What in fact we're doing with our renewable energy policy is we're on the way to creating 50,000 jobs, direct and indirect jobs. We're already 20,000 ahead. We're already \$26 billion ahead.

You don't have to take my word for it. Look around. Go to Windsor and see the CS plant. Go to Tillsonburg and see the plant up there. Go across this province and see those involved in renewable energy. We've been very focused.

There are studies all over the map here. We've been very focused on the bottom line for businesses. We brought in the HST, which they opposed the day we brought it in. We brought in a special rate of electricity for businesses. We brought in cheaper rates for investing in plant machinery in the province of Ontario. We're focused on the bottom line for business, which means jobs—

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

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

Our Auditor General found yet again that the Minister of Health has spent billions of precious health care dollars without monitoring the effectiveness of the spending, without being able to show much for those dollars.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the minister gave physicians under alternate payment arrangements a 25% raise, but when the auditor asked for a study that showed the effectiveness of the spending, the ministry couldn't produce anything: nothing, zilch, nada, rien du tout.

Why did the minister agree to spend billions of dollars on alternate payment arrangements without knowing if patients would be better served?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I'm going to actually take the liberty of quoting the member opposite from 2008 Hansard. France Gélinas says, "Having physicians operating under a small-business, fee-for-service model hinders the implementation of an interdisciplinary team, which we know provides the best primary health care...."

So we know that the member opposite does support the notion that physicians working in groups and interdisciplinary teams actually provide better care for people. We know this, as the member opposite knows this, because we've seen that impact in other jurisdictions.

What we are doing now, because we've had family health teams and the interdisciplinary models for a little while now, is that we are now able to start to study the health impacts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I stand by my words, Mr. Speaker. But the Auditor General did not review family health teams; he reviewed the FHG, the FHO, the FHN. Those have nothing to do with interdisciplinary care.

Our auditor also asked, why did emergency physician payments increase 40% while volume in emergency rooms only increased 7%? He asked, why is it that 22% of patients in alternate payment arrangement organizations did not visit their physicians? They went elsewhere for care, but the ministry continued to pay both. He asked, why did the ministry have to pay the northern physicians to tell the ministry how much the ministry was paying them?

Why is it, Mr. Speaker, that every time we count on this government for major reform, like the electronic health record, like primary care reform—why is it that all this government does is throw the bank away?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think it's important that we acknowledge the tremendous strides that we have made when it comes to health care and the work that doctors do in this province. We've come a long way in attaching people to primary care physicians. That's in part because of the new models of care that we have

supported. Our emergency department wait times have come down, and we are working to continue that progress in emergency departments.

There was a time under the previous government when I think 23 out of 26 GTA hospitals were on bypass; ambulances could not go to those emergency departments because they didn't have the capacity. When is the last time you heard of an emergency department on bypass? We had a question from the member from Kenora—Rainy River earlier this week stressing the importance of keeping that emergency department open.

Speaker, we've had terrific results and we must—

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

EDUCATION

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, yesterday the Auditor General released his annual report. As an Ontario Liberal, I was very proud to read about this government's success in education—proud to hear that this government has succeeded in lowering the dropout rate.

As a former Toronto District School Board trustee, I've always believed that education is one of the most important things that we can give our children. That's why I'm so pleased that there are 18 new full-day kindergarten classes in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt. Families are saving thousands of dollars in child care costs while kids are receiving world-class education.

I know that every member in the House agrees that a strong education system is the key to Ontario's future prosperity. Thanks to the hard work of our teachers, students and parents, graduation rates are up 13% and the test scores are up 15% since—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Education and women's issues.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt for the advocacy that she has done for so many years on behalf of Ontario students.

Speaker, I want to speak clearly about the success that we measure by way of our increased graduation rates. We measure our graduation rate over five years. That's the same approach that previous governments had. We've talked in the House today about apples-to-oranges comparisons, and I want to say clearly: This is an apples-to-apples comparison.

The member is right: We've increased the graduation rate by 13% since coming to office in 2003. It's a significant change that we're making in the lives of Ontario's young people.

We are very proud of our students. They have come out on top in the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program. Ontario students were the only ones to score above the national average in math, science and reading. Say to an Ontario student today—

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

Ms. Soo Wong: Minister, thank you for your response. I know the best thing we can do for Ontario's future prosperity is to invest in our kids.

But the figures that you just presented are on average. What about the students who fall below those average scores? I know that your ministry has a program called Focus on Youth which helps school boards to run summer programs in high-needs neighbourhoods. Minister, can you tell this House what else your ministry is doing in helping at-risk kids?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: The member is absolutely right: We have to continue to reach out to those students who are most at risk in our schools. I'm so pleased that the auditor specifically pointed out our successes in helping at-risk students. He indicated that we did a good job of identifying and providing supports to individual students considered at risk of not graduating. He also pointed out that all boards now have plans in place and risk factors identified to help at-risk students.

1110

We have programs like the specialist high skills major, extended co-op and dual credits. We've given extra support to schools who face challenges. Now we've introduce the Accepting Schools Act, because we know that every child, every student can reach their full potential if they are in a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Speaker, we're proud of the work that we've done. We have more work to do. We look to continue doing that work.

PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES

Mr. Rob Leone: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. On Monday, the Auditor General lambasted the Liberal government, which has completely dropped the ball when it comes to private career colleges. The Auditor General found that illegal private trainers, which were supposed to have been closed by this province, continue to operate illegally under the Liberal government. This oversight is harmful not only to the students in desperate need of good job training, but also to legitimate and successful private career colleges which have always played by the rules.

Why is the minister allowing these unaccredited training centres to continue to operate and tarnish the reputation of successful businesses across the province of Ontario?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The only person tarnishing the reputation of these businesses is the member opposite, quite frankly.

We actually see an important role for these private colleges, which educate 60,000 Ontarians, are helping many Ontarians get back into the economy and are highly linked to the private sector.

We have been resolving issues we inherited from previous governments. This year alone, we took over 100 enforcement actions against illegal operators—better than any other party in power. We have now gone through all

of the high-risk colleges for the first time and we have resolved all of the outstanding issues. We're now going through the medium-risk colleges.

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that we are talking about 470 colleges, a relatively small number.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm not sure if the minister is thinking that I've tarnished the reputation of private career colleges or if he's saying that the Auditor General has tarnished their reputation.

The Auditor General even stated, "Further improvements are required to ensure compliance with the act, its regulations, and ministry policies, and to better ensure that the ministry's primary objective of protecting students is met."

The ministry has known for years about these compliance issues. There has been gross mismanagement in compliance at the minister's department. Can the minister assure Ontarians that this culture of incompetence leaves that ministry and this government and is replaced by a culture of at least complying with its own laws and policies?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The language the opposite members use is not found in the auditor's report. This is hyperbole and gross exaggeration, first off. So maybe we could just actually read the report.

The second is, unlike the party opposite, we actually believe that private-sector-run educational facilities make an important contribution; that we cannot, in the age that we are living in right now, have an entirely public system; and that there's an important role.

We know that, as the party opposite voted against the private colleges act, they don't support the private sector at all, they don't support these businesses and they would be happy to remove 60,000 off of places for students, the same way they want a made-in-government solution to the trades and apprenticeships and remove the private sector participation from that—

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

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, there used to be a time not long ago in this province that motorists would know that the Ministry of Transportation would ensure that highways, when it snowed, were open and that we can pass on them with our vehicles.

So far this fall, we've had Highway 402 closed because of snowfall; we've had Highway 17 between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury and Highway 11 between North Bay and Hearst closed, where we've never seen them closed before. So we started checking around, and what we found—

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It's the weather.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, they say it's the weather. Well, let me tell you where the storm exists. The storm exists because the government has created what's called

performance-based contracts, and those performance-based contracts have lowered the specifications so that 25% less equipment is being used to clear our highways.

My question to you is simply this: Why are you prepared to jeopardize road safety by lowering the maintenance standards in those performance-based contracts?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question and for bringing his concerns to my attention.

Ontario has among the highest safety records on our highways in North America. We're proud of that, and we're going to continue that record. Our winter maintenance standards are among the highest in North America, as I mentioned. The ministry and its contractors continually monitor weather and road conditions so they can respond quickly. Our contractors are required to meet ministry standards. We monitor their work before, during and after a winter storm.

I will certainly look into the complaints that you're bringing to the House. I will review those particular highways and the weather conditions at the time, and I'll be very pleased to get back to you with a report and/or meet with you personally to discuss it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I appreciate that you're going to look into it, Minister, but you're the one that lowered the standard. It is the Liberal government of Ontario that has said highways used be maintained at a particular standard, and when you renegotiated the new contracts, you said, "We're going to lower the standard." As a result, there's 25% less equipment being used in those new contracts. That's why Highway 402 was closed. That's why Highways 17 and 11 were closed.

So I say to you again, Minister, we have always been able to drive on these highways when it comes to the type of snowfalls we have seen up to now. Will you reverse that decision? If not, I believe that people's lives will be at risk.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, we use current technology, tools and methods to keep our roads safe for winter driving, while using best management practices, including road and weather information stations, pre-wetted pre-treated salt, direct liquid application, fixed automated spray technology, electronic spreader controls, changeable message signs and many others.

On the other hand, as I mentioned to the member in the answer to the main question, I will look into the situation that he's bringing to our attention, and we will report back to him. I would be happy to meet with him and review the situation.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Construction is under way on the GO expansion for the Georgetown South rail corridor and the air-rail link project. Changes have been made to the original proposal, such as a stop in Weston and

partially tunnelling the trains to address the concerns expressed by the residents of York South-Weston. However, there are concerns about the health effects that the increased number of trains could cause.

Speaker, my community and I support electrification as soon as it is technically possible. Could the minister update us on where we stand on electrification?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'd like to thank the member for York South-Weston for her question and for her tireless advocacy on behalf of her constituents.

Metrolinx identified this line along with Lakeshore as priorities for electrification, and we are moving forward with that development in a very responsible way. As the member knows, the necessary first step towards electrification is the completion of a comprehensive environmental assessment, and that process is progressing well.

In the interim, we are using state-of-the-art, ultra-low-emission, tier 4 engine technology. These engines are designed to be converted to electricity when infrastructure upgrades are complete.

The air-rail link is an important project for the mobility, the environment and the economy of the GTA. It will not only create 10,000 jobs but will also eliminate 1.2 million car trips in its first year alone. Mr. Speaker, eliminating 1.2 million car trips is a tremendous boost for our air quality in itself.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you, Minister. I am aware that Metrolinx conducted a review of human health assessment, as required by the Ministry of the Environment, for the project to move forward. Recently, questions have been asked in this House, citing concerns of increased risk of asthma and cancer for the residents along the line, concerns similar to those made by the Toronto medical officer of health two years ago.

1120

Speaker, we all take health risks of our constituents very seriously, and clean air is important to our government and all Ontarians. Can the minister speak to the recently updated human health mitigation plan and assure my constituents that it protects air quality in York South-Weston as we move forward towards electrification?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. The human health mitigation plan was updated to reflect the move to cleaner tier 4 engine technology and look at what, if any, impact on air quality would result. The plan concluded that the utilization of tier 4 technology effectively mitigates emissions from the corridor while we move forward, implementing electrification. Particulate emissions from these tier 4 engines are 90% less than older trains in the existing GO fleet, and Toronto's medical officer of health offered input into the plan and is satisfied with the approach we are taking and the measures we are putting in place.

We take our responsibility to protect the local environment seriously, unlike the NDP, who want to subsidize gas guzzlers and gridlock in the GTA for the next 50 years. We've got a plan to get people moving between

Pearson and Union Station, to do so in time for the Pan Am Games—

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

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr. Michael Harris: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, the Auditor General is not the only one questioning your government's failures in managing programs. Last week, the Environmental Commissioner said that despite your government's 60% waste diversion target, you've only gone from 20% to a whopping 23%.

Minister, I have to ask you: You were a teacher; is 23% a passing or failing grade?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Here comes the answer. I'll tell you in a minute.

Interjections.

Hon. James J. Bradley: One thing I can tell you is it's much more progress than ever existed under the party members there that fought all of these efforts tooth and nail.

Now, I know that one of the proposals that your party had was to foist the cost of certain diversions back on to municipalities, because when I was at the AMO conference one of the things they said to me was, "We're glad that you are putting that on the cost of the producers as opposed to sticking the municipalities with that particular cost." So I explained that to them and they were very pleased. But will you find that there has been some considerable progress—

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

Mr. Michael Harris: Minister, I will remind you that it was a PC government that created the blue box program.

Minister, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, BC and Quebec are far ahead of Ontario in waste diversion. And last week, the Environmental Commissioner that your government appointed said in his report that the Liberal government is stubbornly refusing to engage solutions to the waste management problem. So I ask you again, Minister: Will you make waste diversion a priority now or will we have to wait for another scathing report from the Auditor General to force to you act?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Well, the efforts are progressing well. One progressive effort we have is that after I chastised you for not asking a question the other day about the environment, being bullied by your fellow members into not asking any questions, you did come forward with a question.

I can tell you that right now Ontarians are currently diverting approximately three million tonnes of waste from our landfills per year. The people of this province are responding overwhelmingly in terms of the blue box, which was made province-wide by the government of David Peterson and has been expanded over the years to take many more materials to divert from landfills. More

has to be done, but we will require the support of the members of the opposition who've been trying to foist—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I just want to do a quick point—stop the clock for a moment, please.

I just want to quickly point out that yesterday, I did bring reference to the fact that I'd like you to continue to talk about your own policies, but the questions need to be about the government of the day. If you're going to reference your own party's previous history, it causes a problem for me. So I'm going to remind everybody again: Stay focused on the government business of the day.

The leader of the third party.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Health. Ken Rodger is fighting for his life in Hamilton. On Friday, Ken will lose funding for the drug that is helping to save his life. He doesn't have the luxury to wait for the results of his appeal to the Exceptional Access Program and he doesn't have the means to pay out of pocket for the drug that's keeping him alive.

Will the minister intervene and give hope to Ken Rodger and his family?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: First, let me express my concern and my sympathy to this family, who are really fighting for life.

What I can tell you is that I am not familiar with this particular case. I will undertake to take a look, although I do have to stress that we do not politicize decisions about who gets what drug. But I will ensure that the proper steps have been taken to make sure that there is a resolution as quickly as possible.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The minister should be aware, because I sent her a letter about this about a month ago. I'll give it to a page to remind her and send it back to her right now.

Ken Rodger's brain tumour has dramatically shrunk since he started treatment, and that includes treatment with chemotherapy and Avastin. Ken's doctor believes that Avastin is in fact prolonging his life; it is shrinking his tumour.

Health Canada has approved the use of this drug for brain cancer, Avastin. British Columbia funds Avastin under its drug program as well, for this particular application. Will the minister reread that letter that I sent her a month ago and use her discretion to ensure that this life-saving treatment is not denied to Ken Rodger?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Of course I will reread the letter. Thank you for sending it over again. But I do have to be clear that I do not have discretion. Although there are some who would like the minister to be able to make decisions like this, we pass legislation in this House, Speaker, removing the politicization of coverage of drugs.

I think it was the right decision. In fact, I know it was the right decision. My job is to make sure that we have

sufficient funds in the drug envelope to cover drugs that are based in evidence.

I will ensure that all of the steps have been taken to make sure that this gets proper review.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. As the minister responsible for women's issues noted yesterday, December 6 was the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. In my riding of Ottawa Centre and around the province, the tragic events that sparked this day of remembrance are top of mind, as are the steps that we can take to address violence against women. All women have the right to feel safe and secure in their own homes, and the government has a responsibility to help those fleeing violence.

Speaker, through you to the minister: After the cuts to violence against women programming made under the previous government, how has your ministry helped to rebuild and enhance the supports in place to help those escaping domestic violence?

Hon. John Milloy: I'd like to thank the honourable member for raising this very important issue. It's particularly fitting, as he mentioned, in light of yesterday's anniversary and the statements that were made in this Legislature. Also, members may be aware that representatives of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses are here at Queen's Park with us today, and I certainly would like to thank them for their work and the work of their member organizations, for the work they do.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the steps that our government has taken in this area since 2003. In 2010-11, we provided over \$143 million to programs that help address domestic violence. That's a 49% increase since 2003. My ministry also provides funding to 96 agencies operating emergency shelters for those fleeing violence. In 2010-11, shelters served approximately 12,000 women and 8,000—

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

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Minister, as you know, yesterday I introduced a private member's bill to help victims of domestic violence. If passed, this legislation will help victims of domestic abuse by allowing them to break their lease to escape from an abuser in a shorter time period than is now allowed.

1130

Minister, last week you spoke about the White Ribbon Campaign, a campaign that aims to mobilize men to talk about violence against women. I believe that everyone needs to stand up and work to eliminate violence against women. Through you, Mr. Speaker: Will the minister tell this House what is being done to fight sexual violence?

Hon. John Milloy: To the minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank the member for the question, and I also want to acknowledge the presence of OAITH here today. They were a partner in the development of our province's comprehensive domestic violence action plan. We have worked hard with many of our partners across the sector. Last year, I had the opportunity to continue that work and introduce and launch the province's sexual violence action plan.

Speaker, it's incumbent upon each of us, as has been said before—every day, women of all backgrounds and all ages across the province and country are victims of sexual violence and domestic violence. Our plan provides services for victims of sexual and domestic violence and helps them heal. We have increased funding, for example, to Ontario's 41 sexual assault centres, improved support for women who turn to our health care system, and invested in training. At the root of this is inequality, and each of us has a very important role to play—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Premier. On November 22, a letter was delivered to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Transportation in which they were advised of concerns relating to the awarding of a contract to implement an electronic fare card system in the TTC. Specifically, the letter questioned why the Ministry of Transportation, through its agency Metrolinx, was coercing the city of Toronto and the TTC to enter into the contract with Accenture. There was a competing bid that would have saved taxpayers \$300 million, and the technology was in fact an advanced technology.

Speaker, \$300 million was on the table. Knowing that this is in the works, I would ask the Premier: What steps will he take to ensure that we save the taxpayers \$300 million?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question. We did have some discussion about it earlier.

We were very pleased to see that the TTC voted to adopt Presto as part of the MOU package back in June. On November 23, the TTC confirmed the use of the Presto card. In their report, the TTC staff said:

“With the TTC joining Presto, there would be benefits for interregional customers who could use one payment card on multiple systems throughout the GTA....”

“[O]nce the Presto system is fully operational ... TTC costs for fare collection could be reduced by up to \$10 million annually....”

The procurement that's referred to is really procurement that's within the purview of the city of Toronto and the TTC. They opted to go with the Presto card, having heard submissions from the alternative bid.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: I don't understand why this government insists on turning a blind eye to such gross

mismanagement and why it takes the Auditor General to expose them from time to time for their mismanagement.

Here are the facts: City of Toronto councillors as well as commissioners of the TTC have stated categorically on the public record that the competing bid is superior and will save taxpayers \$300 million. It is also a fact that Metrolinx is coercing and threatening the TTC to withhold other infrastructure funding if they don't enter into this agreement. The minister has heard about that.

Will it take the Auditor General to expose yet one more time this kind of gross mismanagement and waste of tax dollars? I ask one more time: Will the government take the steps now to intervene and ensure that this waste of taxpayers' dollars will not—

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the facts are really quite clear. The TTC looked at an alternative type of card to Presto. They were operating under the MOU with the city of Toronto back in June. They further confirmed it, and they confirmed it on the basis that the deal with Metrolinx was a better financial deal for the city of Toronto, and they're moving forward on that basis.

Unlike the alternatives, Presto is proven and fully operational. Presto is in place on nine transit systems, with almost 100,000 users, and growing every week. Open payment systems like the alternative ACS Xerox is proposing are not currently fully operational in any major transit system anywhere.

Presto can also be used—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Thank you.

SOLDIERS' REMAINS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Tourism and Culture. I again raise the issue of the reburial of the War of 1812 British, aboriginal and American soldiers' remains at Smith's Knoll. The minister keeps dodging my inquiries, saying that he's working on it, or that he needs a letter from the mayor, or that the funds can't be used for property purchase. I've already told the minister that the property was purchased with other funds. I've shown him a letter from former mayor Eisenberger requesting the \$200,000 in funding specific to this project.

Will this minister and this government stop hiding behind other funding allocations, stop mixing the requests with other funding, and deal with it as its own request right now?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much to the honourable member for his question.

I have engaged myself with the new mayor, not necessarily the past mayor. The member and I had a conversation. In numerous conversations, I have told him that I have sent a letter to the new mayor. I have engaged the new mayor to contact my ministry to further this situation.

I recognize the importance and the significance of the battle of Stoney Creek to the city of Hamilton. Smith's Knoll was the site of the some of the fiercest fighting during the battle of Stoney Creek in the War of 1812.

The upcoming War of 1812 bicentennial offers Ontario a unique opportunity to celebrate our rich heritage and honour the sacrifices of Canadian heroes that helped define our national identity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: I guess the cheque's in the mail.

The bicentennial of the War of 1812, the battle of Stoney Creek: June 5, 2013. The spring, summer and fall of 2012 are the last times when this excavation and re-interment can happen.

For months, this minister has made every excuse he can come up with to avoid answering why he has done nothing to correct this disrespectful condition of these soldiers' remains.

Will this government stop weaving and bobbing and finally commit to cutting a cheque right now for \$200,000 to get this specific reburial project under way and do the right thing by these honourable soldiers?

Hon. Michael Chan: Only a few months away, there will be celebration of the War of 1812 across the province. It will be in Windsor; it will be in Niagara Falls; it will be in Hamilton; it will be in North Bay; it will be in Thunder Bay.

The War of 1812 bicentennial offers a unique opportunity to celebrate our rich heritage. Our government is proud to provide support to mark this important 200th anniversary. In the city of Hamilton, we have invested over \$145,000 for two projects in the arts, heritage and library sectors related to the bicentennial celebration.

I understand that the western corridor alliance has many exciting activities and events planned for the bicentennial, including the battle of Stoney Creek re-enactment.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Dipika Damerla: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Experts say that in the future, our economy will require that 70% of Ontarians have a post-secondary education. The good news is, we are already well on our way. Today Ontario has one of the highest levels of post-secondary education in the OECD. In fact, that's one of the key factors in our success in attracting jobs and investment. The recently opened Sheridan College Hazel McCallion campus, in my riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville, is another step in the right direction.

However, my constituents in my riding have raised concerns about continuing to make our post-secondary system responsive to the needs of students. Speaker, can the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities tell us how Sheridan College's Hazel McCallion campus will help us improve the quality of our education system and modernize the delivery of post-secondary—

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

1140

Hon. Glen R. Murray: First, Mayor McCallion has been a dear friend of mine for 25 years. Mississauga is home to powerful, bright women politicians. After December 6, it's great to have role models who are great hockey players and great mayors, and the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville represents that fine tradition of powerful role models for women. I'm honoured to sit with her.

To have a campus named after Mayor McCallion is extraordinary. This government has put its money where its mouth is in delivering more accessible education across Ontario and the GTA with \$15.6 million, 33 state-of-the-art classrooms and rebuilding the mayor's downtown revitalization, where we see the beautiful transformation of Mississauga.

The facility's state-of-the-art technology is allowing students both from Mississauga and across Ontario to produce a degree or diploma. Its technology platform and online learning will extend education opportunities to the hard-working community public, allowing all the people in Mississauga who are mid-career also to—

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Early today our leader Andrea Horwath asked a question of the Premier in regards to the ability for the government to call the auditor in in order to take a look at what happened and do a review on the power plants in Mississauga and Oakville. He suggested in his answer that the member herself can do that, and I want to, under standing order 23(j) and (m), say the following.

The public auditor's act is quite clear, and I read from section 17 of the act: "The Auditor General shall perform such special assignments as may be required"—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member, that is not a point of order.

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, I also rise on a point of order. If you bring your attention to section 23(j): "In debate, a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she:

"(j) Charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood."

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities said that the language is not in the report and that there is hyperbole. I would like to deliver to you, sir, to the Minister of Colleges, Training and Universities, to the table and to all the House leaders—from the government and to the two opposition House leaders—a copy of what I stated. It suggests as follows: "Further improvements are required to ensure compliance with the act, its regulations and ministry policies, and to better ensure that the ministry's primary objective of protecting students is met."

This is exactly what I said in my question, Mr. Speaker, which the minister suggested was hyperbole. So I'd like to table this for you, sir, and I demand an apology from that minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also do not find that to be a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, on a further point of order: I just read from section 23 in the standing orders, subsection (m), and it clearly states, in any case where a member "introduces any matter in debate that in the opinion of" this House "offends the practices or precedents of the House." Clearly what the Premier did is to try to say that we in the opposition had the ability to order the auditor to go out and do the audit. That cannot be done. Only the cabinet can do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will reiterate my original belief: That is not a point of order.

If, however, anyone on an individual basis is not satisfied with their statement, they can correct their record. This is just simply a disagreement between two people, and it's not a point of order.

DEFERRED VOTES

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The members take their seats, please.

On November 23, 2011, Mr. Hudak moved that the motion for the address in reply to the speech from the throne be amended by adding the following thereto:

"However, this House asks that the government create a legislated mandatory wage freeze to control the cost and size of government and reform apprenticeship ratios to create 200,000 jobs in the province of Ontario."

All those in favour of Mr. Hudak's amendment to the motion please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Klees, Frank	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLaren, Jack	Shurman, Peter
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Harris, Michael	Milligan, Rob E.	Yakabuski, John
Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick	
Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed to the amendment to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Forster, Cindy	Murray, Glen R.
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Orazietti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Piruzza, Teresa
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Prue, Michael
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Campbell, Sarah	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Schein, Jonah
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Chiarelli, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Sorbara, Greg
Coteau, Michael	Mantha, Michael	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Craitor, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Mauro, Bill	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	McGuinty, Dalton	Vanhof, John
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
DiNovo, Cheri	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

The ayes are 37; the nays are 69.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the amendment to the motion lost.

We will now vote on the main motion.

On November 23, 2011, Mr. Coteau moved, seconded by Ms. Sandals, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

“To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

“We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.”

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1155 to 1156.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I did notice that even on his last day he wouldn’t let the members get away with anything that wasn’t traditional, so thank you, Wayne. Thank you.

All those in favour of Mr. Coteau’s motion will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Forster, Cindy	Murray, Glen R.
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Orazietti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Piruzza, Teresa
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Prue, Michael
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Campbell, Sarah	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Schein, Jonah
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Chiarelli, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet

Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Sorbara, Greg
Coteau, Michael	Mantha, Michael	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Craitor, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Mauro, Bill	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	McGuinty, Dalton	Vanhof, John
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
DiNovo, Cheri	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Klees, Frank	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLaren, Jack	Shurman, Peter
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Harris, Michael	Milligan, Rob E.	Yakabuski, John
Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick	
Jackson, Rod	O’Toole, John	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 69; the nays are 37.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is therefore resolved that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

“To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario:

“We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us....”

There are no further votes. This house stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Until 3 p.m.; it’s Wednesday. I’m trying to get us out earlier.

The House recessed from 1200 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It’s my honour and privilege this afternoon to introduce my family: my father, Raymond Milligan; my mother, Susan Milligan; my lovely wife, Rebecca; and my daughters Linda and Samantha Milligan.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the former member from Scarborough East, Mr. Steve Gilchrist, is blessing us here as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We always welcome former members to the House, and we thank him

for his service to Ontario. Welcome, on behalf of all of us.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Allan and Wendy Hubley, from my riding of Carleton–Mississippi Mills. Allan is a city of Ottawa councillor. They have bravely come here today to share their family tragedy with people in the House, and have talked to many of the MPPs here. We'd like to thank them for being very brave about facing their troubles.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to members from Cambridge and Waterloo region who are interested in the child care issue that I'm bringing forward today. We have Lori Prospero and Kris Parsons from Owl Child Care Services. We have concerned parents Ashley Ross, Terry Bordman and Tara Walker, as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. Further introductions?

Since there are no further introductions, it is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jack MacLaren: This statement concerns teen-age mental illness.

On October 15, 2011, Jamie Hubley lost his battle with mental illness, and he took his own life. Jamie was only 15 years old. His father, Allan, and mother, Wendy, are here with us today. Allan is a well-respected city of Ottawa councillor who lives in my riding.

Allan and his wife, Wendy, have been very brave about working toward raising awareness on how common depression is among teenagers and how more support is needed to help teenagers survive this terrible illness.

Mental illness in teenagers is an area of health care that has been sadly neglected. I ask the government—indeed, all members of this House—to increase the resources needed for mental health care professionals to effectively deal with this problem.

Parents need our help. Our young people need our help. It is time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you; a very poignant message.

I do have to remind our gallery guests that being here is the utmost respect to us and we appreciate you being here, but there will be no participation from the galleries, please.

Now, we'll carry on with members' statements.

ABORIGINAL HOUSING

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Speaker, here we are, still in the same situation in Attawapiskat. We still have people who are living in tents. We still have people living in backyard sheds. And what we've got is that the federal gov-

ernment has decided to point the finger at the community and say it's their fault.

I just want, for the record, to refute some of what the federal government is saying, because I think it needs to be said. The federal government is trying to make the argument that somehow or other they've given this community some \$80 million and somehow the \$80 million has been misspent.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The federal government is playing fast with the numbers. What they're essentially saying is, "Over a five-year period, we give you an annual budget as a community to run your water, run your sewer and do all the things you've got to do to run the community," and they've totalled the money and said, "Look how bad they are: They've got \$80 million and somehow they've misspent the money."

Well, nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker, and I'll tell you why. The federal government, through the Department of Indian Affairs, has to audit every dollar that's spent from that community and others, and the audit is passed, signed and accepted by the federal government. But what makes this even more bizarre, that community is under co-management. The federal government has imposed a co-management model on the community of Attawapiskat, which means to say that any dollars they spend have to be signed off and agreed by the co-manager, which means to say that the federal government is at the table when it comes to making all the expenditures.

So I just say to the federal government: Stop playing loose. We've got people living in backyard tents, we've got people living in backyard sheds, and when you start trying to blame the victims for what they find themselves in, it's a dark day in Canada.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Residents in my riding of Scarborough–Southwest have been calling my constituency office and are asking about our government's position on child care. I would like to take this opportunity today to talk about this very important issue.

Since 2003, our government has demonstrated its commitment to maintaining and enhancing child care services, because we know how important child care and early learning is for our children and for our families. Since 2003, child care funding in Ontario has gone up from \$532 million to \$869 million, an increase of 63%.

Mr. Speaker, let me explain where this money is going. Our government is investing over \$64 million per year to permanently fill the funding gap left by the federal government when it terminated the agreement on early learning and child care. We've created more than 22,000 new licensed non-profit child care spaces in the last five years.

Through our government's investments, nearly 43,000 more children are receiving fee subsidies every year. Our government has been committed to addressing the needs of our children, and will continue to do so in the years to come.

ART TRUAX

Ms. Laurie Scott: Last week, my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock lost a great man with the passing of Art Truax. Today is his funeral.

Art was the first mayor of the city of Kawartha Lakes and the last mayor of the former town of Lindsay. He was also an educator, sportsman and athlete who was inducted into the Lindsay sports hall of fame. He was a teacher, a vice-principal and principal at Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational Institute, and a superintendent of schools with the Trillium Lakelands District School Board.

Over the past 10 years, Art fought a very public and courageous battle with cancer. Despite his illness he maintained a very active life, continuing his involvement with the Rotary Club, the Dream Ball and Kawartha Lakes Food Source, and served as the chair of the police service board until earlier this year. He also managed to golf as often as possible.

Over the last five years, he received close to 100 chemotherapy treatments, becoming an inspiration for other people in the community fighting serious illness.

People who knew him and worked with him universally say that he was a great leader for the community and a mentor for them personally. His passion and love for his community, family and friends was unwavering. He was a champion for those who he felt didn't have the same advantages that he did.

Art is survived by his wife of 54 years, Barb, two children and two grandchildren. My community mourns this great individual, and my sympathies go out to his family.

ARGYLE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Today I would like to share with the members present some of the great work that's happening in my community.

On July 18, 2011, after many months of planning, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to launch the grand opening of the Argyle Business Improvement Association in London–Fanshawe.

Located in the heart of the Argyle retail and business district, the BIA is actively promoting a more vibrant, healthy business district through their hands-on efforts with local businesses.

Most recently, they initiated a relationship with Community Employment Services Fanshawe that will encourage retail businesses to access their many services.

They held their first annual Christmas party fundraiser. The event was well attended by business owners and staff, as well as Colours of London, CIBC, Forest of Flowers, Coulter's Pharmacy and Sutherland's Furniture. A silent auction was held, and proceeds from this incredible night will go to My Sisters' Place, a centre supporting homeless and troubled women in our neighbourhood.

1510

With the holiday season fast approaching, I am very pleased to share with you the new Cold Hands/Warm Hearts initiative. It is a mitten, hat and scarf drive for underprivileged children in my community.

I would like to thank Argyle BIA for their efforts. I applaud their hard work and look forward to working with them to promote local business and community in London–Fanshawe.

CO-OP HOUSING

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I'm pleased to take the opportunity to recognize a milestone for an important organization based in my riding of Ottawa Centre and active in communities across all of eastern Ontario.

The Co-operative Housing Association of Eastern Ontario, or CHASEO for short, is celebrating its 15th anniversary in 2011. CHASEO's membership includes housing co-ops, co-op staff associations and sector-related organizations in the eastern Ontario region. They not only serve as a collective voice in eastern Ontario to represent co-ops' interests with government, agencies and other groups, but CHASEO also provides local resources, expertise and training that is instrumental in helping co-ops operate at their best.

A unique form of home ownership, housing co-operatives are incorporated, non-profit businesses formed by people who wish to provide and own their housing jointly. The people who live in the co-ops are its members. From the beginning they decide on the planning, design and day-to-day management of the co-op. Co-ops are an integral part of my community, Speaker, and of many communities across the province, and I am pleased to bring this to the attention of the House.

I would also like to offer congratulations to CHASEO's board of directors: president Tim Larmour, vice-president Angela Blais, treasurer Michelle Bainbridge, corporate secretary Daniel Monoogian, staff liaison Catherine Lee, directors Karen McQuarrie and Helen Friel, and acting managing director Mary-Ann Schwering.

Congratulations to CHASEO on their 15th anniversary.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. John Yakabuski: What has happened to the lines on our highways in Ontario? It's plain to see—no pun intended—that the line marks on our highways have somehow become less visible. The obvious conclusion would be that the Ministry of Transportation has changed the specifications of the paint being used to mark the lines. On a dark, rainy night, they become next to impossible to distinguish from the blackness of the pavement.

Speaker, the primary reason for having line markings is safety. Safety is and should always be priority number one. The last two Sunday nights driving back to Toronto

have been rainy ones. On Highways 115 and 401, it was impossible to clearly see the lines in the rain. On a dark, rainy night, it's tougher driving when you can see the lines; when you can't see them, it's not a safe place to be.

My constituents and the people across Ontario need to know why the ministry has changed the specifications of this paint and what is going to be done to correct it.

I must thank my constituent Al Donohue from Pembroke for raising this issue with me and also for pointing out that there is an increasing number of seniors who will no longer drive at night because of this problem.

I have raised the issue with the Minister of Transportation, and he has assured me that they're looking into it. As safety must be the number one priority of his ministry, I expect he will get back to me in the very near future.

Speaker, highway safety is something that cannot be compromised, and every step must be taken to ensure that the markings on our highways are visible under all conditions, not just on clear days.

COLIN RICKARDS

Mr. Mike Colle: On November 24 this year, Colin Rickards, one of Canada's iconic authors and journalists, passed away. Colin was a columnist with Canada's largest Caribbean newspaper, the Caribbean Camera, for 15 years and was one of Canada's leading authorities on Caribbean affairs and history.

Colin was born in England and eventually served in the Royal Air Force. In England, he chose to focus his attention on the Caribbean and worked as a correspondent for newspapers in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Guyana, Antigua and St. Lucia. He travelled throughout the Caribbean and Central America and was one of the world's foremost experts on Caribbean history and politics.

He wrote a number of very outstanding books on everything from the great Crimean War to the Wild West in the United States and its heroes.

For 14 years, he worked as the editor of Caribbean Business News and the West Indies and Caribbean Yearbook. He worked at Share magazine here in Toronto, Pride, the Caribbean Camera and Contrast. He appeared on CTV and CBC as an expert on everything Caribbean; he was known as a walking encyclopedia of everything Caribbean. He truly loved the Caribbean, he loved its people, and he connected the Caribbean to Canada in the great bridge that he built between those two great peoples.

We're going to miss you, Colin. Rest in peace.

MUSIC EDUCATION

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm proud to stand here today and add my voice to the growing chorus in my riding calling for music education to have a higher priority in Ontario's elementary schools.

I want to take a moment to praise two women from my riding who have been instrumental in raising this issue. Dr. Denise Bowes and Joy Goodfellow are both members of the Brockville and Area Music and Performing Arts Hall of Fame, and they understand the value of music education. I was pleased to meet with them recently with our Ontario PC education critic, the member for Nepean–Carleton. Mr. Speaker, we were both inspired by their passion to ensure a generation of children don't miss out on the experience of enriching their lives by learning the subject from a qualified music teacher.

Beyond the value of fostering a lifelong love for music and the arts, we know that music instruction is strongly linked to overall student success. Sadly, for too many children in our province, this opportunity is disappearing. Indeed, a 2010 Coalition for Music Education study found that 58% of Ontario elementary schools do not have a qualified music teacher.

This weekend I will be launching a petition to support the initiative, and those interested can also give a message of encouragement and find out more by visiting the Save Music in our Schools Facebook page. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Denise and Joy, and it's my sincere hope that the Minister of Education and the administration and trustees of the Upper Canada District School Board are tuned in to their important words.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

Mr. Yakabuski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities / Projet de loi 27, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun à l'égard des remboursements de la taxe sur l'essence similaires consentis aux municipalités par le ministre.

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. John Yakabuski: This bill amends the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act. If the minister, under section 116 of the act, enters into an agreement with a municipality to provide a rebate of tax under the Gasoline Tax Act to the municipality for the purpose of constructing, maintaining or operating a rapid transit or public transportation system, the minister shall not refuse to enter into an agreement to provide a rebate

of tax under that act to any municipality for a purpose related to public highways under the jurisdiction of the latter municipality. The amount of the rebate that the latter municipality receives shall be based on the number of inhabitants in the municipality and the total distance of public highways under the jurisdiction of the municipality.

REGISTERED HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LES PROFESSIONNELS EN RESSOURCES HUMAINES INSCRITS

Mr. Zimmer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association / Projet de loi 28, Loi concernant l'Association des professionnels en ressources humaines.

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

First reading agreed to.

1520

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

Mr. David Zimmer: I'm reintroducing this bill. It was introduced in the 39th Parliament. It received second reading at that time, but unfortunately we concluded the Parliament before we had an opportunity to reach this.

The bill provides for self-regulation of human resource professionals here in Ontario. Human resource professionals in Ontario play an enormous role in ensuring that Ontario has the very, very best employment practices, that those practices are at the leading edge, and that those practices are conducted in such a way that it attracts industry to Ontario and keeps industry in Ontario. The human resources profession has a reputation for developing with employers the very best employment practices.

I'm joined today in the Speaker's gallery by Bill Greenhalgh, who's the CEO, and Scott Allinson and Claude Balthazard, who are senior executives with the Human Resources Professionals Association.

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

PROTECTION OF CHILD CARE CENTRES ACT (EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS), 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA PROTECTION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS (PROGRAMMES DE JOUR PROLONGÉ)

Mr. Leone moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 29, An Act to amend the Education Act in respect of extended day programs / Projet de loi 29, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne les programmes de jour prolongé.

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. Rob Leone: This bill provides for an amendment to the Education Act to allow third party child care providers to have a grandfather clause: if they were in operation as of September 1, 2011, that they continue to be in operation in school boards.

Waterloo region is currently the only region that doesn't have a school board—an agreement with third party providers with respect to child care and the seamless day program.

I hope this bill addresses those concerns of parents in my riding and in Waterloo region.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It now time for petitions. The member for Durham.

PETITIONS

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and we're all looking forward to tomorrow.

I have a petition from my riding of Durham which reads as follows:

"Whereas Solray Energy Corp. has given notice of its proposal for a class 3 solar power facility known as Epsom Solar Farm to be located in the township of Scugog; and

"Whereas the site is on prime", class 1, "farmland that has been in production for many generations; and

"Whereas we consider productive farmland to be of vital importance to farm and rural communities by providing healthy, locally grown food and ensuring the sustainability of Canada's food supply; and

"Whereas class 1 to 5 farmland should be protected from the current proposal and similar projects that may be considered in the future; and

"Whereas other sites of less value to agriculture are better locations for solar power developments;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature not to allow large, industrial wind or solar farms on prime agricultural land, and we further express our support for giving local communities, through their elected municipal councils the power to ... approve large-scale renewable energy developments."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, along with other members here.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to introduce this petition that was brought to me by Adel Mian, Megan Spasevski, Twee Tran, Amarna Moscote, Vera

Kevin and Jessica Merroli, who are in the gallery with us today.

The petition consists of 3,000 postcards, and they read as follows:

“Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada that continues to subject all landed immigrants to a waiting period to access government health insurance coverage;

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

“Immediately reform existing health care legislation and policies, and specifically eliminate the three-month wait period eligibility requirement that is part of the Ontario Health Insurance Plan to ensure that all landed immigrants residing in Ontario have access to health care services free of charge. This is in accordance with Ontario’s recognition, under the Ontario Human Rights Code, of the importance of the equality of service to its residents.

“Article 1 of the code states: ‘Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability.’

“Landed immigrants contribute to this province’s growth and prosperity and must be afforded the equal protection that they rightly deserve.”

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask our strong pages—and they would be Christian, Daniel and Andrew—to bring it to the clerks’ table.

JOB RELOCATION

Mr. Phil McNeely: It’s a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the federal government is moving 10,000 jobs from the downtown of ... Ottawa to Kanata;

“Whereas about half of those employees live in Orléans;

“Whereas the commutes of these jobs will be over one hour for Orléans commuters, compared to 20 minutes to the present Department of National Defence offices downtown;

“Whereas this action by the Harper government will make our city less sustainable;

“Whereas Orléans has only 0.5 jobs per household, compared to 1.65 jobs per household in Kanata;

“Whereas this action runs counter to the city of Ottawa’s official plan by promoting urban sprawl as opposed to densification;

“Whereas the overall costs of this move of 10,000 jobs to Kanata have never been fully costed;

“Whereas no environmental assessment or consultation was carried out with the affected communities;

“We, the undersigned, petition the assembly of Ontario to request that the Legislature evaluate the actions of the federal government to see if the environmental

assessment legislation of the federal and provincial governments was followed; and

“Furthermore, that the Legislature investigate the total cost of a purely political decision by the federal government.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this and send it forward with Yousef.

MALE BREAST CANCER

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by a great number of people around Ontario.

“Whereas, each year, an estimated 45 men will die from male breast cancer in Canada, a number that is expected only to increase; and

“Whereas breast cancer is widely believed to be a disease specific to women, and due to a general lack of awareness that men can also develop breast cancer, men are typically diagnosed at a late stage; and

“Whereas promoting awareness and education about male breast cancer is crucial to improving the health and well-being of men throughout Ontario, facilitating earlier detection, improving the prognosis of men who have been diagnosed with the disease and ultimately preventing further loss of life; and

“Whereas, in remembrance of the many men who have lost their lives or are fighting for their lives,

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

“That the third week of October be designated as Male Breast Cancer Awareness Week in Ontario.”

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I’ve got a few petitions from a couple of hundred people. They read:

“Whereas 700 affordable TCHC homes are in danger of being sold off to the private sector;

“Whereas the sell-off will reduce the diversity of neighbourhoods and lead to an increasingly divided Toronto;

“Whereas the sell-off will further reduce the inadequate supply of affordable housing for the 80,000 households already waiting for affordable housing;

“Whereas the sell-off will require the displacement of thousands of men, women and children from their homes, schools and communities;

“Whereas there are a range of other options to deal with the repair shortfall that exists, including drawing on Infrastructure Ontario loan funds, seeking support from higher levels of government, investing in retrofits to reduce utility costs, and partnering with non-profit and co-op housing providers;

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

“We urge the Minister of Housing not to approve the sale of the TCHC units, but instead to work with the city of Toronto and TCHC to explore more just, sustainable and economically viable ways to address the repair backlog in TCHC’s scattered housing stock.”

Speaker, I support this petition very strongly.

1530

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “Whereas we, the neighbouring residents of the proposed CAW turbine site, believe that we have been misled during the CAW’s public hearing processes; and

“Whereas new documented scientific evidence concerning infrasound and its health effects on people has come to our attention and into the public domain since these hearings; and

“Whereas we believe that had we and our municipality been informed that the CAW turbine would be a for-profit business enterprise and not a generator of electricity solely for the CAW Family Education Centre, as advertised, we would have vigorously opposed this project; and

“Whereas the proposed turbine does not comply with either the government setback of 550 metres nor the town’s policy of 2,000 metres, both designed to protect people’s health and safety, and the health and safety of people are in jeopardy;

“We, the undersigned, petition the MOE as follows:

“To immediately halt the construction of the CAW wind turbine, revoke the CAW’s permit and conduct an open and fair public hearing that gives Port Elgin residents a democratic opportunity to have their quality-of-life, health and safety concerns heard.”

I fully support this petition, I will affix my signature to it, and I will ask Miss Alli to run it to the table.

TRANSFERT D’EMPLOIS

M. Phil McNeely: « Pétition à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que la communauté d’Orléans va être durement touchée par le déplacement de 10 000 emplois du centre-ville vers Kanata;

« Attendu que le déplacement de l’emploi de l’est vers l’ouest va forcer de nombreux habitants à s’installer dans la région de Kanata et la valeur des propriétés, qui a déjà chuté d’environ 5 %, baissera davantage;

« Attendu que le Fonds de développement de l’Est de l’Ontario est destiné à aider les entreprises à créer de nouveaux emplois et à investir dans de nouvelles technologies, équipements et formation professionnelle;

« Attendu que le Fonds de développement de l’Est de l’Ontario a aussi comme objectif de soutenir des projets économiques qui attireront et conserveront les investissements au sein des entreprises ontariennes et des communautés;

« Attendu que le gouvernement de l’Ontario s’est engagé à maintenir le programme du Fonds de développement de l’Est de l’Ontario au-delà des quatre ans prévus;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que la législation s’assure que le Fonds de développement de l’Est de l’Ontario étende sa zone géographique d’admissibilité pour inclure Orléans, afin d’encourager la croissance des emplois dû à l’impact désastreux de la décision fédérale sur la viabilité de l’ensemble de la région à l’est de la ville d’Ottawa, et surtout d’Orléans. »

Je vais mettre ma signature ici, monsieur le Président, et l’envoyer avec Carolyn.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Todd Smith: “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 this petition, and I’m signing it.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s nice to be recognized by the Speaker.

I am happy to present this petition from the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member from Nickel Belt, there was a large group of people standing. That’s why we missed the rotation. Thank you for your comment.

M^{me} France Gélinas: You’re most welcome.

I have this petition from the family of Mr. Sam Bruno, as well as the patrons from Società Caruso, better known as the Caruso Club, in Sudbury.

“Whereas the Ontario government is making” PET scanning “a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; 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, the undersigned, 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 Laibah to bring it to the Clerk.

RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Jim Wilson: “Petition to Save Duntroon Central Public School and All Other Rural Schools in Clearview Township.

“Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

“Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

“Whereas the frameworks of rural schools are different from urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, ‘Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we’re not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them’; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn’t found any money to keep rural schools open in Simcoe–Grey;

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

“That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario.”

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will sign this.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Rob Leone: I’m very pleased to table this petition, which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Waterloo Region District School Board ... proposes to implement a before- and after-school child care program in their schools for children ages four to seven years, effective September 2012;

“Whereas the board intends to prohibit all daycare centres currently partnered with schools from continuing to provide the same services;

“Whereas the board intends to charge \$27 per day for the same services that the YWCA charges \$16 per day;

“Whereas the implementation of such a program would result in the loss of revenue for the daycare centres currently partnered with schools, further resulting in either a fee increase to child care services for children three years and under (\$1,500 plus per month) or the complete closure of child care programs for children three years and under;

“Whereas the result would be to create a crisis in child care for parents in this region who require good-quality, affordable child care for their children three and under, which already suffers from a severe shortage of such services;

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

“Whereas we are seeking that the board either cease to implement such a program or implement a hybrid approach wherein existing daycare centres partnered with schools will be allowed to continue to provide before- and after-school care at rates set by them, and the board may operate before- and after-school care in schools which do not have on-site daycare centres;

“Whereas should the board refuse to implement either approach;

“We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation amending the Education Act and the Day Nurseries Act so as to protect our valuable and vulnerable child care spaces and affordability from the above actions of the Waterloo Region District School Board.”

Mr. Speaker, I have about a thousand names on this petition. I’m happy to sign this petition as well and deliver it to page Aidan to be tabled.

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 December 6, 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London left off.

Mr. John Yakabuski: On a point of order, Speaker: I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 24(c), the member for Northumberland–Quinte West may speak for 20 minutes on the motion for second reading of Bill 2 and that the official opposition be skipped in the next following rotation of debate on the bill.

1540

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Agreed? Agreed.

The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just finishing off where we left off yesterday, I was talking to the bill, the healthy homes renovation tax credit, which is created to help those 65 and older get a 15% tax credit on renovations to their house up to a maximum of \$10,000.

I first made the point, just to reiterate, that the tax bill isn't really going to hit the 1.8 million seniors that the government is proposing. In fact, a lot of the seniors out there 65 to, I would say, between 75 and 77 don't need renovations; they're in perfectly good health and there's no way they could plan at that time what their needs are going to be in the future. So, really, you're getting a smaller portion of the population that this tax credit is going to benefit. My proposal is: Let's try to get relief for all of the citizens, all the people in Ontario, and let's get behind removing the HST from heating—and hydro, while we're at it.

Mr. Jeff Leal: It's already off 10%.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Well, let's take the HST on top of the 10% that's already off. I think that would be a great idea.

The other problem is the cost. The costs have not been outlined to how much this program is really going to cost. They're estimating maybe \$60 million by March, but what is a year going to cost? It hasn't been costed out, and I think the programs that the government is going to take from this point on should be fully costed out so we know how our money is being spent, so that there are no surprises at the end of the year and so we can stop running \$16-billion deficits and get our budget in order. Because if we don't watch our spending, health care is next to be cut, education is going to be cut and the Ministry of the Environment will be cut.

The CCACs—these people who need these renovations need the services from the CCACs in order to stay in their home. It's not enough just to build structures in their houses: they need the services; they need nursing care; they need companionship; they need laundry—whatever they need to stay in their houses. I think that's where the money should be filtered. If you really, really need to spend this \$60 million, put it into health care so they can strengthen our CCACs. Put it into surgery time so that we can get more surgeries done, and so those people who are sitting at home suffering, needing these

renovations, can actually get on and have a better quality of life and enjoy life.

One other point I wanted to make note of is also for surgeries—I'm sorry; it's just getting the deficit under control.

There were points made earlier about dementia and people at home with dementia: These renovations aren't going to help people with dementia. Those people need more structured care. Again, going back to the CCACs and working with the local Alzheimer's societies, it's getting those people to come into the house and helping those people with dementia. Putting up a grab bar is not going to help anyone with dementia. We need to relook at our position on how we treat people with dementia.

In closing, Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak today and yesterday on this tax credit bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Speaker, it's unfortunate that I missed much of his presentation yesterday, but what I hear, I like, by way of the concerns he raises—the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. I love these new guys here. They're friendly. They want to work with others. They're sincere. It's just beautiful to see. God bless.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The older ones, I don't know. But the younger ones: God bless.

He raises a couple of good concerns, because I raised them myself just the other day. Imagine: We are renovating their homes, and only up to 1% of the public is likely to take that program on, and it will be only the wealthy. But he raises a good point: What seniors really need in order to stay in their homes—yes, in part, renovations, and indeed the majority of people who need it won't be able to do it. But he also makes the point that what they need is adequate home care, which is a point I think he made, or would have liked to have made, in addition to the other points he made. That is indeed a big, big point. People need home care, and without it, they can't live in their homes.

I know that the Minister of the Environment understands this, because he's been here longer than I have. I know he's got a whole lot of seniors in his home town who are indeed working poor, and if they're not working, they are indeed poor and can't afford to make those renovations. So I know that he was very attentive to your comments in terms of how and what it is that we need to do to make sure that seniors have the services to indeed stay at home.

So I'm sympathetic to the many arguments you have made about this particular bill, and while this bill helps some people—the very wealthy, God bless—it will not help the majority of people who desperately need it. I appreciate your comments.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased to offer my comments after hearing the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London on this very important bill, Bill 2, a new piece of legislation that is going to add to the long list of pro-

grams that are making life easier for seniors in Ontario. Sure, this will not be for everyone; we know that. The federal program that allowed many improvements to homes—well, this is much better than new kitchens and new renovations like pools etc.

This is targeted to the Aging at Home strategy, which is a big part of this government's legislation to help seniors. I am sure that we're going to find that a good number of seniors are able to take advantage of this program, are able to prepare for aging at home, retirement in their own home, rather than going to the other options that are available. And this 15% reduction makes it more affordable. It's an incentive. It's going to allow people to do the planning for their retirement, to get their homes ready. It will spread the word about aging at home, all the advantages of aging at home. It will be an assist to many seniors.

So I'm very pleased, as a senior myself, to look ahead—I want to stay in my own home all my life. I think that this is a great way to look forward, that if something happens that you're going to need a lift or you're going to need different adjustments to your home, you're able to do it, and this is an incentive. This will help. I thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. Thanks for the comments from the member from Trinity–Spadina—

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Oh, sorry. I jumped up too early, Speaker.

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Did I jump up too early?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I think you jumped up out of order there.

Questions and comments? Seeing none—okay, the member from Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker. I have to agree with a lot of the previous speakers with respect to this bill, that it's not going to affect a large percentage of seniors in our communities, including my community. They don't need home renos until later in life, and so it's going to affect those people who are in their later 70s and into their 80s, and many of them aren't going to want to invest in their homes at that point in their life.

In my riding, there are many seniors who live in poverty and they don't have the \$10,000 to even try to get a \$1,500 tax decrease, so it is not going to work for many seniors where I live. But I have had calls from many seniors who need help with getting their roof fixed, they need help with their home heating bills, they need some new windows and doors, they've got a leaky basement, and they don't have the money to fix those things. And so this bill doesn't do anything for those seniors who are struggling to stay in their homes and need home renovations unrelated to the aging process.

They need more health services. They need more housekeeping services. They need somebody who might help them with meal prep, somebody who might shovel

their snow for them in the winter. Maybe they need a bus pass and they need some relief on their bus pass, or they need a ride to a medical appointment. They might need their stoves and fridges cleaned, because that's a heavy job to do for a senior. So I think that there are many seniors who really will not take advantage of this bill; a very small percentage may, and I think that that money would be better spent looking after a large segment of the senior population. Thank you, Speaker.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd ask that the House leaders—it's kind of hard on the Speaker when three different people stand up, and it's out of rotation, and sometimes not in their seats. It's difficult to remember the ridings as it is. So could we certainly help out the old Speaker here? A little bit of organization would be nice. Thank you.

The member from York West.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Thank you very much, Speaker. It is a pleasure to add a few comments in two minutes on the presentation by the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Speaker, let me add to the information, especially for the new members here. Seniors already enjoy, thanks to the Liberal government, a good number of benefits. Let me inform the House which ones they are, adding to the existing Bill 2, which we are debating today.

We have the Ontario senior homeowner property tax grant of \$625 for eligible homeowners. We have the Ontario energy and property tax credit, which is available for those who own or rent: \$900 a year in tax relief up, to a maximum of \$1,025.

We already have another permanent sales tax credit of \$260 per year, which is available for every adult with a low or middle income. There is 10% off your hydro bills already, which has been in place for some time. And 93% of Ontarians will pay less personal income tax, saving another \$355 a year. Moreover, 90,000 Ontarians will not pay any personal provincial taxes, and that includes a lot of seniors with low or middle income.

The new home health care strategy includes a program consisting of house calls at a home by doctors or nurses. If a senior gets sick, there are also eight weeks where a family member can look after them. And the bill that we are debating now adds another \$1,500 that they can avail—so I hope this will pass.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London has a two-minute response.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker, and I'm very sorry for messing things up for you earlier. I was too ambitious to speak again.

I'd like to thank the members from Trinity–Spadina and Ottawa–Orléans, the member from Welland and the member from York West for their comments. It's true, we're here to work together and get things done. The blue stripe on the NDP sign that I mentioned yesterday is a good way of showing us that you're coming to the right way. Thank you.

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Yes. I would like to add, though, that it's the people who suffer who use medical devices at home that have to plug in and use electricity to keep them running, like oxygen, like I mentioned yesterday. These people are struggling to pay. I've had numerous people stop me in St. Thomas and tell me, "What are you going to do about my oxygen? I have to run it all day." They just started with the time-of-use rates in St. Thomas, so they're now paying the maximum amount during the day when their medical devices have to run.

If they just want to focus on a small portion of society to give them a tax break, let's take that money and give these people who need medical devices running during the day, using up the high energy prices, a benefit or a tax credit or something on their energy bills so it's more affordable for them to stay in their homes. That, I think, is going to be a better solution than just focusing on one small pattern of people who can't really afford to do these renovations in the first place.

Thanks again for letting me speak over the last couple of days, and have a nice day.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It is a great honour and privilege to be elected to this House to represent the Welland riding constituents, following 36 years of vigilant and vigorous representation, and passionate representation, by Mel Swart, followed by Peter Kormos. Mel represented the Welland riding for around 13 years, and he was a tireless champion for social justice and for public auto insurance. He also called for the resignation of Bob Rae—who is now a Liberal—

Interjection: And always was.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Well, maybe he always was—over the abandonment of the public auto insurance plan. We were talking about that this morning, and unfortunately that didn't happen.

He was one of the Niagara region's most loved and notable politicians. Mel wasn't just interested in being here and representing people in the House. He had a long list of charities that he worked for in his community and my community, raising funds for all kinds of causes.

Peter Kormos, my friend, a mentor, was a cabinet minister under the NDP government, and he held the House leader position most recently. A well-respected member and a vigilant advocate for everyday folks not only in our riding but across the province of Ontario, he'll be missed by his constituents, he'll be missed by his caucus, and he'll be missed by me. I'm sure there are people here sitting listening today who will also miss him. I've heard the comment over the last few days that there's something missing here, and it's Peter. Peter's not here with us.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But we have Cindy now.

Ms. Cindy Forster: But you have me now; that's right.

It was a privilege to have known and worked with both of them—and I see the member from Niagara Falls over there applauding.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Welland. Now, Welland is a unique riding. Where the member from St. Catharines actually gets away with only one city—St. Catharines, in his riding—I have five. I have part of St. Catharines, and then I have Thorold, Welland, Wainfleet and Port Colborne. I want to thank them for their support, the constituents in that riding. I want to thank them not just for supporting me in this election but for 17 years. This was my seventh election in politics: several terms on city council, one as the mayor of Welland and two elections at a regional level. The people of Welland supported me through all of those. Even though some are suggesting that I jumped ship—that's a minority of the population. But they've supported me through all of those elections.

Hon. James J. Bradley: You were a great regional councillor.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, the member from St. Catharines.

So I am truly humbled to once again have the support and the trust of the Welland riding constituents to represent you as your MPP. You have given me many opportunities over the years to grow and to learn, and I will continue to work hard on behalf of all of you at Queen's Park for betterment of the quality of life in Niagara, in the Welland riding and across the province.

I also want to thank the hundreds of volunteers, friends, unions, family members—including my 85-year-old mother, who's going to be 86 in January, who cooked a meal almost every day for hundreds of volunteers in my office. She couldn't deliver leaflets any more, but she could certainly still cook. She would cook, then she'd call them up, they'd come and pick it up, and she'd feed the troops. So it was very good.

The people on my campaign worked tirelessly during the election campaign, and your commitment and dedication to the campaign and to communicating the NDP message so eloquently at the doors and on the phones is why we had a successful end result in our riding.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Did Willy work on your campaign?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes, he did, actually, Willy Noiles, a reporter from St. Catharines.

To the youth: There was a lot of youth working in my campaign. I know a number of the new members have talked about the youth in the campaigns, and it was so great to see. We had so much fun and so much energy that it inspired many of us who are older to push longer into the days and the evenings of the campaign.

To Mike Grimaldi, my campaign manager: You couldn't ask for a better campaign manager. He has worked for every provincial campaign in the Welland riding. He also has worked many federal campaigns over the years, and Mike only gets better with each and every campaign.

Speaker, to Brian, my husband of 35 years, actually, a couple of weeks ago, who has been my best friend and supporter—

Applause.

1600

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thirty-five years: That is like five times the national average. And he made it relatively easy for me over the last 17 years to actually be in politics, so I thank him for that.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: He does the cooking at home, does he?

Ms. Cindy Forster: He does, and some cleaning; as well, he looks after the cat, yes.

To Andrea Horwath and our staff team for candidate support and for a great campaign that led to an NDP caucus of 42% women—and I don't know whether anybody can boast those numbers.

I come from a working-class family. My father was a steelworker; he worked at what used to be the former Page-Hersey—it's now Lakeside Steel—in Welland. I have seven brothers and sisters. My parents emigrated from Nova Scotia after the war—so, a hard-working, working-class family. My dad is no longer alive, but he'd be very proud to see me standing here representing the New Democrats.

I'm also a registered nurse, for almost four decades. Health care has always been a priority for me and, in fact, the best, most satisfying job that I ever had in my entire life. Every day I returned home from a 12-hour shift and I felt like I had accomplished something at the end of that day for someone. It was a feeling that I had improved somebody's life or some family member's life in the process. But my front-line years are long ago. That was when the health care system had patient care front and centre. Beds were available for patients in need. Patients had confidence in their community hospitals, and nurses, allied professionals and health care workers felt respected by their communities and by their employers.

I've been advocating for improved patient care for the last 20 years through my work with the Ontario Nurses' Association. My riding's hospital is currently under review by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. There is a supervisor appointed there.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Jim.

Ms. Cindy Forster: And the member from St. Catharines has certainly been involved in that.

I'm eager to use this opportunity to work with the Niagara region, the Niagara Health System and the members from Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Niagara West—Glanbrook to ensure that we have positive results for the patients across the Niagara peninsula.

We're in a minority government, and it's clear that the electorate's message was to work together to get results for Ontarians, so I'm looking forward to working in that way to get some results.

My riding has faced many challenges over the last decade, with many factory closings and jobs moving to other provinces, other countries. Some of these factories had millions of dollars in taxes invested to expand or renew, but they turned their backs on their communities and on their workers and they moved those jobs to Mexico and to the United States. This is why the NDP plan to ensure corporate tax breaks and incentives are

tied to jobs is important. We need to rebuild our manufacturing sector and the economy.

So I urge the government to consider all of the debate around this seniors' tax credit and to use those seniors' tax credit dollars in a way that will support many seniors in our communities, as opposed to a small minority of them.

I look forward to working with all of you over the next four years in the best interests of seniors and of all the people in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to talk about myself and talk about my campaign and to thank my constituents.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I enjoyed the member's remarks on this bill. They were very, very good. We allow a lot of flexibility in the House, as you should, Speaker; you've done an excellent job. I want to compliment you. By the way, you look very distinguished in that chair. Even though you're not wearing robes, you still look very distinguished in that chair.

I want to compliment the member on her speech that we just had at the present time. She made reference to a couple of her predecessors, who I've had the pleasure of working with previously: Mel Swart, who used to actually get a ride home with me from time to time when we were here in Toronto and coming home on a Friday, because the House sat on Friday mornings—only I had to bring all the props that Mel had with him. I had to put them in the back seat or the trunk of the car at that time. And of course I had an opportunity as well to work with Peter Kormos, one of your predecessors.

Mr. Speaker, what we've done in the Niagara peninsula, which I think is very good: There are matters of policy where we differ, but when it comes to defending the interests of the Niagara peninsula, you'll find the members from the three different political parties—the member for Niagara Falls and I, who are Liberals; the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook, who is a Conservative; and, of course, the member for Welland, who is a New Democrat. I think that works exceedingly well.

There was something I was thinking of, because I had a newspaper in front of me, and the member would agree with me—of course, I'll be in complete trouble now, so don't worry; you won't get in trouble. Wouldn't it be nice if these newspapers all bought recycled newsprint from the Resolute mill—it used to be called the Abitibi-Bowater mill? It would probably keep that mill going forever if the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail and the Toronto Sun and many others bought recycled newsprint. Now, I expect about five nasty editorials, after chastising them for not doing so, but I know that my good friend the member from Welland would be in complete agreement, as would Willy Noiles, who is sitting in the gallery at the present time cheering you on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I really commend the member from Welland, a former mayor, on her remarks—her ser-

vice to her community is commendable—and also recognize as well, although I did not know Mel Swart personally; I knew of his reputation at that time. But more recently, of course, Peter Kormos—I think we were all surprised when he didn't run again, quite frankly. He really was the chief legal adviser on both sides of the House when we had these points of order.

I was impressed as well that your accomplishments are quite notable, but you express them and your work in such a humble way, as a nurse or as a family person. It's quite genuine, and I hope you continue to bring that lack of cynicism to everything you do in here. But also, more importantly, your mother is part of what you respect, and it's probably why you're here, I guess—86 years old and still making great meals for her family and your friends is notable.

I think the only critical thing, not from your perspective, but of the government—I think you handled it very well, as well, by saying that the investments they've made, the economic development plan of Dalton McGuinty isn't working. They've put the money in and the jobs move to Mexico. If you look generally at Navistar and other investments they've made in Ontario, as well as what the Auditor General said this week about green energy, auto insurance, which Mel Swart [*inaudible*] people, they haven't fixed anything. The hospitals are in trouble, children's aid is in trouble, every single thing you talk about is in trouble.

They've been in government for eight years, and for people like you—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Eight long years.

Mr. John O'Toole:—eight long years, the point being: Now they are even disrespectful to the Auditor General of Ontario. They're ignoring his advice. I can't wait until the report comes in from Don Drummond to say that there's a structural deficit over there and they're spending the money of all the people of Ontario. It's future debt.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you, Speaker. First, I would like to congratulate my colleague the member from Welland on her maiden speech. I would also like to share the member opposite's comments with respect to my colleague's humility on her accomplishments and the way she presented them—the fact that she presented them in a manner to downplay them.

I'm honoured to share her experience as a colleague. She was mayor of Welland—and I'm sure that will add a richness to our caucus—and she's filling some large shoes, replacing Mr. Kormos. Hopefully together, you as the new member from Welland and me as a former criminal defence lawyer, maybe we could join our talents and our skills and replace the irreplaceable Mr. Kormos—hopefully.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Kormos in the hallway—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I met him somewhere else.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm sure my colleague from the party opposite can share that story with me off the record at some point.

I was impressed with Mr. Kormos. He had a passion for defending the rights of the people of Ontario that I hope to emulate as well. I know my colleague from Welland will also keep that spirit alive—that fire, that passion to fight for Ontarians. That's really what we're here to do.

I wish you the best of luck in the upcoming session and I hope that, together, we can really keep that spirit, that fight for the rights of the people of Ontario alive and continue that fight as long as we're given the honour to do so. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

1610

Mr. Mario Sergio: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I also want to congratulate you on your re-election, if I may, as Speaker. Yes, you look very well, especially when you wear your official dress—

Hon. James J. Bradley: And a very expensive tie.

Mr. Mario Sergio:—and a very expensive tie. But at the same time also, I would like to congratulate the member from Welland and the presentation that she has made on Bill 2.

As well, Speaker, I share the sentiment from my friend the Minister of the Environment on the former colleague that she took over from, Peter Kormos, who has been a member, a dean of the House here. We had grown accustomed to his wonderful, colourful presentations. So when you have a chance, say hello on my behalf, and I welcome you as well.

As we had a chance to mention before, this bill is just an addition to the several benefits that Ontario seniors enjoy now. Of course, no particular benefits may ever be of assistance to all the seniors at all times, but let me just mention some of them.

At the moment, there is a \$625 benefit from the Ontario senior homeowner property tax grant. There is the Ontario energy property tax credit, which is available to those who own or rent: \$900 in tax relief up to a maximum of \$1,025 yearly, based on income. There is a permanent tax credit of \$265 per year, 10% off your hydro bills to offset the hydro increases.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Trinity–Spadina would like to sit in his seat, if wants to make comments.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Can I claim the extra—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Ten seconds. Go ahead.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Ten seconds. Mr. Speaker, the best thing that we could do as a government is to support this particular bill as it adds more money into the pockets of our seniors. I hope that the opposition will support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Welland has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you to the member from St. Catharines, the member from Durham—where was the member from Durham?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Right there.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Right there.

Interjection: No.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: He's right there. He's not there, but he's right there.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Oh, he was there. The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton and the member from York West, thank you for your comments.

I spent a lot of time over the years with both Mel and Peter. I worked Mel's last election campaign and I worked probably all of Peter's election campaigns over the years. They're both very great men who are very compassionate about their communities and about social justice.

On the issue of seniors, my own mother, who I talked about a few minutes ago, lives in her own apartment. It's a private sector apartment. She wouldn't be able to take advantage of any tax credit for anything in her unit, and I doubt that her landlord would be prepared to do anything in her unit to assist her in staying there when she isn't able to live there any longer. But she does need things like rides to medical appointments, and even with seven kids, occasionally, somebody can't get her to Hamilton, where the services are specialized, so she has to take a \$50 or \$60 hit to get a ride to Hamilton and back. So I think that there needs to be some more flexibility in this seniors' tax credit so that more seniors will be able to take advantage across the province.

Once again, thanks for the opportunity to speak, and I look forward to working with all of you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased this afternoon to have 10 minutes to speak on the senior healthy homes renovation tax credit, a seniors-focused initiative from our government that is one in a series of many credits and seniors-focused initiatives that we have brought to the Legislature over the last number of years.

I want to begin this afternoon, Speaker, if I can, though, by focusing a little bit—and I've been here for a fair bit of the last two days, listening to much of the debate on this senior healthy homes renovation tax credit.

The opposition members, almost en masse, as they have spoken to this, have focused a bit of their criticism on what they would perceive and convey to their constituents as a lack of affordability or a lack of accessibility of this particular credit. When I listen to the speeches, it seems to me as if the opposition members are conveying to their constituents and people following the debate on television that you almost need to spend the entire \$10,000—therefore it's not going to be accessible—before you can be eligible to receive the rebate of some 15%.

I want to be clear, speaking to my constituents in Thunder Bay–Atikokan and to people following this across the entire province, that you do not need to spend

\$10,000; you need to spend only up to \$10,000, which is the maximum. On any amount of money up to \$10,000, you are eligible for a 15% rebate on that amount of money, so let's be clear to our constituents.

I hope the members in the opposition benches, when they get calls to their constituency associations, will be conveying to their constituents that, no, you don't have to spend all of the \$10,000. You can spend \$1,000 or \$3,000 and get a 15% rebate on that amount.

Speaker, let's also be clear that most seniors, even seniors of modest income, do spend money on their homes. It's not as easy for some as it is for others, but they do spend money, and this credit can help them.

The reason I want to spend a couple of minutes on this is this: One or two weeks ago, we debated in here a private member's bill put forward by a member of the third party that was going to remove part of the HST off gas bills or heating bills in the province of Ontario. By his own admission, when he spoke on the bill, it was going to save his constituents, in a northern Ontario riding, about \$100 annually. He said that. The second party, the official opposition, supported it as well.

It was going to save them \$100 annually, okay? That averages out to about 27 cents a day. They were very supportive of that, and yet they're dismissive here of an issue that if you spend \$1,000—and most seniors spend money on their homes for grab bars, for lifts, for a variety of things; they'll spend some money. If you spend \$1,000, you're going to get \$150 back, which is more than in the private member's bill that was introduced, that both of the opposition parties want to hang their hats on and talk about as one of the most incredible things to come to the Legislature in the last while.

By way of comparison, it's important—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I would ask the two members to cease and desist from their outbursts. Thank you.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Thank you, Speaker.

By way of comparison, it is very important for me to point out that this is going to save more money than that private member's bill would have. It was really remarkable to see how much political capital they had invested in that one point.

To be clear: You don't have to spend \$10,000; you can spend \$1,000, and it will get you 150 bucks back. Most seniors, no matter what their income levels, do spend money on their own homes, and there is a whole long list of things here that are eligible. Not all expenses are, but many of them are.

I want to go through—jeez, I'm almost down to five minutes already. I want to get on the record some of the things that we've already done, lest the opposition members leave my constituents in Thunder Bay–Atikokan with the impression that this is the only thing we've done for seniors over the course of the last number of years:

—enhancements to the energy and property tax credit, up to \$1,025 annually—I believe voted against by the opposition;

—personal income tax reduction, on average saving \$200 for everyone in the province of Ontario, including our seniors—I believe voted against by the opposition;

—the Ontario sales tax credit, up to \$260 per family member, including seniors, for every family member, in addition to the existing GST credit;

1620

—seniors in the north: a special piece, eligible up to \$130 for a single, up to \$200 for a family, in northern Ontario only;

—the Ontario senior homeowners' property tax grant: We increased that from \$250 to \$500 in our 2010 budget—voted against by the opposition—seniors only; and

—increasing access to locked-in accounts; we did that.

Speaker, about a year ago, I ran into an old friend of mine. Here's one we don't ever talk about often enough in the Legislature: seniors-focused income-splitting. The feds got great notoriety and notice for their work on income-splitting. This old friend of mine came up to me and said, "Billy, I've got to thank you for your income-splitting tax initiative." That one income-splitting measure alone, as a senior couple, he told me, was paying for his winter vacation every year. I don't know how many of us as Liberals in this Legislative Assembly talk about that, but we need to do a better job of reminding people about that. That's about the seventh or eighth one.

The Ontario clean energy benefit—and I'm very proud of this one, Speaker. As the chair of the northern caucus, we worked very hard to move this one forward, as did all other members of caucus. This benefit—10% off your electricity bills, available to everybody in the province of Ontario—is valued annually at \$1.2 billion or \$1.3 billion.

The last example of what we've done for seniors that I'll mention—and I don't have the total dollar values in front of me, Speaker; I wish I had. We've been uploading now, off the residential property tax base in the province of Ontario, those services that were formerly downloaded by the Conservative government from 1995 to 2003. We have been bringing those off of people's tax bases. This is what this is about. This is one more affordability measure to help people stay in their own homes. We have been uploading those services back off their property tax base.

I know that there was an AMO conference in August, a month or two before the election. I know that after the leader of the official opposition made his speech there were a lot of municipal leaders in the province of Ontario very concerned because it didn't sound to them like the leader of the official opposition, who wanted to be Premier, was committed to continuing the upload. I forget who it was from the official opposition who ended up touring around the province trying to do some damage control after the AMO conference. The point is: We're here; we're continuing that upload. It's actually in the billions of dollars that we're taking back off the residential property tax base.

My colleagues and I have listed here for you a variety of measures, most of which, I will say, have been voted

against by the opposition parties at one time or another, and all of which impact the affordability of seniors in their own homes. Those are the facts.

Speaker, what's the focus of the measure? We know that health care is chewing up, on an annual basis, more and more of our provincial budget. We're close to 50% of the total spending that the province of Ontario does being used up in health care. We know that the challenges related to health care are growing; they're not getting smaller: the baby boomers just turning 65, we've got an aging population, dementias, diabetes, First Nations issues, and on and on it goes. So if we can bring in measures that are going to help our seniors to stay in their homes longer, that is to the benefit of all of us.

I could go through a long list of health care initiatives. We're talking financially about how we're able to allow our seniors to stay in their own homes, and I've given you a list of about 10 things that have made it more affordable for them. But we could talk about the fact that, over the course of our mandate—and I heard the speaker before me from the third party talk about being a registered nurse—we've hired somewhere in the order of 11,000 nurses over the course of our mandate. We've hired over 3,200 doctors.

Speaker, who is it that uses our health care system the most? Seniors. All of these initiatives were focused primarily on them—a wait time strategy that, for the first time in the history of this province, allowed people to measure how long they had to wait for surgeries. The first five initiatives on the wait time strategy: hips and knees, MRIs, cataracts, cancer, and cardiac, most of which, again, focused on seniors.

Speaker, there is a long list of initiatives that we've taken. Please, I tell my people in Thunder Bay—Atikokan and right across the province, when you're listening to the debate on this issue, this is far from the only initiative that we have brought forward to help seniors in the province of Ontario—a long list of things that we're very proud of. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I certainly had some concerns regarding this bill, and I'll be frank: Ultimately, my decision to not support the bill is founded upon three main concerns.

Firstly, as my colleagues have mentioned, this bill will only benefit those seniors who can afford to spend \$10,000 on home improvements. Talking with constituents in my riding, they tell me that this is not their reality. We are not tasked with ensuring that wealthy seniors can cope; we are tasked with ensuring that all seniors can cope with rising costs.

Secondly, I am concerned with the shell game that is inherent within the bill. It is dishonest for this government to try to portray the tax benefit as a 15% return. That is simply not the case. The 13% HST paid on the qualifying \$10,000 in goods and services would be an additional \$1,300. Therefore, the 15% supposed return only nets 2%. Spending \$10,000 and getting 2% back

doesn't sound like such a plum offer when you have all the facts.

I would suggest that this government be honest for once. Rather than constantly trying to posture in appearance, be honest. Ontario families understand this government's shell game of taxing more and then pretending they are doing Ontario families a favour by returning a small portion of their own money.

Thirdly, I am concerned with how this government intends to fund this program. We heard this government commit, in the speech from the throne, that all new spending would come from realized savings elsewhere. So where are the realized savings? It seems to me that the only time this government gives without hidden strings attached is if the money is going to union friends or to reckless green energy projects. So unless these seniors are going to organize within their own homes or install turbines, they know they aren't going to be getting what they sign up for.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to comment on some of the comments from the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

It's typical of the Liberal initiatives we've seen over the last eight years. The talk is large but, at the end of the day, the actual effect is small. Sure, you don't have to get the whole \$1,500; you can get 15% off a \$45 item, off a \$50 item. When I talked to Gilda in Iroquois Falls—she's about 80. I knocked on her door. She owns her own house. She never asked for a grab bar. She never asked for a walk-in shower. She asked, "Mr. Vanthof, I'm having a hard time paying my heat bills. HST off would be nice. Help with new windows would be great so I could save some heat." It's those things that are going to keep people in their houses.

It's not the bill itself; it's the minuscule amount of people it's going to help. There's a lot of press being given about it and, "Oh, we're going to help so many people. We're going to create so many jobs." But in the end, there are things we could do for seniors that would benefit the seniors more than what this bill is going to do.

In itself, the proposal isn't necessarily bad. It's that it's so narrow; that's the problem. It's meant to create a lot of good press but not so much results for the majority of seniors who really need help in this province. I hope that the government will consider broadening this bill to truly impact more seniors.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Oakville.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate and to pass some comments on my friend the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

I think any government attempts to try to support as many members in society as it possibly can in a number of ways. We support our young people in a number of ways. This particular initiative, I think, looks at the other end of the age spectrum in a very practical way. It looks at what happens in the aging process and what happens to

people who would prefer to stay at home as opposed to moving into an institutional setting; or what happens to a family as it starts to get back together when, perhaps, the son or the daughter asks the parent to move back into the home. I think it's just very straightforward that, often, that entails some changes to the physical layout of the house itself. Where I think a government can play a role in encouraging more people to stay in their own homes, or encouraging sons and daughters to perhaps accommodate a parent who wants to move back into their own home, is to give them some assistance to allow for those physical changes to be made.

1630

At the same time, I think any party that formed a government would be looking for some sort of a win-win situation. In this case, we're able to help the seniors; we're perhaps able to help people who aren't seniors yet but would be responsible for the costs. Also, there's work that needs to be done here. There are contractors that need to be hired. There are supplies that need to be bought. There are a number of things that are entailed in the economic exchange that takes place when somebody just makes that simple decision that they're going to renovate their home or retrofit their home so that it would accommodate an older person more readily.

All the member spoke about, I think very simply, was that this government, at this point in time, is prepared to offer a program that assists families to do that. The opposition parties may think we could do more. Perhaps that's true, but it would seem to me that all parties should be supporting this particular initiative, and then we move on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thank you, Speaker—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'm slow at the switch. We'll go—

Mr. Jeff Leal: I just got up. They were stalling over there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'm sorry, member from Peterborough.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I just wanted to take the opportunity. Sorry about that.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize for my tardiness in getting up.

I just wanted to say that this bill obviously was announced during the election—that it was coming and so forth—so some of my constituents were already looking forward to it. They inquired to my office as to what was in the bill, and I would just like to share with the members here what the email that I got back today was.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You might want to put your BlackBerry away.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Well, I have to read it from there, Mr. Speaker.

"Whatever you sent me didn't come through. Is it that you have to spend \$10,000 to get a \$1,500 tax break? Where does a senior get \$10,000, and what would a

\$1,500 tax break do for a low-income senior? Something doesn't sound right from where I stand.

"I have never seen anything that helps seniors. Everybody wants to help people with children but put seniors out to pasture. Why does a person work all their life to lose everything in the end?"

"Then you ask, why should people vote? I have to come to the conclusion that voting will be the one thing I will never do again. I have voted since the first time I could and look where it's got me. I think it's time all governments were disbanded, and put in people who are for the people and not big corporations.

"Why should governments get big pensions and the taxpayers pay for it? We should all be on the same page when it comes to pensions. We have invested our whole lives to it, and we all deserve to be treated fairly."

This was the comment I got back when we sent the constituent the information in this bill, Mr. Speaker. I think it's a shame that they would put something forward like that to help the seniors, and that's what the seniors think about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I just want to quickly take an opportunity to introduce Joe Mancinelli from LIUNA, who is here with his colleagues, sitting in the members' east gallery.

I want to thank the members from Chatham—Kent—Essex, Timiskaming—Cochrane, Oakville and Oxford for their comments.

To the member from Chatham—Kent—Essex: You spoke to the affordability and accessibility issue. I spent 10 minutes. I talked for at least four or five about that. I don't feel the need to go over that territory again.

To the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane, who referenced one of his constituents named Gilda: Well, I hope you told Gilda about the 10% Ontario Clean Energy Benefit that we brought in. I hope you told her that for the longest time, we in fact did have an energy-related program in the province of Ontario. Apparently, she can afford new windows, but she can't afford to buy some grab bars. In fact, that program, Gilda might be interested to know, still exists at the federal level. So you could maybe convey that to her, and that might be a help.

One of the things that I didn't mention in my remarks in terms of the long list of things we've done over the last number of years to bring relief to seniors was the fight we took on with the big drug companies to get a better deal for generic drug companies—and so much detail there that I must say was extremely unsavoury. I can tell you some of the things that my constituency office experienced through that campaign. There will be a day when the detail on that will become a little clearer, and we'll all use it, I guess, as we will.

There was a question this morning from the third party about a drug that was not accessible to one of the third party's constituents. Speaker, that fight that we took on, and it wasn't an easy fight, in fact has saved the government of Ontario about \$500 million, all of which has

been ploughed back into health care to put more drugs back on the formulary to help those very people that were referenced this morning.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'm pleased to stand today to give my inaugural speech.

To begin with, it is a honour and a privilege to be a part of the 40th Parliament here at Queen's Park. I'm humbled by the overwhelming support shown to me by the constituents in my Chatham—Kent—Essex riding, a once-Liberal stronghold. Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, when one holds a government position, that person usually walks to a different drummer. It is my intention to bring my inaugural address differently.

To my predecessor, Pat Hoy, MPP, I wish you much health and happiness in your retirement. Thank you for serving.

To my wife, Dianne, of 35 years—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry to interrupt the member, but there appears to be a bit of a mix-up here. The party had asked for 20 minutes' consent and it was given, and the member isn't doing it. So we'll allow you to go with 10 minutes. They missed their 20-minute request.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): So it's 10 minutes—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): That's not what I was told.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, we'd better straighten this out. Clerk, please. We'll straighten it out right now.

We seem to have straightened out the difficulty, and I'm sorry for interrupting the member from Chatham—Kent—Essex. You may continue where you left off and whatever time you lost, please put it back on the clock—or add it to it. Add it. Thank you. Go ahead.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you.

To my wife, Dianne, of 35 years and my three terrific children Jeff, Kristin and Brooke, thank you for your love and support throughout this incredible journey. I love you very much.

1640

I would be remiss if I didn't give a very heartfelt thanks to the many people who helped me in my journey to become the MPP for Chatham—Kent—Essex. Thank yous are extended to Ed O'Brien, Brandy Robertson-Young, Jeff Parker, Joanne VanAlphen, Uly and Sherril Will, Brad Easter, Chris Timmermans, Roxanne Hedberg, George Paisiovich, Larry Landry, Jim Gray, Ric Aarssen and Carolyn Walker. So, to my core campaign team, the dozens of volunteers and the thousands of PC supporters who voted for me, I say thank you.

I was born in a wonderful, loving, nurturing and respectful family where my parents, Jeanne and Fred Nicholls, raised me as an only child. I would have had an

older brother, but the Lord had other plans for him. Today I'm hopeful, as they look down from heaven, that they're proud of their son and little brother.

Today is a special day for me as well, as it is a celebration of my mother's birthday—101 years old. But sadly, she left us at a very young age. Happy birthday, Mom.

For you history buffs, I believe politics might even be hereditary, as my great-grandfather, Frederick George Rumball, was the mayor of London during Queen Victoria's reign in 1901. Hence, I was named after him: Frederick Rumball Nicholls. Maybe great-granddaddy was giving me a reputation to live up to.

Chatham-Kent-Essex is my riding, and it's the most southwesterly held PC riding in the province. Not only does it include Chatham proper, but it also encompasses the towns of Leamington, Wheatley, Tilbury, Merlin, Blenheim, Ridgetown, Highgate and many other smaller communities in between—a very rural riding.

Agriculture is obviously a major focal point in my riding. It supports a variety of agricultural crops for fresh markets and processing. Leamington is home to the largest concentration of greenhouses in North America. Cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers and flowers make up the majority of the greenhouse crops, with well over 1,600 acres under cover. This, by the way, represents over 80% of the total greenhouse operations in Ontario.

Chatham-Kent, on the other hand, has been hit very hard by the automotive industry. Where have they all gone? I think about Eaton Yale, Motor Wheel, Canadian Fram, even Libby's, Campbell Soup, Hunt-Wesson and, most recently, Navistar. Yes, job creation and making it easier for businesses to invest and stay is priority one for me.

As a proud member of the Legislative Assembly, I will continue to work in the best interests of Ontario families, holding true to the values and principles that govern democracy—job creation, rein in government spending and provide relief for Ontario families.

By the way, did you know that Chatham is also the home of Canada's only Major League Baseball Hall of Fame inductee, Ferguson Jenkins? Other notables include Doug Melvin, general manager of the Milwaukee Brewers; Shae-Lynn Bourne, gold medal winner of the 2003 world ice skating championships; and in the music world, Ian and Sylvia Tyson and Michelle Wright. Just think: Jenkins, Melvin, Bourne, the Tysons, Wright and now Nicholls.

Faith, integrity, honesty, loyalty, passion and a sense of humour are key ingredients to who I am. I believe in a can-do versus a can't-do attitude. I've been told that I'm so optimistic that I would go after Moby Dick in a rowboat and bring along the tartar sauce.

I've always had a heart for serving people and have done so over the past 25 years as an entrepreneur, where my public-speaking skills and training were best utilized.

And speaking of heart, I have created an acronym: HEART. The H stands for honesty. I was raised with the adage that honesty is the best policy. I practise that every

day in life. Whether in our personal lives or in our professional lives, I believe it's always best to be straight up with people. It's always easier to remember the truth. It also means being honest with oneself as well. Don't look at life through rose-coloured glasses.

The E in HEART stands for effort. There's a management saying that if you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you always got. Mind you, there are those who think that things will be different if you continue to do what you've always done. That's not progress; that's insanity.

Collectively, we all need to remember who sent us here to Queen's Park, and from the voters' perspective, we always need to be putting forth our best effort on behalf of our constituents.

The A in HEART stands for attitude. It's been said that your attitude will determine your altitude of success. I work hard at being a positive person, and when I feel my attitude is slipping, I need to give myself an attitude adjustment: PMA, positive mental attitude. And you know what? If we all practise positive mental attitude, we'll get more enjoyment in life and it's been proven that it will add years to our life.

The R in HEART stands for responsibility. I cannot use the word "responsible" without adding yet another word: "accountable." In the end I know to whom I'm accountable and will be held accountable, but we are also accountable and must act in a responsible manner to those who elected us into office. To thine own self be true.

And the T in HEART stands for teamwork. I have often told people that we must learn to get along and play well in the sandbox of life. If we can share common goals and work towards those means, life will be much less complicated. I also believe that a good idea doesn't care who owns it, so let's be team players. Championship teams recognize that in order to be successful, the team's success is dependent upon the collective skill sets of everyone moving in the same direction.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I have taken the liberty of re-working a famous quote taken from the inaugural speech of JFK, back in 1961. I say: Ask not what this government can do for you, but ask what can we, as the three provincial parties working collectively for the betterment of hard-working Ontario families, do together.

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier in my inaugural speech that it would be different. It's my wish that the members not only found it different and informative but will take the latter portion of my address to heart.

I wish to thank all who have provided guidance, support and wisdom in my journey to become the MPP for Chatham-Kent-Essex, now and for years to come. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex on his election. We both came at the same time and we share a few other things: We both have blue on our signs,

although he had a bit more, but we both had blue on our signs; we share that. We both have politicians in our background, and both our ridings have faced hard times.

I particularly like what he said about working together and staying optimistic, because that's something that all of the new members who came in—I think we all believe that and I think we all are going to try and bring that to this new Parliament. It's a part of the parliamentary process to have division, but out of division should come better ideas, and I think that you've expressed that very well, that we have to work together to bring those better ideas, like—and I have to have one political hit in here—we're working together to take the HST off home heating.

Your optimism and the way you voice it really shines through, and I hope I can be as optimistic as you are right now in the future. I hope that you remain that optimistic as you represent your riding and as I represent mine. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm pleased to hear the throne speech debate that we just heard. It was not necessarily on the bill, but we're very flexible in afternoon sittings here, so I certainly commend that. It was a highly interesting speech. I would say that Dale Carnegie would not have been not applauding; Dale Carnegie would have been mighty happy. Ted Sorensen's son might not be as happy with the change of the quote, but there we are.

1650

I know, since there's a matter of co-operation here, that the member is going to be supporting the bill which brings in the southwestern Ontario development fund. Now, I've heard a couple of people in the Conservative caucus who have said they're opposed to it, so I was going to place a call to Senator Bob Runciman, who landed in what we would call political heaven, that being the red chamber in Ottawa, where one never has to be re-elected but simply adhere to the pledge given to the Prime Minister when one gets appointed to that august body.

I know Senator Runciman would have been in favour of this; his successor, Mr. Clark, the member for that riding, would be in favour. So I'm looking for support because I've heard how much co-operation we're going to have as a result.

I agree with the member when he says that this House would work well together if people didn't keep fighting—I'm kind of paraphrasing—the last election campaign but instead decided to look at all legislation in a very objective way.

I watch with great amusement question period, petitions and members' statements, because it reminds me all the time of the Canadian Tire commercial. The Conservatives want us to spend like Santa and save like Scrooge, because on the one hand they are demanding that we save money constantly; on the other hand, they get up and they want to spend more. So spend like Santa, save like Scrooge: Canadian Tire Conservative Party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Comments and questions?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's my pleasure to comment on the address by my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex, but first I'm just going to make a quick comment on the Minister of the Environment. We keep hearing that spend thing, the save thing. Look, spending in this province is at an all-time high. It's about time the people on the other side of the aisle understood that it's about managing your money, not how much you have. And that applies to everybody and should apply to this government.

But I want to go back to my colleague. I'm so proud of not only Rick Nicholls but the other 14 people who have never sat in this chamber before, of course, along with Laurie Scott, who was elected after a brief absence from this chamber.

This is the greatest crop of new members we've seen in a long time in this House. I love the attitude that I hear from my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex, a positive attitude regardless of what is going on. I hope that—I know he will, because this is a positive man. I know that politics can sometimes breed a bit of cynicism, particularly when you're dealing with a government such as this, that talks about cooperation and working together, but then everything that they do is counter to that. They turn their noses at the offers from the opposition for good suggestions about making this province operate more efficiently and better and bringing relief to the beleaguered taxpayer, such as my friends from the NDP—Mr. Mantha's bill about taking the provincial portion of the HST off home heating. Those things matter. But they just dismissed it.

But I say to my friend from Chatham–Kent–Essex, God bless you for coming here. His mother would be 101 today. My parents today would be married 65 years; they're both long gone. But we share an important day. Glad to have you here as a friend and colleague. All the best to you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Congratulations to the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex and welcome to this chamber. In fact, while I'm at it, welcome to all the new members and to the returning members, for that reason, as well.

We've heard a number of maiden speeches this afternoon and, to correct the member from St. Catharines, they really don't have to be that specific. There's been a long-standing tradition in this House that maiden speeches are just that, a chance to introduce yourself to the House and a chance to thank the folk in your riding and to speak to them, because they're the ones that sent you here.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank some very hard-working individuals that never get thanked much, and that's our clerks. My goodness, and particularly in a minority government, I think we owe them a debt of gratitude. They're working harder than they've ever

worked since we've been here. So thank you to our clerks.

And yes, I want to thank the translators and Hansard. These are folk who work behind the scenes. They don't get the camera turned on them too often, but they do incredible work. And for that matter, the illustrious member who is sitting in the throne, we want to thank him. He's acting judiciously.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What about the Sergeant?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes, and the Sergeant too, my benchmate points out—the Sergeant too. Let's hear it for our Sergeant. He keeps us all safe.

As for the bill itself, this home renovation—a couple of real problems. I won't probably get a chance to speak to this. Yes, we're tending to support this in the New Democrats because an inch is better than nothing. Our seniors deserve a whole lot more than an inch, of course, and this doesn't afford them much more than that. For one thing, the HST plus MPAC's reassessment of their house will claw back any benefit that they've got from this bill. But it sounds good; it is an inch, so be it. We support it. It's sad, though, that this is as good as it gets.

Anyway, thank you all. Congratulations on getting back here, and to all a good night.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The member for Chatham–Kent–Essex has a two-minute response.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the member from Timiskaming–Timmins, the Minister of the Environment and also the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for their comments. I truly do appreciate it.

You know, I'm a firm believer in that attitude will in fact determine altitude of success. And you know what? It's not what happens to us in life that really matters; it's what we do with what happens to us in life. That, my friend, is what truly matters. That's what really matters at the end. I mean, we can go back and forth in this House, which is full of history, and we may differ politically on some of our points, but hopefully, at the end, I hope and trust and pray that we'll be able to collectively work together for the betterment of all who have in fact put us in our chairs this particular day.

It was obvious to me that my riding recognized the true values and principles that I stand for, and hence, also realized what a strong PC leadership can bring to our particular riding. So again, to my riding: I'm eternally grateful for that.

I would also like to thank the member from—I'm not sure where—

Mr. John O'Toole: Parkdale–High Park.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Parkdale–High Park; forgive me. Thank you for your comments as well. Forgive me; I'm a rookie. But thank you.

Mr. Speaker, again, thank you for the opportunity to speak in this illustrious Legislature. It's an honour and a privilege. I am truly humbled by the opportunity to serve not only my own caucus and the other two parties but,

more importantly, the constituents of Chatham–Kent–Essex. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Member, you've been recognized.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I didn't notice I was recognized yet.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to engage in further debate on the government proposal for the seniors' tax credit. Of course, when we're talking about the seniors' tax credit, there's no one here in this House who would suggest that we don't need to take care of our seniors. Seniors are vulnerable for many reasons: Economically they live off a fixed income; their employability, obviously, is reduced; they rely on their savings; and their health—as one ages, of course, health becomes more and more of an issue. That is a real issue; that's a real concern. That's something that no one in this House would disagree with. All of us are committed to caring for our seniors, recognizing their vulnerability.

So there's no question that we should support an initiative that proposes to take care of our seniors. But when we look at this bill, a number of questions are posed. What is the goal of this bill? The goal of this bill, in the wording of the language, is that we want to care for our seniors, we want to take steps to give them a break and make life easier for our seniors. The purported goal is to make life easier for seniors: “Let's keep them in their homes where they want to be and where it's most economically advantageous for them to be.”

But if the goal truly is assisting our seniors, giving them a break and making life easier for our seniors, then why limit this tax credit to mobility? I understand that we are in difficult times and we have limited resources, so the tax credit being applied to \$10,000 as a cap—I can see some logic in perhaps capping. But why is the limitation on mobility items only?

If you look at seniors, their concerns, their troubles, are varied.

1700

There are many concerns they face. They face health concerns; they face transportation concerns. These concerns are not limited to home mobility. To keep seniors in their home, we also have to keep them healthy in their home. If they require electricity to operate life-saving equipment, then savings on electricity would keep them in their home. If to stay in their home they need to go and get groceries, travel to doctors, travel to other areas, then we need to assist them in accessing transportation—maybe a tax credit that applies to transit, that applies to their ability to get around their neighbourhood, their constituency, their area.

If our goal truly is to assist seniors, then this bill is far too narrow. The scope of this bill does not truly encompass all the concerns of seniors. So I urge my colleagues—I urge the members opposite—to consider expanding the catchment, expanding what this bill truly covers, so that we can give more comprehensive assistance to seniors, true assistance to seniors.

By analogy, if we look at the seniors' tax credit and all the requirements—you have to be 65 years of age; it applies to mobility items such as grab bars, ramps and lifts making the home more accessible—and compare that to the tax credit proposed for corporations, the tax credit proposed for corporations has no strings attached. We want to give corporations an additional tax credit without any requirements, any stipulations, any restrictions.

Why is it that we put so many restrictions on our seniors—limit their ability to access this tax credit by limiting the sphere of what they can rely on in terms of only mobility equipment in the home—but we place no restrictions on corporations? I ask my colleagues in this House to consider the lack of fairness. Why is it that corporations are given a blank cheque but our seniors aren't? I urge the government members opposite to consider imposing a limitation on corporations and taking away the limitation or restriction on our seniors.

More carefully and more clearly, I propose that the corporate tax break be based on whether or not a corporation employs someone in Ontario, whether or not they invest in infrastructure in Ontario, whether they invest in machinery or factories or equipment to ensure that there are jobs here where we live in Ontario, and with our seniors, we loosen those restrictions. Expand the tax credit to allow for a tax credit on transportation, whether it's getting a transit pass, whether it's travelling in their riding by means of taxi or their own vehicle; expand it to include diet—nutrition. It's important for our seniors to eat healthy. Let's allow them a tax credit on purchasing healthy food. Let's allow a tax credit that expands to apply to other areas including medical equipment. If seniors need to purchase equipment of a medical nature that may not be mobility-related to keep them in their home, let's expand the tax credit to assist those as well.

Times are certainly difficult, and when we look at our budget, we have to look at it in terms that if we invest somewhere, there may be a requirement to cut somewhere else. Let's not cut when it comes to seniors; let's invest more in our seniors. Let's cut where we can ensure jobs. Let's cut where it comes to the true issue in Ontario, which is creating more jobs. Let's link our corporate tax breaks to creating more jobs here in Ontario, to creating more infrastructure for jobs, to ensuring that our workplace employees are trained, and give more incentives to grow the economy here in Ontario—and real incentive, not just the hope of an increased economy based on a tax credit that has no strings attached to it.

For this reason, when we look at the seniors' tax credit, I urge all the members in this House to really take a look at what we want to accomplish. If we truly want to help our seniors, then let's make this a bill that truly helps our seniors and that's not limited to mobility concerns.

The other issue that comes to mind, and it's been raised a number of times in this House, is: Who can truly access this tax credit? It's true that there's not a limitation, that one doesn't have to spend the entire \$10,000,

but one does have to spend some money. This tax credit only applies if a senior can spend money. Now, if a senior can only spend or afford \$100 for home improvements, the tax credit has a very minimal impact on their life. It's not a truly revolutionary effect; it's a very limited effect. If we want to help our seniors, we need more than just this type of incentive, where you spend money and you get a savings. We need something that's more comprehensive, something that truly assists those who are vulnerable in our society.

The other issue in terms of, again, looking at the scope of this bill: In Ontario, we know we are going through very difficult times. Economically, there are difficulties facing all Ontarians. If they face all Ontarians, seniors will be the most hard-hit. With the cost of living rising, with the cost of living increasing beyond that of the means of subsisting in society, it becomes more important—it becomes essential—that we look at reducing that cost of living. Seniors are, again, most hard-hit, being on fixed incomes and having limited employment. So if our goal is to assist seniors, let's look at making life more affordable for seniors and what we can do to do that.

That's why the proposal to remove the HST from home heating really hits home when it comes to assisting seniors. It's a guaranteed way of reducing some of that cost of living. I urge my colleagues in this House to look at more innovative ways that we can assist our seniors in reducing that cost of living. That's really the heart of the matter. That's really the core of the issue. We need to make life more affordable so that our seniors can exist in dignity, can retire and enjoy a lifelong commitment or service to community, and then, in retirement, enjoy what they rightfully deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You look quite esteemed in that chair.

I want to really commend my friend from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, because I think he has become one of the more articulate and thoughtful voices in this House very quickly.

Hon. James J. Bradley: He'll be using this in his pamphlet—watch out.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: He probably will be.

And I love cars, Mr. Speaker. I just had to give up my lease on my little Miata, so I'm kind of heartbroken. It was a good, modest, Liberal car.

But I do want to say something, because there is this sort of standard that everything we do, and that sometimes the opposition holds us to, which is a ridiculous standard—and I think I'm hearing from my friend that he is a more sophisticated critic than that. It's easy to say that everything we're doing is not enough, because, I mean, really, tell me the one thing that any government can do that solves all problems. There are no silver bullets or panaceas.

But I actually think, and one of the reasons I'm very excited about this—and I spend a lot of time with my

friend Harpreet out in Brampton. I represent a community with large Afghani, Somali and Tamil communities where young families, young people who are good income earners, pay and take care of their parents. In the Tamil community, one of my staff who's the youngest son will be expected to have his parents live with him and be taken care of by him and his wife.

If you can afford to buy a BMW or a Miata—and I don't apologize for either—you can afford \$10,000 to make your bathroom. In a lot of farm communities—because I grew up and spent a lot of my time in Alexandria, quite frankly, and a lot of farmhouses, because a lot of my cousins are farmers in Prince Edward county—that is not beyond their means. This is very meaningful.

My mother is just relocating to Toronto. We just rented an apartment. It's going to cost Rick and I probably about \$20,000 to retrofit that apartment. I don't need the \$15,000, but it's going to go to my mom because she can use that. My mother lives on about \$1,200 a year. My father was a small business person and did not have pensions—died at 63 of prostate cancer. But we live in families. I'm always surprised when I hear Conservatives saying, "Well, we have poor people." Like, there aren't four or five.

In my constituency, with two million people of Chinese and Indo cultural backgrounds, this is very common, and I think this is a meaningful tax credit.

1710

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: In my community, there are many seniors who have had to go back into the workforce. So if you go into your local Walmart, you go to Tim Hortons or you go to McDonald's, you will see people over the age of 65 who have actually had to go back to work in my community.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The mayor of Mississauga is 90 years old.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes, 90 years old, that's right; and she can probably afford to do a \$10,000 retrofit.

But in my community there have been tens of thousands of jobs lost. We have companies like Atlas Steel, formerly Atlas Specialty Steels, and then I think it had another name after that—that went out of business maybe seven or eight years ago. The workers at that factory thought they had a pension, and two or three years into the plant closures found out that they lost 30% of their pensions. They lost 30% of their benefits. Their pensions were not fully funded, which is a whole other issue that we really need to be dealing with here in this province.

Those kinds of seniors in my community don't have \$10,000. They thought they were going to have a \$1,500-a-month pension or a \$2,000-a-month pension and they were going to get their CPP and their old-age to go along with that. Well, guess what? They don't have it now. Maybe they get \$1,000 a month.

There are a lot of seniors in my community that could never possibly take advantage of a tax credit because of

the fact that they've lost their jobs and their pensions were not fully funded.

As we've said, the bill is admirable, but we think that we need to go further for all seniors.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate that only 10 minutes have been able to be allocated for this portion of the speech, because I know that the member, who has already directed a question from the opposition to the government on auto insurance, was wondering, as I was—and you will remember the years, because you're a strong New Democrat; the years when my good friend Rosario, the member for Trinity-Spadina, was advocating public auto insurance. With all of the problems that are alleged in public auto insurance, I was surprised that the number one promise of the New Democratic Party was not implemented. I know they like blaming Bob Rae as though he was the only person there. The others must have all been at a conference in Honey Harbour or something, because, I can tell you, my New Democratic Party friends always said that was going to happen. I know the member didn't get a chance to express his disappointment, but he probably is.

He would also know how difficult it is between offering suggestions in opposition—and we welcome them—and being in government, because I do recall that the government of Saskatchewan—you'll recall Premier Romanow—had to close 52 rural hospitals. That's not something that they did lightly. They didn't do it to be mean, they didn't do it because they wanted to, but they were confronted with the realities of public office.

Also, I wanted to recommend to him a book by Janice MacKinnon, the former finance minister of the province of Saskatchewan, called *Minding the Public Purse*, where she talks about the great dilemmas that governments happen to face. They didn't have to implement the social contract, ripping up all the contracts of the public service in their province, but they did have to rein in many of those expenditures.

So I wish the member would have had more time so he could have elaborated on those particular issues.

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I want to congratulate the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton. I had the opportunity to meet him last week, and I have been observing him as he has spoken in this House and began to make a contribution in representing his constituents. I want to congratulate him: I've personally been very impressed with the comments and statements he has made. Certainly his presentation today shows that he's carefully reflecting on the content of the bill and expressing his opinions as to how it can be improved. He has recognized, obviously, that there are people in this province who aren't going to have access to funding that is being provided.

This bill, despite the fact that it will obviously help some seniors in the province of Ontario, is certainly not

going to be of assistance to a great number. I know that when I look at my riding and I look at people I know, there has been a tremendous amount of hardship they have suffered in recent years. I would tell you that one area where they have certainly experienced the greatest hardship is seeing their hydro bill go up on an ongoing basis. Now we learn—and it's been confirmed by the Auditor General—that hydro rates are going to increase by some 8% a year for people throughout the province of Ontario.

This is an area where this government could have moved forward and addressed the hardships that are being felt, not just by seniors but by other people in the province of Ontario. In that way, they could have assisted all the individuals in this province who are really finding it more difficult to make ends meet on a daily basis.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton has a two-minute response.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, my colleague the member from Welland, the Minister of the Environment and the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for your responses. Whom do I begin with?

I can't resist talking a little bit about auto insurance, since it has been brought up in the replies. I wish the Minister of Finance was here for this response so I could direct some comments to him—I speak no ill about his presence or not. I'll direct it to the Minister of the Environment for raising the issue. Regardless of the car anyone drives in Ontario, I think the fact that Ontario has the highest auto insurance for all people of Ontario, despite the fact that we have the lowest accident rate, the lowest death rate, is shameful and—

Mr. Bob Delaney: Scandalous.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Scandalous—yes, that's a good word—problematic, outrageous. It's ridiculous, in fact. My colleague the member opposite will recall that in 2003 the Premier indicated a commitment to reducing insurance, that being one of his platform pieces to get elected. In fact, instead of reducing premiums, premiums have gone up year after year at an exorbitant rate.

Though there are difficulties, of course, when you are the government, there are also responsibilities, and the responsibility is taking care of the people of Ontario. If that requires some sacrifice and some hard work, then you have to live up to that. That's your obligation.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 2 this afternoon. I've listened intently to other speakers from all sides of the House as they describe a variety of opinions as to what they think Bill 2 is all about: why it's good, why it's bad, how it could be improved.

As I said yesterday, I'm getting a much different impression from listening to the newer members of the House, and certainly it's kind of refreshing to hear people bring forward opinions about a bill where they say, "Well, this bill seems to be okay, but it could be strength-

ened this way or strengthened that way." That, I think, sets the tone and sets the mood, perhaps, for the rest of the term of this government, where the people who have elected us from the three parties that have representatives here have sent us here to work together. When I hear speakers get up and say, "You know what? The bill is okay, but I think it could be better," that's actually the sort of thing I as an individual member want to hear.

1720

I'd like members to feel they can bring forward their constructive suggestions, and if we ever get the committees going, certainly those members will be able to experience the exchange that goes on at the committee level, where it's much more informal, where people are able to express themselves just like you were sitting across the table from somebody. That exchange gets much more inviting, and I think a lot more work gets done at the committee level than gets done in this House, unfortunately. I'll leave that to the new members to make their own minds up about that, but certainly that has been my impression.

I listened intently to the previous speaker, and that was the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. If I had to summarize his remarks, he wants to do something for the seniors in this province, and I think all parties do. I wouldn't cast aspersions on any one of the parties to think that they would want to do otherwise. I think he was saying that while this is good, there are other ways and there are other things that we should be exploring, and I would tend to agree with that opinion. I don't think anybody in this House would suggest that this will be the last thing that any government of Ontario does for seniors in this province. There will be things that we will have to do in the future; there will be things we will want to do in the future.

I think what we're being asked to do today is to comment on the bill that's before the House at this point in time and to bring forward suggestions that may make it a better bill or to bring forward suggestions that maybe could improve this bill as it stands before us today.

This bill is part of a menu of other things that seniors can avail themselves of in the province of Ontario. Some of those have been brought in in the past by previous governments, and I think they were well intentioned and I think they've served the seniors in this province well.

This one in particular, though, is very, very practical, and it's part of an overall strategy where we realize that seniors, given their druthers, would much rather stay in their own homes, if they possibly could, as they aged. I don't think that's rocket science. I think that's something that all of us from all parties would have heard at front doors around Ontario when we campaigned in the election. Anybody we've known in our own families that has had the misfortune to have to go into hospital generally can't wait until they can get out and they can get back in their own bed or they can get back to their own home again. I don't think there's anything we could possibly argue about as to where seniors would prefer to be.

What we have to do as a government is to find ways to allow that to happen. Often, it's not the health of the senior that precludes a return home; often, it's the physical condition of the home itself. It could be things like steps; it could be things like handrails that allow you to get into the bathtub—very practical things that, until you don't have them there, you don't miss. Until you've got a broken leg, you don't realize how many steps you've got in your house. Until you've got to get out of the car and up the steps into your house in the first place, if you've got something that prevents that mobility, all of a sudden you realize some of the blocks and some of the impediments that other people have had to deal with for a number of years.

What this tax credit is doing is saying to seniors, or the families of seniors, at that point in time when you're making that decision to allow somebody—rather than be forced to go into an institutional setting or forced to, in some cases, even stay in a medical setting, to facilitate the return of that individual to their house. We realize that times economically are tough out there. We can look around the world and see examples in Europe, we can see examples in our neighbour's jurisdiction to the south, where times are tough and people could use some assistance. I think what we're saying, as a government collectively, is: If you decide to make this choice, if this is something that is going to assist you to stay in your house, we as a government are prepared to assist in that regard.

As I said, this is part of a menu of a number of initiatives that are available to seniors in the province of Ontario. I don't think that this government can take credit for them all but it can take credit for certainly a good number of the more recent ones, and that is as the nature of us being in government for the past eight years. Some of those have been supported by the opposition parties; some haven't. But we've certainly seen enhancements to things like the energy and the property tax credit for those people who are seniors; we've seen personal income tax cuts throughout the province of Ontario. Some 90,000 Ontarians simply don't pay income tax anymore as a result of provincial tax reform. We've got a sales tax credit where every senior in the province of Ontario is eligible for a payment of, I think it's up to \$250, or somewhere between \$250 and \$300 a year, in addition to the existing GST tax credit that they already can avail themselves of.

The Ontario seniors homeowner's property tax credit is available as well. We're providing, I think, over \$1 billion over the next five years, and that's going to help over 600,000 seniors, and they're people who have the low to moderate to middle incomes and who own their own homes and want to continue to own their own homes and want to stay in those homes.

This tax credit augments existing assistance programs that are benefiting seniors and allowing them to stay in their own homes. This provides the hardware. This provides the handrails, this provides the doorknobs, this provides things that, as I said, until you reach that point

where you need them, you perhaps wouldn't think of them—things like even lowering kitchen cupboards, lowering kitchen counters so you can reach them. Until perhaps you're confined to a wheelchair, you don't realize that you don't have the same reach that you used to. If you've got problems with your grip, with your hands, for example, door locks that are easier to operate—they're expensive. They're more expensive than an ordinary door lock. What we're saying is that by availing yourself of the tax credit that's available in this plan, you'll be able to retrofit your home. Pull-out shelves from under counters—you'll find that you can't reach under the counter, that you have to pull out whatever is in the cupboard towards you.

It's all these things. I think we've all been injured at some point in the past; we've all been on crutches or we've had to wear a cast or we've had an eye patch. Something has happened to probably all of us in this House, where we've found ourselves in a situation where we didn't have the use of our facilities the way we had in the past, and we found that life simply wasn't the same, that things have to change and that ordinary, everyday things are harder to do.

Things like a slip in the bathroom, for example—one of the things that we hear as people age, one of the things we don't want to hear, is that a senior has fallen, because quite often that leads to other things and quite often it leads to much more serious things. If we're able to equip our homes in such a way that seniors don't have those falls or accidents in the first place, it simply allows for a much better health outcome.

We're also starting to see advances now in technology where you don't have to reach up for the light switch, where simply because you walk into the room, you get a motion-activated light switch that turns on the lighting for you.

These are all things that I think make the lifestyle that our seniors would like to enjoy much more accessible and available, but they have extra costs attached to them. Anything like that generally will cost more than an ordinary light switch or will cost more than ordinary things we would put in our homes.

This is a recognition that there are extra expenses but also an undertaking from the government that we understand and that we're prepared to help in that regard. So for up to a maximum of \$10,000 in a year, eligible expenses, you would be eligible for a \$1,500 tax receipt each year. That, to me, seems to be something that makes sense. It's claimed on your personal income tax form, in any event; it's not something that you have to go above and beyond to get.

While other members may think there is more that we can do—I tend to agree with them in that regard—on this date, I think this bill is worthy of support and would ask members to support it. Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to respond to the comments from the member from Oakville.

Quite honestly—and I think the member put it rightly—this bill doesn't go very far, it doesn't do very much, and quite honestly, it's probably not worth the weeks of debate that we've had here in this House on this bill. It just doesn't go very far at all.

You know, as I was travelling around in Prince Edward–Hastings and talking to the various people during the election campaign, the seniors in my community don't have \$10,000. The member talked a lot about handrails and he talked a lot about doorknobs, but you're going to have to buy a lot of handrails and a lot of doorknobs to equal \$10,000—unless they're getting the very expensive gold-plated ones. I'm not sure.

Interjection.

Mr. Todd Smith: Diamond studded perhaps. I'm not sure.

When I was speaking to members of Community Care for Seniors in Prince Edward county last week in my office in Belleville, we were talking about the fact that what the government really needs to do is invest more in those types of supports: those people that can go into people's homes and allow them to stay in their homes. I think that's where the government should be focused. It should be focused on saving money in health care by keeping people in their homes, by allowing them to stay in their homes and bring in the supports that they need in their homes.

1730

This doesn't do that. This is making someone spend \$10,000, and the seniors in Prince Edward–Hastings don't have \$10,000. They just don't have it. I mean, the member over there just talked about the fact that they're not even paying taxes. How do they expect to pay \$10,000 to put some handrails and a doorknob in their home? They just can't do it.

They need a break, and the break that we're offering them and the NDP are offering them is to give them the HST back. That money will go directly into making home improvements that they can actually afford. They can spend that money on getting the handrails and the doorknobs and the ramps that they need for their homes. That's just a better way to do it.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to take a moment on the comments from the member from Prince Edward–Hastings and from the member for Oakville.

I would agree with the member from Prince Edward–Hastings that this bill doesn't go nearly, nearly far enough.

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's dangerous. You're agreeing with the Tories.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yeah, well, we share a little bit of a colour on a sign.

But the one thing—I was encouraged by the member from Oakville when he said that this is the kind of thing that we should discuss in committee. As a new member, I am eagerly awaiting these fabled committees, because I am told that's where things really get done.

This bill doesn't go nearly far enough, because the goal is to keep seniors in their homes. So maybe in the committees we could—and I heard from the member from the government side that he's looking forward also to working in committees to look at this bill clause by clause. Perhaps there are things we can do in this bill without it costing a lot more money, that make it a lot more accessible to a lot more seniors, because at the end of the day, that will save health care dollars. We're all trying to save health care dollars, and we're all trying to keep seniors in their homes.

So perhaps we can work with this bill within these committees—I've heard of them; I haven't quite figured out how they work. I've kind of figured out how the House works, but the committees, I don't know—never seen one.

So when we get this set up, maybe we can actually work together and make this bill as effective as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Well, I say to the member, there was a chance yesterday, when the House leader put forward a proposal, to approve it, but you didn't, and I accept that. I accept that. I thought it was a very fair proposal that was put forward, but you disagree, and I think my friend from Trinity–Spadina, in his heart of hearts, probably agrees that it was reasonable. But that's a little different.

I want to correct a misinterpretation. The member for Prince Edward–Lennox—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Hastings.

Hon. James J. Bradley: —Hastings, I know would not mislead the House at all. But in his best radio voice—somebody said the Rush Limbaugh voice; that's not his voice at all—he suggested that someone has to spend \$10,000. Of course, that is totally, totally inaccurate. I know the member was probably not aware of that, but that is inaccurate information.

We are, in fact, investing millions and millions of dollars in home care. I think there's consensus developing—and I'm glad to see that, because in politics you don't often see that—that it is better to have people, if at all possible, aging at home as opposed to going into an institutional setting.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Or right here.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Or, as the member for Pembroke—Barry's Bay—says, here in this House.

But it is far superior to do that, and I think there's a consensus developing around that. That's why our government has already poured millions of dollars into that kind of care and has committed millions more to it. I think that's an appropriate method in which to move, and I see a consensus developing. I know the former Minister of Health, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, would agree with that as well.

So there's an opportunity now for the doctor to come back and visit frail, elderly people in their homes, for nurses to do so, for home care to be provided. This is

simply in addition to all of those services this government wishes to provide.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: One of the biggest issues I see in health care, especially with seniors, is worrying about paying their bills. We introduced a different thing: the HST off home heating. This is a cold climate in Ontario. We must look at that before this scheme because this scheme only targets a small part of our population.

I'm fortunate that my parents are in their mid-80s, they live in their own home and they've done well in their lives. But my mother-in-law is going to be 90 years old on her next birthday, and she's not about to go and spend \$10,000, because she doesn't know how long she has. So this program—besides the \$10,000 and you give her \$1,500 back, she pays \$1,300 in HST. I called our building inspector, and there is a \$200 permit involved too, so where are the savings here? It's going to cost her money to do this thing.

We have to look at programs that are going to save people money. That's what I think we should do. People are getting tired of high energy rates, they're getting tired of the taxes that have been imposed on them in the last few years and they're getting tired, sir, of your government doing this shell game which gives nobody anything. We have a deficit, a terrible debt in this province, and people want to see us being more responsible to those things rather than these schemes that don't do anything for our seniors.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Before the member responds for two minutes, I'd just like to remind members that when they leave and enter this chamber, they should acknowledge the Chair. A lot of members are not doing that. Thank you.

Two-minute response?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise and acknowledge the remarks of the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, Timiskaming–Cochrane, the Minister of the Environment and, lastly, the member from Perth–Wellington.

I too, as a member of this House, would really like to see the committees in place. The House leader put forward, as I understand, a motion in the House. I was here, and members had the opportunity to either support it or to turn it down. Certainly, I think on this side of the House, our members were ready to support the formation of the committees and move on. The noes I heard—

Interjection.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: The noes I heard came from the other side of the House, and apparently they're still coming from the other side of the House. So I think we've settled that question: We're prepared to move to committee; the opposition parties seem to have some issues with that. Perhaps they will get sorted out.

Now, I didn't hear from any of the remarks, except from the Minister of the Environment, whether the people who were speaking were actually in favour of that. Because the one thing about this place is that after

all the talking is done, a vote is held. That's your opportunity to stand up and say, "Yes, I agree with that," or "No, I'm not going to support that." It sounded, from what I was hearing from the Conservative side, like they're not in support of this, that it's something that they won't be supporting and that they don't agree that seniors should get the assistance that they need. Now, I think that is wrong; I hope I've been clear about that. I was getting a much better message from the third party; they seemed to be saying that we should be supporting this and we should be supporting more, perhaps, and that's something that I've said in the past that I agree with.

But at some point the rubber has to hit the road on this, and you're either in favour of it or you're opposed to it; you're either flapping your lips about it or you're going to do something about it. It seems to me that the best way you could help the seniors out in this particular circumstance is to support this and to live to fight another day on the other stuff. So I'd ask all members for their support again, Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I'm privileged and honoured to be able to address you today in this, my maiden speech in this august chamber. Like most of the members who have preceded me and those who continue to be MPPs, I chose to contest the recent election because I had the firm belief that this Legislature could do more to ensure that every Ontarian enjoyed a full and comprehensive range of government services while enjoying the greatest possible range of personal freedoms.

As a teacher, I watched with growing alarm as graduating students from my high school, Campbellford District High School, found it increasingly difficult to cope with the rising cost of tuition, on the one hand, and decreasing job prospects on the other.

1740

To my former colleagues, the teachers and administration at Campbellford District High School, I want to thank you for the inspiration you have always given me as you go about the important work of educating and inspiring the eager young minds entrusted to your care. I'm immensely proud to have been a teacher for the past 13 years, and I owe a great debt to my colleagues and students with whom I have worked.

I hope you will all recognize in my election success the opportunity we all have to participate in the democratic process and to ensure that our voices are heard. I intend to be an ardent champion for our schools, and I'll fight to ensure that they have all the resources they need to provide the best educational experience for our students. Their future and the future of this province depends on it.

I'm truly humbled to walk in the footprints of those who have shaped this great province, whose counsel has created a province where the bounty of the land has been placed in harness with the indomitable spirit of its people. The result has been a jurisdiction which is the envy of virtually all the world.

Among those who have sat in this hallowed chamber was my great-grandfather, who was elected to represent the riding of York East. John Richardson served from 1894 to 1904. Prior to his service to this Legislature, he served his community as the reeve of Scarborough township.

As a farmer myself, I also have that in common with John Richardson. One hundred years ago, agriculture was the backbone of the Ontario economy, and it's still the single biggest contributor to our gross domestic product, something I wish more Ontarians knew.

In a speech he gave on February 24, 1897, John Richardson "expressed the satisfaction it gave him to represent, in the Legislature, this, the most progressive and intelligent county in this most progressive province of Canada." To the chagrin of my colleagues, I can only echo his proud comments, particularly the part about representing the most intelligent county.

Mr. Speaker, I'm truly excited at the opportunity to work with members from all three parties, as well as my federal counterpart, MP Rick Norlock; the new county warden, Gil Brocanier; the mayors; councillors; and board trustees representing constituencies within the beautiful and vibrant riding of Northumberland-Quinte West. I have complete faith that, together, we can build a riding that is even more prosperous, more compassionate and more committed to finding solutions to all the problems that vex our constituents.

I believe the political system does work, and my commitment to all the constituents of Northumberland-Quinte West is that I will work tirelessly to give them thoughtful, considerate and passionate representation here at Queen's Park.

There are four topics which I believe warrant critical and urgent attention. The first is the protection and conservation of clean water supplies, especially in the GTA but also across this great province. For years, many experts have predicted that water will become the most valuable resource of the 21st century. Source water protection should not be an esoteric concept; instead, it should be the cornerstone for all future planning and development decisions made by the province and the municipalities.

I believe the Planning Act should be updated to place the protection of surface and subsurface water as the most important consideration when new developments are proposed. Just because Ontario is blessed with 7% of all the clean water on this planet does not mean we can afford to take this resource for granted.

Some in this chamber will recall the heated debates about the protection of the Oak Ridges moraine, started by a PC member in 1999, and how those debates ultimately resulted in the then Progressive Conservative government enacting legislation that protected that essential source of water. Ninety-three per cent of the land mass of the moraine, a geological feature that stretches 160 kilometres in width and up to 30 kilometres in breadth, was placed off-limits to development. There are over 400 other moraines in Ontario, and the past eight years have

seen no progress in identifying and protecting other moraines and aquifers.

Protecting ground water is an issue this needs to be handled properly the first time. There is no second chance once an aquifer is drained, covered up or contaminated. I call on all members to join me in demanding the highest possible protection for surface and subsurface water in this province as a reality of our obligations to the residents of Ontario today and as our legacy for generations of Ontarians to come. This is not a theoretical concept, Mr. Speaker. One need only look at the crisis at Attawapiskat to realize the importance of protecting the water supply in this province.

The second of my key issues is actually related to my first. While the current government has incurred a massive debt promoting the use of wind and solar technology, it is neglecting energy resources which, ironically, had already been proven by the time my great-grandfather served in this Legislature over 100 years ago. I'm speaking, of course, of water power.

First used to directly provide energy used in lumber and grist mills all across this province, hydroelectric power has, for the past century, been supplying the low-cost, pollution-free, baseload power that allowed Ontario to attract energy-intensive industries which became the backbone of our economy. Low-cost power was the reason Ontario saw the meteoric employment growth of the 20th century.

My great-grandfather would have seen the impact of the construction of the first hydroelectric facility in Ontario in Niagara Falls. How convinced he must have been that having access to low-cost, reliable, clean power would permit development of Ontario's resources in a fashion that would guarantee that future generations of Ontarians would never lack jobs and would always be on the cutting edge of industrial development. What a shock it would be to him to see another Liberal government destroy that stable, cost-effective energy system and to see it systematically devastate the industrial core of our economy with their misguided and oppressive energy pricing policies.

Water power has had to take a backseat to other, more trendy forms of power generation under the current government. All of us in rural Ontario have seen the backlash to industrial wind farms and, at least in one case in my riding, to a solar farm that was sited without consideration for the impact on surrounding properties.

It seems to me that the solution to creating energy self-sufficiency for almost all regions of this province, starting with the riding of Northumberland-Quinte West, is to re-harness the same sort of water power opportunities which provided energy and jobs across Ontario 100 years ago.

I have been working with Paul Norris, the president of the Ontario Waterpower Association. With Paul's help, we have determined that the potential opportunities in Northumberland-Quinte West alone are staggering. We currently boast 14 water power stations producing 71 megawatts, but there are another 45 sites with the potential to add another 25 megawatts. Combined, that would

mean more power than is consumed by all the homes in my riding. Better yet, 36 of those 45 sites were already developed as mill sites, and many of those retain the historical mill rights which would dramatically accelerate the planning and environmental assessment process.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that within one year, if the government really cared about green energy, we could see the development of literally dozens of new hydro power projects in my riding and up to 2,000 sites province-wide, which would provide lower-cost power from facilities that would last four to five times longer than wind and solar plants.

I'm sure the new Minister of Energy would welcome the addition of vast new supplies of clean, renewable energy, free from the sort of public controversy which seems to be attached to wind and solar plants. It would really help the government meet their green energy goals while recognizing the inherent advantages of water power over other forms of energy generation. I look forward to working with the minister to ensure that a proactive and timely consideration is given to the hydro-electric potential in my riding.

1750

Power generation should not come at the expense of the environment when there are other options that can actually improve the environment. Building new hydro-electric facilities won't just create new power generation in the riding; it will actually have a significant impact on the third area in which I hope to be able to make a significant difference in my riding, namely, tourism.

Northumberland–Quinte West is already blessed with an extraordinary array of natural features, artistic venues, recreational facilities and impressive feats of architecture and engineering, all of which draw tens of thousands of tourists to the riding every year. Whether it's boating on the most popular inland waterway in North America, the Trent-Severn waterway, visiting lovely Presqu'île park on the shores of Lake Ontario, taking in a play at the Capitol theatre in Port Hope, visiting the impressive RCAF museum in Trenton, or admiring the historic buildings, such as Victoria Hall in Cobourg, that form the core of so many of our towns and villages, Northumberland–Quinte West really does have something for everyone.

As diverse and interesting as our riding's tourism offerings are, there is always demand for new recreational opportunities. I'd like to see the ponds that would be formed upstream from every one of those new hydro-electric facilities stocked with fish and bordered with lovely parkettes that would be a perfect venue for a family picnic. I can see any number of new restaurants, tea houses and bed and breakfasts springing up on the scenic shores of these expanded watercourses.

Perhaps the most unique new tourist draw I would like to see developed in my riding would be the covered bridges. These kissing bridges, as they're called, are huge tourist magnets in the Maritimes and the New England states, but there's only one left in all of Ontario, and it's located in Woolwich township, in the fine riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, a riding served with distinction by

my friend and colleague Mike Harris. That bridge is still standing 130 years after it was built, and drawing visitors from around the world.

With many bridges in the riding in need of renovation, this would seem the perfect time to implement such an innovative development, which would serve as a perfect complement to our beautiful natural surroundings while creating one more reason for tourists to visit the great riding of Northumberland–Quinte West.

The fourth issue, Mr. Speaker, could arguably be the most important matter I and the other MPPs will have to wrestle with during this Parliament. My riding, like all the other ridings in Ontario, has been beset by job losses and economic challenges. For over 130 years, Ontario has been the province that led Confederation on a path to almost continuous growth. But sadly, our once mighty province has become a have-not province that collects welfare from the federal government. I am ashamed, Mr. Speaker, that this is the financial legacy of the last eight years of the government in this province.

The proposals I've outlined in this speech would go a long way to restoring full employment to Northumberland–Quinte West. The most recent analysis of water power job creation would suggest that the supply chain for the construction of those 45 sites would bring 525 well-paying jobs to the riding. The tourism components would further stimulate employment in the construction and service industries.

But we can't stop there, of course, and if we ever want to return to the employment levels that Ontario enjoyed under the last PC government, we need to ensure that taxation rates and WSIB rates are frozen or reduced, and all unnecessary government regulations and red tape are eliminated.

Clearly, each of these four issues demands the keen attention of government, and I am committed to working with all members in this Legislature to see that together we harness the resources at our disposal to make sure that clean water, abundant clean energy, increased tourism and significant new job creation are the legacy of our term of office, no matter how long or how short that may be.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't offer my sincerest thanks to those whose hard work, dedication and commitment resulted in my recent election success. My campaign manager, Tina Stephens, ensured that the volunteers were put to best use, the finances were carefully stewarded and, most importantly, the candidate was in the right place at the right time throughout the campaign. Thank you, Tina, for your capable leadership and your ongoing assistance.

Similar thanks go out to my campaign co-chair and sister, Christine Ouellette, who ensured that our 16-hour work days always had someone at the tiller guiding the ship. I can't thank you enough for your time and dedication.

Mary Anne Irwin, our tireless riding association president, provided exceptional advice to the campaign team. I have often referred to Mary Anne as my political mother. Her generosity in sharing decades of experience,

knowledge and wisdom has definitely shaped the approach I took to seeking this office. To you, Mary Anne, my deepest and most sincere gratitude. You were the cornerstone of my victory.

If anyone thinks politics is a transient business, I must pay particular tribute to Adrian Langhorne who, with only a short break, has been the riding CFO since 1952.

Karl Bernhardt, our legal adviser, has another lengthy and storied history of service to the riding association. His counsel on matters legal and otherwise was indispensable to me, and I cannot thank Karl enough for all the time he spent and for his unswerving support.

Getting the funding required to run election campaigns is not an easy task. Bob Dodd and Don Rogers combined together to ensure that we had the funds to run a very successful campaign and I want to extend to both my dearest thanks.

Betty Finnie-Hunt, Dave White and Kim Colton were pivotal in marshalling resources in their respective territories, and without their hard work and leadership, there is quite simply no way we would have been able to effectively reach every corner of the riding.

Troy Stephens did an exceptional job handling almost 3,000 sign requests, setting a new record in our riding. On election day, Grant Dingwall, our get-out-the-vote chair, made sure that thousands of voters who had professed their support got to the polls in a timely fashion.

I cannot possibly name all the volunteers who have given so much of their time prior to election day or all

the financial supporters. To all of you: You have my sincerest gratitude and my commitment that I will work always to justify that support.

I started my discourse this afternoon by talking about an historic family connection to provincial politics; it is only fitting that I close by offering comments on family connections in the present. Of course, I have to reserve my most sincere thanks to my loving wife and best friend, Rebecca; my dear children Linda and Samantha, who give me the greatest inspiration and purpose; my generous and loving parents, Raymond and Susan; my sister Christine Ouellette and her husband, John; my sister Kimberly and her husband, Tim Brough; my brother Bradley and his wife, Jodi. And to all the other members of my family whose efforts went far, far beyond anything I could have expected or asked, I can only say to them that I will always be mindful of the need to comport myself in a dignified, respectful and thoughtful fashion as a tribute to the values they have instilled in me.

It is an honour to carry on my family's tradition of service in this Legislature and I eagerly await future opportunities to participate in the important debates that will shape Ontario for my children and generations to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The time for debate has ended. This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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	

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 7 December 2011 / Mercredi 7 décembre 2011

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Accepting Schools Act, 2011, Bill 13, Ms. Broten / Loi de 2011 pour des écoles tolérantes, projet de loi 13, Mme Broten

Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	403
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	412
Mr. Michael Prue	412
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield	413
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer	413
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	413
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	414

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Tim Hudak	414
L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur	414
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	414
Mr. Monte McNaughton	414
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	414
Hon. Michael Gravelle.....	414
Mrs. Teresa Piruzza.....	414
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	414
Hon. Deborah Matthews	414
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	414
Special report, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	414
Wayne Butt	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	414

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Government's record

Mr. Tim Hudak	415
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	415

Government's record

Mr. Tim Hudak	415
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	416

Energy policies

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	416
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	416

Automobile insurance

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	417
Hon. Dwight Duncan	417

Renewable energy

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	418
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	418

Health care

Mme France Gélinas	419
Hon. Deborah Matthews	419

Education

Ms. Soo Wong.....	419
Hon. Laurel C. Broten	419

Private career colleges

Mr. Rob Leone	420
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	420

Winter highway maintenance

Mr. Gilles Bisson	420
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	421

Air-rail link

Mrs. Laura Albanese	421
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	421

Waste diversion

Mr. Michael Harris.....	422
Hon. James J. Bradley	422

Cancer treatment

Ms. Andrea Horwath	422
Hon. Deborah Matthews	422

Violence against women

Mr. Yasir Naqvi	423
Hon. John Milloy	423
Hon. Laurel C. Broten	423

Public transit

Mr. Frank Klees	423
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	423

Soldiers' remains

Mr. Paul Miller.....	424
Hon. Michael Chan	424

Post-secondary education

Ms. Dipika Damerla	424
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	425

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Throne speech debate

Motion agreed to	426
------------------------	-----

Continued on inside back cover

Continued from back cover

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Rob E. Milligan	426
Mr. Jack MacLaren	427
Mr. Rob Leone	427

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Mental health services

Mr. Jack MacLaren	427
-------------------------	-----

Aboriginal housing

Mr. Gilles Bisson	427
-------------------------	-----

Child care

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	427
--------------------------------	-----

Art Truax

Ms. Laurie Scott	428
------------------------	-----

Argyle Business Improvement Association

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	428
-------------------------------	-----

Co-op housing

Mr. Yasir Naqvi	428
-----------------------	-----

Road safety

Mr. John Yakabuski	428
--------------------------	-----

Colin Rickards

Mr. Mike Colle	429
----------------------	-----

Music education

Mr. Steve Clark	429
-----------------------	-----

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Gasoline Tax Fairness for All Act, 2011, Bill 27, Mr. Yakabuski / Loi de 2011 sur l'équité pour tous à l'égard de la taxe sur l'essence, projet de loi 27, M. Yakabuski

First reading agreed to	429
Mr. John Yakabuski	429

Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2011, Bill 28, Mr. Zimmer, Mr. Prue, Mrs. Elliott / Loi de 2011 sur les professionnels en ressources humaines inscrits, projet de loi 28, M. Zimmer, M. Prue, Mme Elliott

First reading agreed to	430
Mr. David Zimmer	430

Protection of Child Care Centres Act (Extended Day Programs), 2011, Bill 29, Mr. Leone / Loi de 2011 sur la protection des services de garde d'enfants

(programmes de jour prolongé), projet de loi 29, M. Leone

First reading agreed to	430
Mr. Rob Leone	430

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Renewable energy

Mr. John O'Toole	430
------------------------	-----

Access to health care

Mme France Gélinas	430
--------------------------	-----

Job relocation

Mr. Phil McNeely	431
------------------------	-----

Male breast cancer

Mr. Ernie Hardeman	431
--------------------------	-----

Affordable housing

Mr. Rosario Marchese	431
----------------------------	-----

Wind turbines

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	432
----------------------------	-----

Transfert d'emplois

M. Phil McNeely	432
-----------------------	-----

Wind turbines

Mr. Todd Smith	432
----------------------	-----

Diagnostic services

Mme France Gélinas	432
--------------------------	-----

Rural schools

Mr. Jim Wilson	433
----------------------	-----

Child care

Mr. Rob Leone	433
---------------------	-----

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. John Yakabuski	434
Mr. Jeff Yurek	434
Mr. Rosario Marchese	434
Mr. Phil McNeely	434
Mr. Jeff Yurek	435
Ms. Cindy Forster	435
Mr. Mario Sergio	435
Mr. Jeff Yurek	435
Ms. Cindy Forster	436
Hon. James J. Bradley	437
Mr. John O'Toole	437
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	438
Mr. Mario Sergio	438
Ms. Cindy Forster	439
Mr. Bill Mauro	439

Mr. Rick Nicholls	440
Mr. John Vanthof.....	441
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	441
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	441
Mr. Bill Mauro.....	442
Mr. Rick Nicholls	442
Mr. John Vanthof.....	443
Hon. James J. Bradley	444
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	444
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	444
Mr. Rick Nicholls	445
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	445
Hon. Glen R. Murray	446
Ms. Cindy Forster	447
Hon. James J. Bradley	447
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer.....	447
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	448
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	448
Mr. Todd Smith	449
Mr. John Vanthof.....	450
Hon. James J. Bradley	450
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	451
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	451
Mr. Rob E. Milligan	451
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	454