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Tuesday 8 March 2005

Mardi 8 mars 2005

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 8 March 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 8 mars 2005

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): Fabry patients have been abandoned by the Minister of Health and by the McGuinty government. By refusing to fund enzyme replacement therapy, premature death is a certainty for Rick, Sabrina, Danielle, and Fred Sgroi of Richmond Hill, Julia Strauss of Kitchener, Bill Taylor and Carolyn Auger of Ottawa and some 20 other Fabry patients who depend on this treatment to survive.

The minister and this government have heard appeals from patients, their families and members of this Legislature to fund enzyme replacement therapy, and the minister and the Premier have turned their backs on those appeals. The minister hides behind the shield of the Common Drug Review process and deflects making a life-saving decision to the expert drug advisory council. This response by the minister is irresponsible, intellectually dishonest and immoral.

The minister knows that the Common Drug Review was never intended to make decisions about rare and orphan diseases. It recommends drugs for inclusion in provincial drug formularies based on cost-effectiveness. By relying on the opinion of this panel and the expert drug advisory council, this government is basing the decision to save lives on economics rather than patient need. That is offensive to every citizen of this province.

On behalf of Fabry patients and their families, I call on the minister to exercise his authority and his responsibility to extend enzyme replacement therapy today. It is a lifeline that these patients need and they deserve as citizens of Ontario.

HIGHWAY 3

Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex): I rise today to bring to the Minister of Transportation's attention the urgent need to get on with safety improvements and the planned four-laning of Highway 3 in my riding. This stretch of highway is increasingly becoming known as a deadly one, with two head-on collisions occurring just last month within days of one another. Over the years, countless people have been injured or even killed while the former government made promises to my constituents that it did not deliver.

I've been pressing the issue of Highway 3 safety improvements with governments of the day for over seven years now. While I realize there are many important projects to be completed, it's imperative that the four-laning of Highway 3 be a priority. This project has been in the works for far too long and has been plagued by unacceptable delays and postponements that need to be addressed immediately.

Seven years of waiting is enough. The 24,000 drivers who travel this highway every day need assurance that our government takes the issue of their safety seriously and that, unlike the former government, we are serious about the four-laning of Highway 3.

I urge the minister to ensure that further studies and information sessions be completed as soon as possible so that improvements to Highway 3 can be added to the minister's capital construction projects before another of my constituents is injured on this dangerous stretch of road.

FARMERS AND RURAL ONTARIO

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I rise again today in an effort to try to get this government to listen to the voices of farmers and rural communities, from my riding and from across Ontario.

Last week, farmers rallied on the lawn of Queen's Park, and tomorrow, farmers and rural citizens will be rallying on the lawn of Queen's Park again. This is because the government is not listening to them. There is a rural revolution happening in Ontario. It is coming because you are not listening to the voices of farmers and you are not listening to the voices of rural Ontario. Your policies and inaction have been hurting rural communities and farmers. They have been hurting local communities, and hurting our community halls and our churches.

Over the past several months, I've been meeting with farmers throughout Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, and they have told me that without a doubt the CAIS program is not working. They are not getting the money they need to put seed into the ground or to keep their farms viable.

I want to urge you to respond to the plight of the hard-working farmers. They have told you what they need to survive. You have made promises to farmers and rural Ontarians, but now that you're in charge you're ignoring them. We hope there is money coming for our farmers. So far, this government has ignored their plight. I hope they will listen, and I hope they will act.

And if there is any financial assistance coming to farmers, do not use the CAIS program to distribute it.

Make sure the money goes directly to the farmers who need it. The CAIS program is not working. Money needs to get into the hands of farmers and farm families now, before they lose their farms and before we all lose the safe, secure access to food that they provide.

DEB PELITI

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): Today is International Women’s Day all over the world, and we are honouring women in this country and in every country that makes up the face of this planet.

Today, I’d like to speak about one woman whom this Legislature honoured last December. That is a woman named Deb Peliti. You will all remember her, because everyone on this floor gave her a standing ovation. She is the woman who found \$40,000 and turned it in to the bank. She is the woman who was on welfare. She is the woman who, with her two children, has a very hard time making ends meet.

This Legislature chose, and rightly so, to give her a standing ovation for her integrity. You now have a chance, especially the members opposite, to have some integrity of your own. You let her keep the reward money. You let her keep the \$2,000. But every single month since then, you have chosen to claw back the child tax credit from her: \$227 every single month. In that period you have clawed back \$700 of the \$2,000 you let her keep, and in the next eight months you will have succeeded in clawing it all back.

You should honour her instead by giving her and the 55,000 other female heads of households an opportunity to keep the child tax credit, and you should eliminate your shameful policy of clawing it back.

MOHAWK COLLEGE

Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): Friday was an exciting day for one of Hamilton’s premier post-secondary education facilities, Mohawk College. MPP Jeff Leal, on behalf of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, in conjunction with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, marked the official opening of Mohawk’s new Industrial and Process Automation Training and Applied Research Centre, a \$10-million project designed to train students for what the industry says is one of the most pressing needs.

But the measure of this wonderful program was quickly evident when Ray Myler, a student, came to the podium. It’s his second time through the Hamilton-based school. But in a world where jobs change almost overnight, continuing education is the price of staying employed. Mr. Myler spoke without notes and from the heart as he thanked the provincial government and the various industrial partners. He said this was a wonderful second chance for his success in life.

Mohawk president MaryLynn West-Moynes said in a statement to the Hamilton Spectator, “We are absolutely

thrilled at the opportunity that this investment has created for our students and partners.”

This government is proudly encouraging and supporting our young people to be the best they can be. Our future depends on it. On behalf of the students, the stakeholders and the community, Hamilton says thank you.

1340

RURAL ONTARIO

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): We’re hearing some old expressions on the back roads and in small-town Ontario: “One for all and all for one,” and also, “You can hang alone or you can hang together.” This has been the winter of our discontent in rural Ontario, and whether it be intrusive landowner restrictions or the need for help for one commodity or another, a common response prevails, and that is unity.

There are many rural problems, many rural organizations, as we know, and many rural voices. These voices are all sending one message to achieve shared goals. Those goals are to educate, to inform, and to reach out not only to the Legislative Assembly, but also to people across this part of North America, where the rural way of life is now threatened.

There are so many issues: sawmills being shut down—we hope the environment minister will be at the rural rally tomorrow; greenbelt devaluation of property—we expect to see the municipal affairs minister at Queen’s Park tomorrow; community halls and schools closing their doors—folks are looking for the education minister to be there on Wednesday; wildlife damage to crops—that’s for our MNR minister; and of course the crises in beef and hogs and tobacco and cash crop—our ag minister and our Premier need to meet with constituents tomorrow.

Our plea: Don’t divide and conquer. Don’t play one crop against another. Don’t play one organization against another. And we’ll see you all Wednesday.

WOMEN OF NIPISSING

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): I rise today on this International Women’s Day to celebrate the wonderful women of Nipissing. Yes, from advocates to CEOs to international celebrities to unsung heroes, we have too many fabulous women to mention them all, but I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate a few who are contributing so much to our community and who are providing great role models.

We have our municipal leaders: the mayor of Chisholm, Barb Groves; the mayor of Bonfield, Narry McCarthy; the mayor of Nipissing, Wendy Billingsley; the deputy mayor of Callander, Virginia Onley; and many, many councillors in a variety of our communities.

We have health care leaders, such as the CEO of our Northeast Mental Health Centre, Jean Trimmell, and our psychiatrist-in-chief, Susan Adams, who are doing great

work. Of course, Lisa McCool Philbin is doing great things at the Community Counselling Centre, and there's our medical officer of health, Catherine Whiting, and Dr. Wendy Graham, a provincial leader in family health reform. In our long-term-care homes, we have Mrs. Monestine and Vala in Mattawa at the Algonquin, Beth Campbell at Casselhome, Yvonne Weir at Leisureworld, and of course Laura Pierce, who is the chair of the Mattawa hospital board.

In the area of social policy, the list is almost too long to even start, but I would like to mention the tireless efforts of Lana Mitchell at Low Income People Involvement, Rev. Elizabeth Fraser, the chair at Community Housing Action Group, Gisèle Hébert at the children's aid society, Christine Woods at the crisis centre, and of course Janine Lafreniere at Transition House.

All of these women contribute so much to our community. They are role models.

Of course, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention my mom at the very end, another woman I'm very proud to say is a staunch member of the Nipissing proud women community.

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington): I rise today to speak about the McGuinty government's commitment to agriculture. The McGuinty government fully supports Ontario farmers and our strong agri-food industry. We understand the issues facing rural Ontario and are working hard every day with our partners to address those issues.

This is a government that has already taken necessary steps, such as exempting the land transfer tax on family farms, investing in increased abattoir capacity for older animals, establishing a new renewable fuel standard that will require that gasoline sold in Ontario contain an average of 5% ethanol by 2007 to help our corn farmers, and providing up to \$30 million to help the cattle industry recover from the fallout of BSE.

Last Friday, I met with the Wellington Federation of Agriculture to discuss their concerns about agriculture and the agri-food industry. Much like Minister Peters, who met with farmers at last Wednesday's rally, I firmly believe that the best way to understand agricultural issues is to meet with the farmers who deal with those problems every day.

The McGuinty government is always willing to sit down with any agricultural group that wants to constructively discuss its needs and concerns. All farmers and farm groups are encouraged to come forward with constructive contributions toward government policies. The door is open, and we are listening.

WOMEN'S SHELTERS AND SECOND-STAGE HOUSING

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): On International Women's Day, it saddens me that I have to talk

about women's shelters and second-stage housing. It is unfortunate that those places of refuge still exist because violence against women is still a dark reality.

That being said, I am proud to rise today to talk about what the McGuinty government is doing to help women and their children fleeing domestic violence. For too long this issue has been repeatedly put on the back burner. Today's announcement means that the shelters in my riding, like the Women's House of Bruce County and the Women's Shelter, Second Stage Housing and Counselling Services of Huron, will be better equipped to provide a safer and healthier environment for women staying in their facilities.

This morning on CBC Radio, Darlene Ritchie, executive director of Atlohso Native Family Healing Services, made a point: "We were down to using one shower upstairs because, you know, after 14 years of using a shower, the caulking is starting to dry out and we're having leaks. So we'll renovate our three bathrooms in that house to serve those 16 women and their children."

I am so proud that this government is taking action. As part of the \$66-million domestic violence action plan today, 98 women's shelters and second-stage housing providers will receive a total of \$2 million for capital improvements and cost-saving upgrades. This money will also pay for wheelchair ramps and repairs to crumbling buildings, and will invest in efficiencies so that cash-strapped agencies will see savings for years to come. But mostly, today's announcement means that women and their children will have safer, more secure places to stay at a very difficult time.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ELECTION FINANCES AMENDMENT ACT (PUBLICATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS), 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE FINANCEMENT DES ÉLECTIONS (PUBLICATION DES CONTRIBUTIONS)

Mr. Arnott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 180, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act to require publication of contributions / Projet de loi 180, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections pour exiger la publication des contributions.

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

Mr. Arnott?

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): Members of this House will recall that during question period last Thursday, I signalled my intent to introduce a bill of this type. Since that time, the government has introduced its own legislation, as has the member for Toronto–Danforth.

This adds another bill to the mix, but mine is different from the other two. My bill amends the Election Finances Act to require that a political party post on its Web site on the Internet information about contributions of \$100 or more at the time it deposits the contributions into its account or that each of its constituency associations, official candidates or leadership contestants deposit the contributions into their accounts. The information consists of the name of the contributor and the amount of the contribution.

In the case of a contribution to a candidate who is not a candidate of an official political party at an election, the candidate is required to post the information on the candidate's Web site. A party or a candidate who does not maintain a Web site is required to post the information on the Web site that the Chief Election Officer designates.

This is real-time financial disclosure of political contributions, because it would compel the political parties to disclose the information the very day they cash the cheque.

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PROTECTION AGAINST ILLICIT DRUG
GROW HOUSES ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR LA PROTECTION
CONTRE LES INSTALLATIONS DE
CULTURE INTÉRIEURE DE DROGUES
ILLICITES

Mr. Martiniuk moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 181, An Act to provide protection against grow houses for marijuana and other illicit drugs / Projet de loi 181, Loi prévoyant une protection contre les installations de culture intérieure de marijuana et d'autres drogues illicites.

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

Mr. Martiniuk?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): This bill provides that certain powers contrary to grow houses that some municipalities now have been extended to unincorporated municipalities in Ontario. It also amends the Conveyancing and Law of Property Act to provide that a vendor must reveal in any agreement of purchase and sale if the building or structure has been used to grow any illicit drugs. It goes on to amend the Tenant Protection Act to permit the landlord of any rental unit to enter and view the rental premise to determine whether it's being used for the purpose of growing illicit drugs.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): We have with us in the speaker's gallery Mr. Philippe Delacroix, the consul general of France in Toronto. Please join me in welcoming him here.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL
PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): Ontarians are proud Canadians. We are proud of our role in helping other provinces financially, we are proud of our place as the linchpin of the nation and we are especially proud of our country's role in the world. But I can tell you I was not proud of the recent federal budget's failure to address the \$23-billion gap between what Ontario contributes to the federation and what it gets back. The federal budget was disappointing to me and to Ontario because it continues the unfair treatment that shortchanges this province's taxpayers by billions of dollars.

The issue that concerns me as Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal is funding for public infrastructure. Ontario doesn't get its proper—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Member from Nepean—Carleton, I'd like you to control yourself and come to order.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I can sense that the members opposite are incensed as well that Ontario doesn't get its share of federal funding programs designed to help maintain public infrastructure like roads, bridges, public transit and water treatment facilities. Ottawa has four infrastructure funding programs. Ontario is getting less than its fair share under all four. I want to highlight all of them for the House today.

The Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund provides some \$4 billion for transit and transportation improvements, urban development and economic expansion. The federal budget allocates Ontario \$92 per person from this fund. The rest of Canada, excluding Ontario, gets \$146 per person. If Ontario received its fair share, there would be an extra \$670 million available for infrastructure in this province.

The Border Infrastructure Fund provides some \$600 million to improve border crossings. The busiest and most important border crossings in Canada are here in Ontario, especially in Windsor, which handles 11,000 trucks per day. About 75% of the value of all goods trucked to the US moves through the Ontario border crossings, but these crossings get only 51% of the federal funding. If Ontario received its fair share, some 75% of the funding, there would be an additional \$145 million for border infrastructure investments in Ontario over the life of the program.

The municipal rural infrastructure fund: This fund provides \$1 billion to improve infrastructure in smaller municipalities and rural communities. Our rural municipalities desperately need help with roads, sewers and water treatment facilities. Renfrew county, for example, has more than 260 bridges and culverts and must finance

major repairs for at least half of them within the next 10 years. No surprise then that applications from Ontario municipalities for funding under this program are double the money that is available. The federal budget allocates \$24 per person for rural municipalities in Ontario. Compare that with \$36 per person in the rest of Canada. If Ontario received its fair share, some \$36 per person, that would mean an additional \$150 million available for Ontario rural municipalities over the life of the program.

Under the strategic highway infrastructure program, Ottawa has earmarked \$600 million over five years to rebuild and expand the nation's highway system. Any help, of course, is welcome, but it's not nearly enough. Ontario will invest some \$1 billion this year alone for highway rehabilitation and expansion. We have the busiest highways in the country, and keeping our transportation network in good shape is essential to the economy not only of our province, but of our country. Ontario receives \$15 per person under this program. The rest of Canada, excluding Ontario, gets \$21 per person. If Ontario were to receive \$21 per person, as is the case with every other province, there would be an additional \$74 million available for strategic highway infrastructure in Ontario.

This government has a plan to invest in the drivers of economic growth, things like high-quality public education, post-secondary education, training and, of course, infrastructure. Strategic investments in these areas now will pay dividends well into the future. Investments now mean more money to contribute to the rest of Canada tomorrow. Ontarians are proud Canadians. With help from the federal government, Ontario will be able to continue to assist other provinces, strengthen our federation and, most especially, ensure Canada's place in the world.

WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I rise to address the House on the important issue of women's health and what our government is doing to meet the health needs of the women in this province. The fact that I am doing so on this particular day is significant. In 1977 the United Nations declared March 8 to be International Women's Day to call attention to and to celebrate the social and political progress that women have made in recent history. While improving women's social and political status are the dominant themes you might hear in commentary today, I would like to take a moment to discuss women's health issues, another area in which continued improvement must absolutely be the norm.

The simple fact is that women have health needs that are distinctive and often unique. Historically, in health care, we have not been as responsive to that fact as we should be. It was not that long ago when clinical trials would be performed on men and the results extrapolated and applied to women, something we now understand to be bad science and even worse medicine. So while our government is working hard to improve our health care

system for all Ontarians, we remain mindful that there are specific measures that must be taken to ensure that women are receiving the health care they need.

For example, breast cancer continues to be the most common form of cancer for women. Ontario is the first and only Canadian province to provide comprehensive screening services for those at risk of developing hereditary breast, ovarian or colon cancer. My ministry currently allocates \$28.5 million to the Ontario breast screening program, which is designed to reduce the mortality rate of breast cancer through a comprehensive early detection program.

Cervical cancer is another critically important women's health issue. Just today, our government announced that we are investing \$1 million in community labs for new technology that will reduce wait times for cervical screening test results and improve the accuracy of those tests. This will enable Ontario women to make more informed decisions about their health care needs sooner.

1400

Violence against women might best be described as a social disease. It is certainly a significant health issue. The ministry provides \$15.1 million for 34 approved hospital-based sexual assault treatment centres, which serve more than 4,500 victims annually, mostly women and children.

Midwives provide care to women during normal pregnancy and labour and to women and their newborn babies during the postpartum period. Ontario was the first province to regulate and fund the midwifery profession as part of its provincial health care system. In 2004, an estimated 310 midwives were registered to provide services through about 50 ministry-funded midwifery practice groups.

Just today, a number of Ontario hospitals announced a joint initiative, funded by our government, called the Fetal Alert Network. This program is designed to improve health care for pregnant women and their unborn babies with birth defects.

In Ontario, women account for 29% of all new HIV diagnoses. We have expanded the Ontario prenatal screening program to include HIV testing. As a result, all pregnant women in Ontario are now offered HIV testing, which is provided with appropriate counselling and informed consent. Currently, about 90% of pregnant women receive a prenatal HIV test in this province. The ministry also funds community-based AIDS groups for HIV-infected women and support for the families.

The ministry funds 334 community mental health agencies, some of which are specifically targeted to address women's mental health issues. One example is eating disorders, for which we currently provide \$8.5 million to support specialized treatment programs.

Young, single, homeless women have mortality rates 10 times higher than women in the general population. The Ontario Women's Health Council has undertaken two projects: One focuses on service integration for homeless women, and the second explores the develop-

ment of curriculum for health professionals working with homeless women. The mental health and addictions branch provides approximately \$9.5 million in funding to 48 women-specific addiction programs in Ontario. Other addiction programs also provide services that are specifically for women.

The early childhood development addictions initiative provides outreach, addiction treatment and ancillary services to pregnant women with addictions.

The heart health program addresses the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease with specific attention to women. Last year's budget announced annual funding of \$30 million to develop strategies aimed at integrating and strengthening aspects of stroke prevention. The strategy addresses gender differences—in particular, the impact and prevention of strokes in women.

Osteoporosis is a highly debilitating disease that affects approximately 530,000 Ontarians—one in four women and one in eight men. The osteoporosis strategy aims to prevent and manage osteoporosis and reduce disability, pain and suffering. The government recently approved the osteoporosis strategy, with funding starting this fiscal year at \$881,000, and rising to \$5 million in 2007-08 and ongoing.

Finally, we have the tentative agreement that we have just reached with the Ontario Medical Association, an agreement that was unanimously endorsed by the OMA board. This deal contains several measures to improve women's health care, including a strong focus on better access to preventive care like mammography screening. In addition, for female doctors we're expanding the province's pregnancy and parental leave programs.

All of these initiatives are part of the McGuinty government's comprehensive plan to improve health care in Ontario for all Ontarians.

One size doesn't necessarily fit all in health care. Women have certain specific health issues, and consequently specific health care needs. It is our job to meet those needs, and I am proud to say that our government is working very hard to do exactly that.

In closing, I would just like to touch briefly on another aspect of health care as it relates to women, and that is the extraordinary number of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals from every health care field who are women. It seems appropriate on International Women's Day that I take this opportunity to salute them and ask others to join with me in recognizing the excellent job they all do.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Responses?

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr. Tim Hudak (Eric-Lincoln): I'm pleased to respond to the statement by my colleague the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Listen, we want to see greater federal investment in the province's infrastructure, no doubt about it.

Applause.

Mr. Hudak: I appreciate the minister's applause. But I've got to tell you that it's a little too cute by half, because months ago, the minister couldn't wait to celebrate the days of wines and roses, this really close, hand-in-hand relationship that he had with his federal colleagues. Now, it's whines with an "h," as opposed to w-i-n-e-s. The problem here that Dalton McGuinty faces is that he has no credibility. He has no credibility with Ontario taxpayers because of his 40-plus broken promises, and he has no credibility when it comes to negotiating with the federal government.

Let me tell you why. About a year and a half ago Dalton McGuinty accepted, on bended knee, a bad SARS deal that sold the province of Ontario well short of what we deserved, and like some Oliver Twist character, he went back and said, "Please, sir, can I have another?" During the first ministers' meeting, Dalton McGuinty—to put an old Trudeau maxim on his head—basically was a head waiter to the Prime Minister and his cabinet. He couldn't do enough to get up close and personal with Paul Martin and his cabinet. And as a result of this weak negotiating strategy, we are not receiving our fair share.

What's really happening is that they're setting up a straw man. For a year and a half, they tried to blame the previous government. We saw recently at ROMA, that every minister that tried that old trick got booed and jeered. Now, they've turned tail to blaming Paul Martin and the federal government. Folks, it just is not going to cut it.

Dalton McGuinty has to do one thing: look at himself in the mirror, point his finger straight at his own chest and admit to the people of Ontario that he made promises that he knew he could not complete. He made promises that he knew he was going to break. The result is that they're looking for somebody else to blame, when the blame rests squarely on Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal cabinet.

So I'll say to the minister that I appreciate the response. Let's see those investments in border areas like Windsor, like Fort Erie, like Niagara Falls. Let's see those investments in rural infrastructure—you mentioned Renfrew county—or Wainfleet or West Lincoln or the vast part of northern Ontario. But he can't forget that while transit investment is welcome from the gas tax, there are 340 municipalities that did not get dime one of those funds. We'd like to see that as well.

WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Health. I wish he were here to hear this.

The minister announced this morning \$1 million of investment in cervical cancer screening. That's federal money, and it's certainly welcome to our hospitals. We on this side of the House, though, will be watching and following up on every one of those hospitals that received funding for equipment to ensure that they actually have the funds to operate that equipment, because this

government is good at making announcements for capital dollars and announcements for medical equipment but leaving the hospitals high and dry.

I just hope that the nurses who will be operating this equipment aren't dizzy, because they are hiring and then firing so many nurses. Some hospitals have welcoming parties and going-away parties on the same day for the nurses hired by the McGuinty government. The minister himself admitted that he is firing 757 nurses. That's exactly what the McGuinty government is all about. They brought in a new health tax, and they're using that money to pay for severance packages for the 757 nurses that they fired.

The Ontario Women's Health Council, an initiative of the Harris government and its former minister, who sits in the House today, has done some great work. We should acknowledge that effort, particularly headed by its chair, Jane Pepino, who is an incredibly devoted Ontarian who has contributed much to the province, not just in law but particularly in the area of health care and a special place for women's health. She has devoted much time and energy.

I would have thought that the Minister of Health would have risen and talked about Fabry disease and about the funding that should be coming, the funding that he promised to meet the needs of patients with that. In Ottawa, we continue to have one or two patients who are suffering deeply from this minister's inaction.

I visited Granite Ridge in Stittsville. I would have thought that the minister would have acknowledged the mistake he's made by cutting off schedule 5 physiotherapy, where literally hundreds and thousands of men and women—particularly women—who need physiotherapy in our long-term-care services will have that service cut by 100% in two weeks' time. It's clear that this minister has no plan for health care, and it's clear this minister is not up to dealing with the schedule 5 physiotherapy services for many Ontario women.

1410

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): I'm responding to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. I'm sitting here listening to the minister and he's talking about all the money we are owed from the federal government. It made me pause to think, what do we do now with all the money that we actually get from the federal government?

Every year the federal government gives this province some \$220 million to alleviate poverty for the poorest of the poor children in Ontario, and every year this government chooses to claw back the money from those very same poor children to ensure that they continue to live in poverty. The money that is earmarked for them is not spent on them; it's spent on some other government program.

Every year the federal government makes \$300 million available to this province to build housing. How

much housing have we built in this province? Almost nothing. They give us \$300 million. It's there and it's available, and then the government chooses not to line up and spend that money. They promised 20,000 units of affordable housing; they've built none. They promised 6,000 units of supportive housing; they've built none. The \$300 million that is made available is totally wasted.

Even when the federal government makes the money available, you choose to take one of two paths: You choose to spend it somewhere else or you choose not to spend it at all. Why are you asking for money that you have no intention of using in the first place? If I was in the federal government, that's the question I would ask the McGuinty government. I'd say, "You're asking for money, but you don't spend it when we give it to you; or if you do, you spend it on something else."

You are saying now that you want to spend it on transit, you want to spend it on border infrastructure, you want to spend it on rural infrastructure and you want to spend it on highways. But if you get the money, I have to honestly ask you, are you going to spend it in these areas or are you going to pocket the money? Are you going to put it against the deficit? Are you going to spend it on some other government program or are you not going to spend it at all? That has been your history in this province. That has been what this Liberal government has chosen to do. If I was sitting up there in Ottawa, I would have to tell you that I'd have a very jaundiced view of what you are requesting today.

WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto—Danforth): I'm pleased to respond on behalf of our critic Shelley Martel, who can't be with us this afternoon. She is in her riding for International Women's Day.

I respond to the health minister. Three things—I wish I had more time; there would be more. First of all, on your announcement on buying the equipment for cervical cancer testing: It's a very important announcement. We've been demanding that this be done for some time. We're pleased to see you announce it today, but we now of course look forward to hearing the minister in the coming days—very soon—announce the money for the staff needed to run the equipment, because without that staff you can't use it. This was federal money that was used for this.

Second—

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It's for replacement equipment.

Ms. Churley: Whatever—you had your chance.

Second, the examples of—

Interjections.

Ms. Churley: This is a very serious announcement. I wish you would listen.

The examples of unprotected patient care services—which we brought up in this Legislature many times once the minister told the hospitals they had to cut back. We brought up the fact—and it's still an issue out there; it

hasn't been corrected—that patient care services at risk for elimination because they were not mandated by this government included most of the special women's health programs in hospitals, like abortion, obstetrics, birth control, fertility clinics, post-partum services and on and on. These services are not protected under your government. So when you demanded that the hospitals make the cuts, guess what they were going to do from the very beginning? Cut the unmandated services. So the women's programs—the ones you are bragging about today—were on the top of the list of the chopping block.

Minister, the third thing I would like to talk to you about is the need, as demonstrated by your announcement today, to bring forward my adoption disclosure bill and pass it, because you're quite right that we know more and more now about diseases like ovarian cancer and breast cancer. Studies show that we can now add cervical cancer to that list of women who have a genetic predisposition to these kinds of cancers. There were programs actually brought in by the previous government on ovarian and breast cancer, and cervical cancer should be added to that for pre-screening of women who have these cancers in their families. But of course, adoptees have no way of knowing whether these cancers exist in their families, so it's more and more critical that this bill be passed so those women have that screening opportunity as well. Right now, they are being discriminated against.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes on International Women's Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): Let me start by wishing a very happy International Women's Day on behalf of our caucus and all members of the House to the people of Ontario. It is a pleasure, as the minister responsible for women's issues, to stand and note International Women's Day today, March 8. This is an occasion to reflect on the progress our society has made toward advancing women's equality and to consider the steps we still need to take to help women achieve their full participation in our society.

In 1977, the United Nations adopted a resolution inviting countries around the world to dedicate this day to celebrating the rights of women and international peace. It is now a global celebration of women's accomplishments and advancements toward equality. We've come a long way from the days when women could not vote, could not be a member of Parliament, were denied jobs considered suitable only for men. Imagine what this House would be like if we didn't have women in it. It is so much better a place today because we have women as members of the Legislature.

Applause.

Hon. Ms. Pupatello: I accept that on behalf of all the women in the Legislature today.

The gains women have made, though, have been hard won, but every gain is worthy of a celebration. Last fall, two women were appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada, bringing the total number on the nine-member bench to four. That makes the Canadian Supreme Court one of the most gender-balanced in the world.

Women stand out in every single field. Businesses that are owned and run by women are growing faster than most parts of the Canadian economy. Women aren't just creating jobs but creating entire companies at double the rate of the national average. There are now almost 10,000 members of the Women's Executive Network, Canada's most influential organization dedicated to the advancement and recognition of executive women in the workplace. Women are a key resource in meeting Canada's skill shortages in sectors where they are under-represented.

Our government's women in skilled trades program offers a pre-apprenticeship training program designed exclusively for women to help them enter a variety of highly skilled and in-demand technology areas and apprenticeships. Our partners for change program works in partnership with external organizations to develop programs and resources that promote the participation of young women for careers in math, science and technology, areas where women have traditionally not been highly represented. We also help unemployed and low-income women train for good jobs in the information technology field through the information technology training for women program.

Our government is committed to creating a prosperous Ontario in which women are able to be economically independent and participate fully in the province's social and economic life. I'm proud that our government has made advances so we could assist women in achieving this. I'm proud that we have done immeasurable work in the area of domestic violence. Over the past 18 months we've increased Ontario Works benefits, Ontario disability supports. We've begun the increase to minimum wage. Thanks to our Minister of Labour for that.

On December 13, we announced a domestic violence action plan, a significant plan that attacks this issue in four significant areas: public education, community supports, training and, most importantly, justice; and significant increases in resources to assist French-language services for this area. Thanks to all 13 ministers who participate in our interministerial task force against domestic violence. Our plan contains a range of prevention, early intervention and justice, all intended to help women who have been abused and their children.

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On February 24, we committed \$1.9 million in additional funding to sexual assault centres across Ontario. This includes significant new funding to the francophone community. Again, thanks to our Attorney General for this.

A \$25-million increase in the aboriginal health and wellness program is a significant boon to women and children who are living on our reserves and in our native communities across Ontario.

Today we're investing another \$2 million to help 98 women's shelters and second-stage housing help keep their facilities safe and accessible for women and children. This funding will be used for security upgrades, accessibility improvements, health and safety renovations and other efficiency and cost-saving projects.

Child care: For the first time, our minister for children is investing \$57 million of federal money in child care. This helps women. Also today, thank you to our Minister of Health for the announcement today where we commit \$1 million to community laboratories as part of our cancer prevention strategy for women. This \$1 million has been earmarked by the McGuinty government for the introduction of laboratory equipment and new technology for cervical cancer screening.

You will notice across this government a significant increase in the number of appointments to this government's agencies, boards and commissions. We are proud of that fact. I believe we have made advancements in the issues that are important to women. Let us be clear: We have much more work to do, and it will take all of us in this House to band together and move the issues for women forward.

Today, for International Women's Day, let us celebrate our achievements and recognize the thousands of women in Ontario who are improving the status of women every day. Many of them go unsung, and we are proud of the work they do. Let's also consider what each one of us can do in our own communities, in our own constituencies, in our own neighbourhoods, to promote women as equal partners in our society.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): Today I'm proud to stand on behalf of our caucus and recognize International Women's Day, a day that was established in 1977 by the United Nations. This is a special day that provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress that has been made to advance women's equality, to assess the challenges facing women in contemporary society, to consider future steps to enhance the status of women, and of course it's an opportunity for us to celebrate the gains we have made.

The Canadian theme for this year's International Women's Week is You Are Here: Women, Canada, and the World. In Beijing in 1995, member nations of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women met to map out guidelines for measuring progress on achieving gender equality. At Beijing +5 in 2000, they met again to review their progress and achievements and to explore strategies to accelerate action. Beijing +10 brought those members together again to continue to discuss future approaches toward gender equality.

Some of the areas where they have been looking to make progress are in human rights, violence against women and children, health, unpaid work, poverty and women's diversity. I think what is notable is the fact that

the progress toward gender equality can be considered a continuing journey. Although the destination is clear, the route remains a challenge and, at times, a very difficult journey.

Let's take a look at some of the accomplishments and past achievements in Canada that deserve celebration. Certainly, if we take a look at education, in post-secondary education the barriers to women getting an education have been all but eliminated. In 2001, women comprised 59% of the undergraduate student enrolment and 50% of graduate student enrolment in Canada. If we take a look at some of the fields and some of the professions that had traditionally been male-dominated, we see that these fields have opened up to women. Women are pursuing careers in growing numbers in the fields of medicine, law, business and engineering. In 2003, while women represented only 29% of the total number of physicians in Ontario, they represented 45% of physicians under the age of 35. A similar trend is found among the representation of female lawyers in Ontario. And by 2003, 53% of people enrolled in the bar admission course were women.

In business, as the 21st century gets underway, it is expected that about half of Canada's new companies will be started by women. The Institute for Small Business noted that between 1991 and 1994, Canadian firms run by women created new jobs at four times the rate of the national average. Women are creating not just jobs but entire companies at double the rate of the national average.

We also know that the pay gap has shrunk. The earnings of women employed full-time in Canada were 71.6% of those of men in 2001. So progress has been made, but there's more to do.

I heard the minister speak about the Women's Health Council. Our government, under the leadership of Premier Harris, was very proud to establish that Women's Health Council. We recognized that women had specific health issues, and we wanted to ensure that these women in Ontario were receiving the health care they needed.

However, despite the gains that we've made in Canada, we appear to have hit a plateau or in some cases even moved backwards in the move toward equality in some areas. In particular, women are missing from the top rungs of the corporate ladder and also from the boardrooms of Canadian corporations.

In politics today, only about one fifth of those who hold elected office are women. In Europe, we have about a third to a half. In fact, when I became an MPP in 1990, it appeared women were on the verge of a breakthrough to achieving more equal representation in Canadian legislatures, but we have moved backwards then since. Today, for the first time in about 15 years, none of Canada's political parties federally are headed by a woman, none of Canada's Premiers are women, and none of the mayors of our largest cities are women. The proportion of women MPs, which had been climbing for 30 years, declined from 21% to 18% in the last federal election, in 2004.

So the challenge remains not just in Ontario but throughout the world. We need to move toward eliminating poverty and violence, and we need to ensure that there are equality rights for women of every race, language, ethnicity, economic status and ability. We've seen tangible progress on many fronts. So today, let us take the opportunity to rededicate ourselves to moving forward, to making sure that women have the right to live in dignity, in freedom from want and freedom from fear.

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth): On behalf of New Democrats everywhere, I want to wish everybody a happy International Women's Day. Of course, as a proud feminist, I behave as though every day is International Women's Day.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Just like Jim Wilson.

Interjections.

Ms. Churley: Yes, just like Jim Wilson here, who thinks we should have that. As John Baird said, "You go, girl," which is what I'm about to do, because this is an occasion when we applaud our impressive accomplishments in all different areas of society and honour the work of our sisters in our immediate midst and throughout the globe who are in one form or another fighting for women's freedom from discrimination and violence.

It's an understatement to say that there is a lot of work left to be done, on all fronts and in many places, some more seriously in other parts of the world, but some issues to be dealt with here locally as well.

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In Canada, many mistake women's prevalence in the labour force and post-secondary education as measures of having achieved equality now. Statistics about females making up over half the student body in post-secondary and entering high-profile fields such as law and medicine in record numbers—

Mr. Bisson: And politics.

Ms. Churley: —no; not in politics—are cited as proof that gender discrimination is a relic of a past era. But I've got news for you: Scratch underneath the surface and you will find obstacles. They have taken on a different form, and we had better address them. Overt discrimination has been replaced with unwelcoming and sometimes hidden attitudes. Closed doors have been supplanted with more glass ceilings and workplace cultures that deter women from reaching for the door in the first place.

Our Legislature illustrates those different obstacles women face. In the arena of public decision-making, here we are in 2005 and women are still drastically under-represented. Why at this point are there only 23 of us here? One reason, and there are others, is that our electoral system works against women getting elected. More women are elected under some form of proportional representation than first-past-the-post. And it is uncertain that in Ontario, given the minister's announcement, we will see the electoral system change to balance the playing field. The bill on democratic renewal released yesterday by the minister responsible for democratic renewal

did not include explicit measures to address the gender deficit, and I can assure him that I will be addressing that.

Level of safety is another tally measure of women's status in society. Violence against women remains a prevalent and growing crisis, while efforts in some areas to end it have suffered setbacks. There is a troubling rise in sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. Sexual harassment is still not recognized as an occupational health and safety issue or criminal charge, and as you know, I have a private member's bill that I would like to see passed to address that. The occurrence of sexual assault has also increased, particularly incidents involving younger women as the victims.

Domestic violence continues to rise, and the Liberal government's strategy to combat domestic violence will not stop that trend. Instead, the plan has too many broken promises and inadequate policies, in some cases putting women more at risk.

I want to underscore some particularly troublesome parts of the plan, starting with its treatment of shelters and second-stage housing. The lack of housing options is among the two top reasons that make women remain with or return to their abusers, because there is nowhere to go. But instead of providing sustained increased funds for beds and programs and more housing, the government has given shelters more money to hire fundraisers and has not kept its promise to build 20,000 new units of affordable housing.

Finally, I want to tell you about a couple of events that are coming up today. There are many to celebrate and honour International Women's Day. Judy Rebick's book launch of *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution*, is tonight, with a tremendous panel of distinguished women at Ryerson University's Jorgenson Hall. I invite all people to go and hear about the history of the feminist movement in Ontario and Canada.

Also, I want to tell you about what I've done today to mark International Women's Day. I've launched a contest on my Web site called "Who do you think is Ontario's greatest woman?" because inexplicably, no women made the CBC's top 10 greatest Canadians. So I decided that we would have our own contest here in Ontario to showcase the incredible women who live or once lived in our great province. I think more needs to be done to celebrate our top Canadian women, and this is an opportunity for women in Ontario to go to my Web site, www.MarilynChurley.com, and vote for—

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton): —for Marilyn Churley, NDP.

Ms. Churley: No, no. Judy Rebick could be one of those, as an example, but this is a chance for people. I'm piggybacking off the CBC's Greatest Canadian.

One of my favourite aspects of the CBC's contest was the way it educated and reminded us of the incredible accomplishment of Canadians throughout our national history and today. I hope this contest will allow us to celebrate Ontario's fabulous women, past and present. So I invite everybody to go to my Web site and vote for your favourite greatest Ontario woman.

POLICE OFFICERS

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes in memory of the four RCMP officers who were tragically killed in the line of duty. I would ask the Speaker to observe a moment of silence after the tribute.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): The government House leader has asked that we have unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): Today we mourn the deaths of four fine young men, all police officers who died in the line of duty in the small community of Mayerthorpe, Alberta.

The deaths of RCMP Constables Anthony Gordon, Leo Johnston, Brock Myrol, and Peter Schiemann, who was born in Petrolia, Ontario, are deeply mourned by all Canadians. The fact that these four men were so startlingly young, so filled with promise and hope, and so imbued with a sense of honour and purpose in the careers they loved makes their deaths all the more tragic and difficult to understand. Their deaths are a devastating blow to their families, to the RCMP, to the community in which they served, to the wider policing community, and to the country as a whole.

Their deaths are also a terrible reminder of the dangers that all police officers face as they go about their duties. Every police officer knows and accepts the risks involved with his or her job. They put their lives on the line every time they report for duty. Police officers know first-hand the dangers that accompany their sworn duty to protect the public. Each officer realizes the dangers and rewards associated with this profession. Those rewards come from making a real and profound difference to the safety and security of the communities in which the officers serve, from knowing at the end of the day that the place they call home and the people who live there are safer because they did their job. Unfortunately, it is often only when tragedy strikes that we realize just what that job entails. It humbles us and reminds us of the debt that we owe.

A note attached to a bouquet of sunflowers left outside the RCMP detachment in Mayerthorpe said it simply and said it best: "Thank you for protecting our community and our people. You're not just Mounties. You're our friends and family and you will be greatly missed."

As we offer our deepest sympathies to the families of Constables Gordon, Johnston, Myrol and Schiemann, let us take a moment to thank all the fine men and women who put their lives on the line each day to keep us, our children and our communities safe. On behalf of the government of Ontario, I offer our profound and heartfelt condolences and thanks.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): On behalf of our leader, John Tory, and our caucus, I'm honoured to take part in this special tribute here today.

Last Thursday, a tragedy occurred in Mayerthorpe, Alberta, that shocked our nation. Four RCMP officers were brutally murdered. The incident was the worst spree of killing of Canada's law enforcement officers in over 120 years. The four officers, Constable Tony Gordon, Constable Brock Myrol, Constable Leo Johnston and Constable Peter Schiemann, were all members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

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The RCMP, or Mounties, have one of the most storied histories of any police service in the world, and that, of course, includes agencies like Scotland Yard and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The RCMP, an organization symbolic of our nation, are known for their colourful uniforms and Stetson hats. They are also known for their legendary musical rides. Known as the North-West Mounted Police when they were created in 1873 by Sir John A. Macdonald, the Mounties helped to colonize western and northern Canada using a peaceful strategy.

The RCMP have always held a special presence wherever they appeared. I can think back to the summer of 2000, when an RCMP officer accompanied the Millennium Trail participants throughout central Ontario. Wherever the participants stopped for a dedication on the trail, the RCMP officer was inundated and swarmed with requests for his photo to be taken with the participants and onlookers.

The Mounties have always had a special place in the film industry. It is my understanding that the Mounties have been involved in more than 400 films and set a tone in Hollywood.

Even a week ago last Saturday night, I had the privilege of attending a retirement dinner for Chief Fantino, and one of the keynote speakers was RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli. Commissioner Zaccardelli spoke about the wonderful partnerships between the police services in our country and indeed even international policing. The common tie to our Canadian police services is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police force. You can imagine the pain on the face of Commissioner Zaccardelli last Friday when he discussed with the media the tragic loss of his four young officers.

In the coming weeks, there will be so many questions surrounding the horrible ambush that took the lives of these fine young officers. I'm confident that the answers to these questions will bring forth timely recommendations. A tragedy like this can never happen again. As legislators, we must provide our officers nationwide with the resources they need to be equipped for every conceivable incident.

On behalf of our caucus, I want to take this opportunity to pay respect to Constables Gordon, Myrol, Johnston and Schiemann. A very special thank you to their families for allowing their young men to serve and protect our nation. And finally, condolences and a thank you to the Canadian police family for continuing to make Canada a safe and secure society. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, the men and women of our Canadian police services put their lives on

the line so that we can all raise our families knowing that our communities are protected and secure. In closing, I would like to acknowledge the fact that our Sergeant at Arms, Dennis Clark, spent his career with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): On behalf of New Democrats, I want to recognize the incredible sacrifice of Constables Brock Myrol, Leo Johnston, Peter Schiemann and Anthony Gordon.

Every time police officers and other emergency workers go to work, they take an incredible risk, and there is no way we can repay the debt we owe to an officer who is killed on the job. The loss of these four officers is made all the more tragic by the youth of the four men. The oldest, Constable Johnston, was 32. The youngest, Constable Schiemann, was 25, a rookie. Their tragic deaths remind us of the sacrifice that so many other police officers have made while serving and protecting the public and they remind us of the proud legacy of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

We can never repay the debt we owe them. We will, however, note the legacy that these men leave behind. It is a legacy of service to their community, service to their country, service to their families and service to their colleagues. We can never make up for what has happened, but we must acknowledge this incredible sacrifice and do all we can to ensure that their sacrifice was not in vain.

We extend our condolences and our sympathies to their families, their colleagues and their friends.

The Speaker: Would all members and guests please rise to observe a moment of silence in memory of the four fallen officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The House observed a moment's silence.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GREENBELT

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. On February 25, you said that you purposely did not meet with individuals who had interests in the greenbelt. Yesterday, in a staggering display of befuddlement, you said that maybe you did; you couldn't remember; it could be. Then, after a developer came forward thanking you for meeting him and exempting some of his lands from the greenbelt, you admitted you had met with the developer. After question period, you couldn't answer the simple question of what other developers you met with privately. It's been 24 hours, Minister. You've had time to check your daytimer. What other developers have you met with?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): To the best of my knowledge and belief, since the Greenbelt Act

was first introduced here on October 29, and the draft plan, I have not met with any other developers in a meeting. I may have met them socially somewhere or what have you, but I have not met with any other developers at all to discuss the greenbelt.

Mr. Runciman: When the minister made his commitment on TVO, he had no qualifications whatsoever: no timelines, no social meetings. He simply said he purposely didn't meet with developers.

The minister seems to have a strange relationship with the facts. The minister said yesterday that he met Silvio DeGasperis during game seven of the hockey playoffs and that the greenbelt wasn't a topic of discussion. Of course, those of us who are hockey fans know there was no game seven last year. Minister, we now know that in fact you had a private meeting in your office with Mr. DeGasperis on May 4, 2004, along with your political staff and Mr. DeGasperis's personal planner. In your final maps, Mr. DeGasperis had a \$15-million parcel of land exempted from your greenbelt. What science was this \$15-million land exemption based on?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Yes, you are correct: It was the sixth game of the Stanley Cup playoffs, not the seventh game; you're right. But it was on May 4 last year. I met with him for about—

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: May 4, I believe it was, last year. He wanted to meet with me to specifically talk about the agricultural preserve in Pickering, and he did so. He wanted to know whether or not we would take out of our campaign commitment to preserve it for agricultural lands, and I told him we were not going to do that. It was a commitment we made to the people of Ontario and a commitment we were going to give. He didn't get his way, and that's the end of that particular story.

It's kind of interesting that the MZO with respect to the agricultural preserve was actually put on by David Young, a member of your government, back in 2003. What did the then finance minister, Janet Ecker, say? She said, "Pickering made a deal to protect these lands. The agricultural reserve is a valuable resource. If it's developed now, it's gone forever. That cannot be allowed to happen." Do you want to know something? We agreed with Janet Ecker.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Final supplementary.

Mr. Runciman: I don't think too many Ontario taxpayers would agree that a \$15-million exemption is not getting your way. It's becoming increasingly clear that there was no scientific basis for this \$15-million exemption. So far, the only evidence we see supporting the exemption was a \$10,000 cheque from Mr. DeGasperis, payable to the Liberal Party of Ontario, and a private meeting with Minister Gerretsen on May 4, 2004.

Since you were unable to recall which developers you met with and you've refused to release any science supposing your \$15-million exemption, will you release today your full schedule from the time you initially pro-

posed your greenbelt, December 2003, until now, revealing the name and nature of discussions for every developer you met with? Will you do that, Minister: release the information?

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Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: As part of the consultation process, as I've indicated before in the House, I met with a number of municipal officials and their planners. I received two letters from the mayor of Vaughan, dated November 29 last year and January 28 this year. He specifically asked us to take a look at these lands and see whether they should be included in the greenbelt. We took a look at the lands. We met with the Ministry of Natural Resources people—when I say “we,” I mean the ministry. The natural resources scientists determined that the natural heritage systems of the streams and rivers should be protected and that the tableland, in effect, could be developed. We did exactly what we were asked to do by a council resolution from the city of Vaughan as per the request of the mayor of the city of Vaughan in two letters to us.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Runciman: The mayor takes issue with that as well, but we don't have time to get into that today. We know this story doesn't end with Minister Gerretsen.

My question is to the Acting Premier. We've learned that not only did Mr. DeGasperis meet privately with Minister Gerretsen; he also had private meetings on four separate occasions, between February 9, 2004, and September 8, 2004, with the Premier's top political adviser, David MacNaughton. This is the same David MacNaughton who engineered the McGuinty broken promises on the Oak Ridges moraine, giving developers the green light to build 6,000 houses after the Liberals promised that no houses would be built.

Acting Premier, how can you still claim the greenbelt was based on science when there is so much obvious political involvement in the process?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): It is really unfortunate that the opposition is engaging in tactics to smear the greenbelt. That's what this is all about. It's about smearing an initiative that is going to protect over 800,000 more acres.

Interjection: It's 8,500.

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: I'm sorry, 8,500 more acres. We know that the opposition wants to pave the greenbelt. We know that they are advocates for people who want to pave the greenbelt. Our government has committed to the greenbelt. We said it during our election campaign. We told the developers this is what we were going to do. We've passed the legislation. I know they're not happy, but we're proud of this greenbelt initiative.

Mr. Runciman: This is not just unfortunate; it's unseemly. In today's Globe and Mail, Murray Campbell characterized this issue as “a whiff of scandal.” Now there is a stench about this Liberal government and their dealings with developers.

Acting Premier, your boss isn't here today to answer the tough questions. After claiming all along that the greenbelt was based on science, we now find out that his top political adviser, David MacNaughton, has met with at least one developer four times. Worse, he met with at least one developer during the final drawing of the greenbelt maps and, coincidentally, at least one developer received an exemption worth, in this one case alone, at least \$15 million. How many other developers did the Premier's principal secretary meet with? Will you release his personal schedule today?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: This is obviously a campaign to smear a very progressive initiative this government committed to and has followed through on.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

The Acting Premier.

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: They've asked for the science. It's on the Web site. The Premier sent the science over to them yesterday. They don't want to pay attention to the science. They claim that the developers have had a hand in the shaping of the greenbelt, an area that has only expanded in its scope since we came to office. It has gone beyond our commitment. They're suggesting that somehow developers have benefited from this. I would suggest that developers are in fact the ones who are most unhappy with the fact that this government has had the intestinal fortitude to go beyond our election commitment and to preserve green space in the greater Toronto area.

Mr. Runciman: We've heard the science referred to as voodoo or culinary or political science, certainly not real science. We have guidelines, not real science applied.

Let's review the facts as we know them. We now know that both the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Premier's top political adviser, David MacNaughton, had private meetings with at least one developer while the final greenbelt process was underway. We know several developers met with Premier McGuinty and Minister Sorbara at a private, swanky soirée at the Sorbara household in exchange for \$10,000 donations to the Ontario Liberal Party. The stench now reaches to the highest levels in the Premier's office, yet you continue to refuse to release any science behind the one exemption we know about. Acting Premier, if your government has nothing to hide, will you now agree to a full legislative inquiry into this growing scandal?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: Our government has nothing to hide at all. We're very proud of what we have accomplished with the greenbelt, an initiative that was talked about by Bill Davis, and there has been no government since Bill Davis's that has had the strength of purpose to move forward and protect green space around the greater Toronto area.

I also want to remind the members opposite that the developer they have identified stands to lose far more with the preservation of the Duffins agricultural preserve than block 41, and that's his issue. Block 41 is a red

herring. This developer has sour grapes for this government. We protected the land that he wanted out of the greenbelt and we're not going to apologize for making sure that that land was included, as we said it would be.

The Speaker: New question.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. May I ask the members to come to order. Can you stop the clock for a minute, please. The member for Oak Ridges and the member for Durham, I'm going to ask you to come to order.

New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is to the Acting Premier and it's about Premier McGuinty's secret \$10,000-a-head fundraiser for big developers. We know that big developers contributed \$10,000 each to the Liberal Party so they could have the Premier's ear before the greenbelt boundaries were drawn up. Yesterday, we learned the Minister of Municipal Affairs exempted lands from the greenbelt after holding secret meetings with a developer. But today my question is about other lands that you exempted from the greenbelt. They are called the peach fuzz lands, about 68,000 hectares of prime farmland wedged between Lake Ontario and the greenbelt's southern boundary. Can you tell us what science exempted this prime agricultural land from the greenbelt?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): The lands the member refers to are currently designated rural or agricultural lands. We've done the studies with all of the regional planning commissioners, who have signed off on the population, household and employment targets that we are going to have to accommodate. We expect some 3.7 million people and some two million jobs in this greater Golden Horseshoe region, and we want to have a conversation with municipalities about what the future of those lands should be: if they should be protected or if they should be used for residential or commercial-industrial purposes.

1500

Mr. Hampton: Here is the contradiction: The Christian Farmers say the peach fuzz lands are better farmland than the land you've included in the greenbelt. Environmental groups like the Pembina Institute, Ontario Nature and the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance all say that the science determines that the peach fuzz lands should be in the greenbelt, but they're not in the greenbelt. Why? What we know is this, that \$10,000-a-head secret meetings with the Premier, secret meetings involving the Minister of Municipal Affairs and developers, and presto, land comes out of the greenbelt. I ask again, where's the science that supports excluding the peach fuzz lands, prime agricultural land, from the greenbelt? We've heard excuses. Where's the science?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: There is no mystery to this whatsoever. In fact, our commitment was to include some 600,000 acres in the greenbelt. We've exceeded that with over one million acres in the greenbelt.

We recognize the need for future growth. I know, of course, that my friends in the New Democratic Party do not believe our province should grow. That's a difference of opinion we may have. We are expecting 3.7 million additional residents in the greater Golden Horseshoe and over two million jobs to be created. We think it is important and prudent that we engage municipalities in the future of what those lands should be used for.

Mr. Hampton: This is what the public sees: The public sees a government that keeps talking about science, but here you've got prime agricultural land, some of the best agricultural land in Ontario, and for no scientific reason it's excluded from the greenbelt. What do people see? Questionable secret land deals, swanky, high-priced fundraisers for developers, and backroom decisions on what land gets excluded. Yesterday you tried a little manoeuvre to divert public attention. You brought in your real, watered-down financial disclosure legislation, but your legislation contains a loophole that allows riding associations to continue to accept huge donations from developers, and none of it is disclosed.

Can you tell me, there's no science supporting the exclusion of the peach fuzz lands, what is the science that supports excluding contributions to riding associations from developers, a practice you yourself say is nefarious?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: What the public of Ontario sees is 1.8 million acres of protected lands, the first time that's happened in the province of Ontario.

It's ironic. When the New Democrats were in the government, they wanted to put landfills on top of these lands. We don't think that's acceptable. We think they should be protected. We think Ontarians ought to have that kind of legacy. I understand that we have a different vision than the folks on the left or the folks on the right. We see the ability to be green and to grow, to accommodate an expanding population and an expanding economy, contrary to the views my friends in the New Democratic Party have. I can certainly appreciate that. My friends in the Conservative Party want to pave it all. You don't want to grow. We think you can both green and grow at the same time—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: —and we believe we have struck the right balance.

Our plans in fact are supported by the regional planning commissioners, by municipal officials, by industry—

The Speaker: New question.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the Acting Premier again: What the public sees are big developers paying big bucks and getting their land excluded from the greenbelt.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): The question is to?

Mr. Hampton: To the Acting Premier.

What they see is that your so-called financial disclosure legislation is going to allow developers to continue to make those big dollar contributions through the side door.

Claridge Homes, Sakto Corp., Trinity Development, Homestead Land Holdings, CH2M Hill Construction, the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association: These are developers or development interests that all made big contributions to a certain riding association in 2002 and 2003. Which riding association? Dalton McGuinty's riding association. And your legislation would continue to allow this to happen.

If you don't have any science for excluding the peach fuzz lands, can you tell us what's the science for allowing corporate developers to continue to have these kinds of financial loopholes?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I think that it's important that we identify for the Legislature, for the people who are listening today, that the minister introduced a bill for consideration yesterday for real-time disclosure. When you talk about a loophole, the legislation that he introduced would require any donation of over \$100 to be disclosed within a certain period of—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Would you come to order, please? Minister.

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: The minister responsible has responded to a campaign commitment, to requests from individuals in this Legislature that we would have legislation for real-time disclosure. He introduced that yesterday.

If you want to talk about loopholes, the NDP have introduced a private member's piece of legislation where they would allow \$500 donations to go undisclosed, so I don't think that they're in a very good position to accuse this government of loopholes.

Mr. Hampton: I want to draw the Acting Premier's attention to an article in the Toronto Star in May 2003, where the Toronto Star pointed out, "The Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals have funnelled parts of large donations through riding associations in order to evade the prescribed limits." In fact, the article notes that the former Conservative government was able to raise \$1 million by funnelling it through riding associations, which otherwise wouldn't be available, much of that money coming from developers.

Now we look at your financial disclosure legislation, and what's it going to permit? It's going to permit that same kind of backdoor evasion. You say that this is about protecting green space, and then you tell us that your financial disclosure legislation is about making it all transparent. What is transparent about allowing developers to continue to use the side door and funnel big contributions and never have to disclose them?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: I'm very proud to say today that, with the legislation that was introduced yesterday by the minister, this will make us world leaders when it comes to transparency and accountability. They're

talking about what they claim to be a loophole. I would draw their attention to the loophole in the legislation that they introduced. They think it's perfectly acceptable to have donations of \$500 and less exempt from this qualification. We believe it's important that the people of Ontario have access to that information. That is the legislation that the minister introduced yesterday, and we're very proud of it.

Mr. Hampton: Well, the Toronto Star pointed out that this is a pretty nefarious loophole to allow someone to evade financial disclosure. In fact, someone named George Smitherman, commenting on the article, said, "We think there is too much money in Ontario politics, and we're very committed to reducing that." Then we see your legislation, and it permits exactly the kind of backdoor evasion that you were critical of.

Minister, I've got a simple question for you. We see the same sorts of things happening now that you used to criticize the Conservatives for, the same sorts of things where developers give big money and, presto, suddenly their development land isn't in the greenbelt any more. I think the people of Ontario deserve complete answers to this. Will you support a legislative committee to look at this from A to Z, the financial contributions and what land went into the greenbelt?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: I would suggest that the leader of the third party read the bill that was introduced yesterday, because in the body of the bill there are provisions for a citizens' jury and the citizens' jury will be charged with reviewing election finances reform. So I would suggest to the member opposite that if he is serious about having the people of Ontario review the donation practices for political parties in the province of Ontario, he support this legislation immediately so that we can have a citizens' jury and look at reforms, perhaps the ones that the honourable member is speaking of.

But this legislation, in my opinion, responds to many of the questions—

Interjection.

The Speaker: I'm going to warn the member from Niagara Centre. The next time, it won't be a warning.

New question.

1510

GREENBELT

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It concerns the greenbelt exemption to the developer in the city of Vaughan which, curiously, was just described by the Acting Premier as some sort of balance, some sort of quid pro quo. He didn't get his way in Pickering, but boy, oh, boy, he got one heck of a deal in the city of Vaughan, a \$15-million windfall.

Minister, the assembly is aware of the following facts: Despite your claims to the contrary, you had at least one secret meeting with developers, maybe more, including the developer in question. Ongoing meetings took place with your political staff. We found out today that at least

four meetings took place with the Premier's top political adviser, David MacNaughton. We know the developer in question attended a \$10,000-per-person soirée fundraiser. The neighbours didn't get an exemption, but this developer got an exemption big-time, a \$15-million windfall.

Surely, Minister, in light of these facts, you went back to your office last night and said to your staff, "Give me the science. I've got to answer the questions." Where's the science behind this particular exemption in the city of Vaughan in the finance minister's riding?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): As I mentioned earlier, as part of the consultation process, I met with the political leadership and the planning officials of the various regions and areas. In addition to that, we got two letters from the city of Vaughan, from the mayor of the city of Vaughan, dated November 20, in which he asks us not to put these lands in the greenbelt, and a letter dated January 28. In that letter, it states that the rural and agricultural lands proposed to be designated as greenbelt are of marginal agricultural quality and are fragmented to smaller landholders. Then he goes on to say, "We don't think that they should be in the greenbelt."

We then took this information—the ministry did—and went with the Ministry of Natural Resources, the science that was approved and suggested and developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and that was part of the Greenbelt Task Force recommendations. We took another look at these areas and determined that what really needed to be protected from a natural resource viewpoint were the waterways—the streams, the rivers, etc.—and that's what we did. We did exactly what the city of Vaughan wanted us to do, and it was confirmed by the science of the Ministry of Natural Resources. That's exactly what the consultation process is all about.

Mr. Hudak: The letters we've received from the city of Vaughan say something else entirely. We want the science. The minister claims that this plan is based on science.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Order. I'd like to hear the member from Erie-Lincoln's question.

Mr. Hudak: Surely the minister would have brought forward the detailed science, referenced a stream that was misplaced, a wetland that was misplaced, some way of demonstrating through the science that you claim is behind the greenbelt why this exemption was granted. You have failed to answer those questions despite two days of questions here in the assembly.

Minister, this is looking more like a greenbotch and not a greenbelt. It undermines your credibility; it undermines the credibility of the plan. Any minister worthy of the title would have gone back to his office, raised bloody hell, brought forth the science today and answered these questions. Minister, answer the questions. Produce the science today.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: The science that has been used by both the Ministry of Natural Resources and in the

LEAR system by the Ministry of Agriculture in fact was put in place by that party when they were in power, and we used the science to determine what should be protected from an agricultural viewpoint and what should be protected from a sensitive-environmental-lands viewpoint.

We followed that process here and elsewhere. We met with the municipal leadership, who after all are the elected councils for their particular areas and who are the people who speak on behalf of the public interest in that area. We took that information, we did exactly what the consultation process is all about, and I'm very pleased to report that we added an extra 8,500 acres of land to the greenbelt area as a result of the entire consultation process that has taken place over the last four or five months.

WOMEN'S SHELTERS AND SECOND-STAGE HOUSING

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a question for the Minister responsible for women's issues. Minister, you've honoured International Women's Day by re-announcing money promised by the Tories to shelters and second-stage housing, to use for repairs. It's time for you to honour the promises you made to these groups and Ontario women.

Housing for women fleeing domestic violence is in scarce supply. As a result, women in shelters are forced to choose between returning to an abusive home or homelessness. You promised to reinstate core funding for second-stage housing programs, but you never kept that promise, and second-stage housing programs are now in even greater crisis.

I've talked to many of them, Minister, and so should you. They have a message for you: Please keep your promise. Today, on International Women's Day, will you finally listen to them and reinstate funding, as promised, to second-stage housing in this province?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I was very happy today to have a province-wide \$2-million announcement for our second-stage housing providers and shelters across the province. Some 98 agencies have benefited from new funding, not the last government's funding. The facts you have are simply incorrect. Yes, the last government provided \$8 million over five or six years for new shelters across the province, over the course of several years. This is new money, and the shelters and second-stage housing providers are well aware that it's new money. It is for refurbishing. It speaks to the security measures that some of these places need: in some cases, bullet-proof windows, enhanced security systems, better lighting; in some cases it's just fixing up the place, like any of us would do with our older homes.

These places have appreciated this. They appreciate the fact that the Ontario government has brought second-stage housing providers back into the fold for the first

time in many years. Does this sector need additional help? Of course they do. Are we working toward moving a step forward for women every day? Of course we are.

Ms. Churley: Minister, you're breaking your promise to second-stage housing. Just admit it. You said in the election, and before, that you weren't going to reinstate the odious policy made by the previous government, and you're doing it. Just admit it.

A lack of housing is another broken promise, and it's the prime reason women and their children return to an abusive home. A library of coroners' reports has said there needs to be more affordable housing so women don't have to make this terrible choice. But your government has not put any shovels in the ground to build the 20,000 affordable housing units you promised. Instead, you are holding up construction by not matching the \$300 million in federal funds. These stalling tactics are costing women and children the housing they need to be safe.

Minister, seize the day today. Keep your promise. Will you build this affordable housing? Will you announce that you're putting shovels in the ground today?

Hon. Ms. Papatello: My colleague, the minister responsible for infrastructure, is desperate to answer this question.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): A little over a year ago, I was with Andy Mitchell, the minister responsible for CMHC, and Toronto Mayor David Miller, and at that time we announced tens of millions of dollars for new affordable housing projects right across Ontario—in fact, so far, in a little over a year, some 3,400 units of affordable housing. I don't know where the member gets her facts from, but it's probably from the same research that indicates absolutely a lack of understanding about what we've done. In fact, I attended a groundbreaking just one month ago for a 230-unit affordable housing project. My colleague in London—

1520

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Order. I think as one starts to address the other, colleagues and members don't want to hear the question. We're going to go to a new question.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Let's get some proper decorum in the House, please. The member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

WATER EXTRACTION AND QUALITY

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Last Wednesday, thousands of farmers from across Ontario assembled here on the grounds of Queen's Park, and a lot of those people are constituents of mine. They came to express their concerns about issues like the BSE crisis, low commodity prices, environmental issues, farm incomes and support programs.

I walked out among those farmers and spoke to them, and I know you did the same. Some of the farmers I spoke with have expressed concerns about the \$750 application fee that accompanies the new water-taking regulations that were introduced earlier this year. They did not dispute the importance of protecting Ontario's water. As farmers and well owners, their livelihoods and personal health are dependent upon the availability of safe and clean water. However, they believe that the introduction of this fee amidst all their other business challenges now belies the government's commitment to address their concerns. Minister, what assurances can you give these farmers that the government's commitment to address their concerns includes re-examining the need for this application fee?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the demonstration we had last week by the farmers. I want to congratulate the organizers. They were able to make their points very succinctly and very peacefully.

I did have an opportunity to walk among them and hear their issues, and you're right: The permit to take water application fees was an issue. I know as well that the elected representatives of farm organizations have made that point with the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture.

I'm very happy that as a result of these meaningful consultations, I am able to say today that the Ministry of the Environment is going to cancel the application fees for farmers. We thank all of the farmers who assisted us in working toward this.

Mrs. Van Bommel: That is certainly great news, and I know the farmers in my constituency, and as a matter of fact all the farmers across the province, are very happy to hear that.

Minister, another issue, while I have your attention, is that I continue to hear—

Interjections.

Mrs. Van Bommel: I'm going to go for more.

Another issue that I hear a lot about from people in my riding is the potential impact of the drinking water systems regulation, regulation 170, that has an impact on community halls and small businesses in rural Ontario. The previous government introduced regulation 170 without consulting the people it would affect. Therefore, I know that you, as Minister of the Environment, ordered a review of regulation 170 last spring. That review included public consultations in 12 rural communities across Ontario last fall, and that included Chatham-Kent, which is in my riding. I know that you provided an update of the review of regulation 170 at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference in February. Can you update the members of the Legislature and the public in rural Ontario about this review of 170?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: Indeed, I have heard a great deal about regulation 170. I've got a copy of that regulation, which was signed by Bob Runciman actually, and there's no question—I am very happy, though, that the Advisory Council On Drinking Water Quality was

able to provide its recommendations to me. We look forward in the near future to posting those regulations on the EBR. We have also received recommendations from the AMO-ROMA task force.

There is a common thread to many of the recommendations that have come. One of the key areas where we see some commonality is that the recommendations we are considering now will involve the public health units. We are going to consider that perhaps they can resume a greater role in providing testing services, particularly for community halls and small businesses, for which the cost of the water testing regimen that's in place now has been very prohibitive.

We look forward in the weeks ahead to working out a regulation that is going to be workable, particularly for people in rural Ontario. We're very appreciative of all the people who have helped us to build and improve this drastically flawed regulation.

GREENBELT

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln): Back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: The minister said that it was not proper—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Order. I'd like to hear the member from Erie—Lincoln's question.

Mr. Hudak: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: You said it was not proper for you to meet with developers during certain periods in the greenbelt consultations. Why, then, is it okay for your political staff and the Premier's top political adviser to do so?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): Once again, I met with Mr. DeGasperis on May 4 last year, during the time the Greenbelt Task Force was setting up the criteria they reported on in August of last year. Following that time, I made a decision personally that I was not going to meet with any particular landowners within the greenbelt. I didn't do that. I met with their duly elected councils, with planners. I took various trips around to take a look at some of the areas.

We had 1,200 submissions from individuals, from municipalities, from different interest groups etc. They were all looked at by the ministry people, taking into account the science that was adopted both through the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture, to see whether or not we had the greenbelt right. I'm very pleased to report that at the end of the day we got it right, because we got over a million acres of land for permanent protection added to the 800,000—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Hudak: A very puzzling answer, quite frankly, by the minister. I asked a very simple and direct question. If you set a standard that said it was improper for you to meet with developers during a certain time period, why then is it not improper for your political staff, your representatives, for the Premier's top political adviser, his principal secretary, Mr. David MacNaughton, to meet

with the developers? Why the double standard, and why are you avoiding this question?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: I have no knowledge as to who else met with whom with respect to the greenbelt. I know that some of my staff people and some of the ministry people certainly met with the 1,200 people who made submissions to our greenbelt consultation process. Consultation is to make sure you've got it right, and I believe that the end result of this entire process is that we do have it right. We, as a matter of fact, added an additional 8,500 acres from the draft plan, the draft mapping, that was produced at the same time the legislation was introduced on October 28.

This is something future generations can be proud of. This is really all about the ag preserve. I would like to know where the Tories stand. Are they in favour of the greenbelt or not? They voted against it. Do they really want to pave over the ag preserve? Is that really what it's all about?

NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT SUPPLEMENT

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): In the absence of the Minister of Community and Social Services, my question is to the Acting Premier. Madam Acting Premier, today is International Women's Day. We've heard all of your lofty goals, we've heard your ideals, but what I want to hear is what you're not saying, and what you're not saying is that you're going to end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement. That's what you're not saying. There are 91,000 Ontario families affected by your non-action, and fully 60% of those, or 55,000, are led by single mothers.

If there was one thing you could do to help women in this province today, it would be to end that clawback. Today, on International Women's Day, will you show some integrity, will you show some action to your lofty words? Will you end the clawback?

1530

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I am very happy to report that the moment this government took office almost a year and a half ago, we immediately changed the policy. All new funding from the federal government through the national child benefit has been flowing directly to families in this province. The total in that first year was \$7 million.

What we acknowledge is that we have a \$200-million issue. We are one of eight provinces across the country that continue to claw this back from that initial allotment from the federal government. We know this. We also understand that we were not delivered a balanced budget like we were promised by the last government. That has had a huge effect on the amount of time it takes for us to deliver on everything we want to do for families in Ontario.

So let me be clear: The moment we took office, we changed that policy, so that funding is flowing through to families. We hope we can continue to do that. As we move forward, we take a step forward every day in helping families that need help in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): The member for Hamilton East.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): The bottom line, Madam Minister, is that where I live in Hamilton, eight out of 10 single mothers with children under six are living in poverty. They're going hungry because you claw back their child benefit supplement by \$122 per child every month, enough to keep those poor families from going to the food bank. How can you claim to be an advocate for women when you continue to discriminate against women in our province who are living in poverty? You promised to end this clawback. You broke your promise. Women and children need to eat.

New Democrats today are calling for an immediate end to your clawback. Will you advocate for children? Will you agree? Will you end it now?

Hon. Ms. Papatello: I think it is not a fair characterization of the significant work we have done for a year and a half; in a very short time, let me tell you. For the first time, families—including in Hamilton, as this member has mentioned—have benefited by \$57 million of federal child care money finally going into child care to help all families, especially moms and children in this province; millions more dollars in nutrition programs, in breakfast programs—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Member for Nepean–Carleton, I'm going to warn you this time: Allow the minister to respond to the question.

Minister?

Hon. Ms. Papatello: One of the first things we did was reinstate the nutritional supplement for moms who are on welfare, something that never should have been taken away. In addition, we have funded healthy babies programs like never before: millions of dollars in breakfast programs to feed children across this province. We have made a 3% increase to families on welfare and ODSP. It's not enough, but we know it's a start. We have continued from day one to change some very difficult policies in this ministry to make life better for people who need it. I stand on that record, and I will continue to work for the—

The Speaker: Thank you.

HYDRO PROJECT

Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham): My question is for the Minister of Energy. For quite some time, my constituents in Markham have been extremely concerned with regard to Hydro One's proposal to run high-voltage transmission lines through high-density residential areas. Many people, including municipal councils, school boards and residents, have raised these concerns, and I support them 100%. As you are aware, I have raised

these very concerns with the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky; the Minister of Education; and with your staff at the Ministry of Energy. I have been asking, on behalf of the people of Markham, that a proper examination of more feasible long-term alternatives take place. It is also imperative that a responsible process be implemented to ensure that any and all health and environmental implications are addressed. Hydro One has demonstrated reluctance in examining possible alternative solutions to the energy demands of York region and in addressing the concerns of my constituents. Minister, is the government prepared to look at alternatives to Hydro One's proposal—

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Thank you. Minister of Energy?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): I want to thank the member for the question and for the hard work he's done for the last year, advocating on behalf of the people of Markham.

Under Bill 100, we have given the Ontario Power Authority the ability to do regional plans as well. Accordingly, the Ontario Power Authority and the Ontario Energy Board are beginning a process to review the electricity needs of York region. The process will survey a variety of options for the region. I expect the OPA will consult, but, most importantly, I can tell the member that Hydro One has informed me that it is withdrawing its application to the Ministry of the Environment, pending the outcome of the OPA's review. I know the member will want to assure his constituents that the process that's set up will allow them to have fair hearing to be heard on a range of issues, and will allow York region to look at things other than transmission lines, including distributed generation.

Mr. Wong: Minister, that is great news for the people of Markham. I have listened to the people in my riding and have worked to bring forward their legitimate concerns. The people of Markham are entitled to know that their community's energy needs will be met, without having to sacrifice their health or that of their children or environmental safety. I have consulted with many of my constituents and a number of groups that are concerned about these very issues, and I have committed to ensuring that their concerns are heard and addressed.

As you know, I have raised our concerns over the failure to examine alternative options to the Hydro One proposal on numerous occasions, and I am pleased to hear that these options will now be explored.

Minister, can you tell me and the people of Markham what specifically the mandate of the OPA will be with regard to examining the power needs of York region?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: The OPA's broad mandate is to be responsible for ensuring long-term adequacy of supply of electricity, including medium- and long-term demand and supply forecasting, conservation and load management. The OPA will assess the electricity needs of York region and provide the Ontario Energy Board with recommendations on how to meet these needs. This process will look at transmission options and generation options,

including distributed generation and demand-side management. It's anticipated to take about 10 months.

I want to thank the member for his very passionate representations on behalf of his constituents that will allow us to have a better look at what the future needs of Markham and York region are with respect to power. He deserves an enormous amount of credit for the hard work he did on this file.

GREENBELT

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. You ask us to trust you that the greenbelt borders are based on the best science and the best planning advice that was available, even though you cannot provide any real science. You ask us to believe that the greenbelt boundary has been drawn fairly and impartially, yet we find you are holding meetings with developers about the greenbelt after you said you would not.

Minister, this is not the first time you have asked us to trust you. On September 20 of last year, I questioned you in committee about new powers your Planning Act changes would give to the cabinet and you to intervene in OMB planning decisions. What was your response? You told the committee, "I, for one, certainly don't intend to abuse" these new powers.

Minister, when you said that, I took you at your word. Now we find out you are meeting with developers when you said you wouldn't, and that boundary lines can be changed with no basis. Will your government call a full legislative—

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Thank you.

Could I explain the rules again. When I do stand up as the Speaker, I would require that the members sit down; therefore, your time for the question is over because I have given a minute in which to ask the question. I know that if we stop giving speeches and ask the question, it may be more helpful.

Minister?

1540

Hon. John Gerretsen: I have great respect for the member opposite and all the work she does. But let me just say this: The science that has been used was recommended to us by the Greenbelt Task Force. They specifically talked about what systems should be put into place to determine the limitations of the greenbelt through environmental protection rules, agricultural rules, natural resources rules, culture, recreation and tourism rules and transportation infrastructure rules. We used that. We used the best possible scientific information that was developed by them when they were in government, by both the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture.

We did that and, yes, there were some boundary lines changed with respect to the greenbelt. For example, the headwaters of the various streams and rivers were included as part of the naturally protected area. That's

what the greenbelt is based on and that generations in the future will thank us for preserving for them.

The Speaker: The member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): Minister, I just want to say that nobody believes you. You're trying to leave behind an environmental legacy called the greenbelt in your one-term government, and what you're probably going to leave behind is an environmental scandal of the worst kind in Ontario history.

Minister, it appears that what we do know—

Interjections.

The Speaker: I would like to hear the member from Simcoe–Grey. I'd ask the minister—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. The Minister of the Environment and others have been quite boisterous and I cannot hear what the member from Simcoe–Grey is saying. Would you put your supplementary?

Mr. Wilson: Minister, we know you haven't produced the science and you're refusing to do so. We know that if a developer has a meeting with you and then drops \$10,000 into the pockets of the Liberal Party of Ontario and meets with the Premier and the finance minister, you get your worthless piece of land worth \$15 million overnight. The maps change overnight.

This has the smell of scandal. You have the integrity and honesty of your government at heart here. Why won't you call a full legislative inquiry and get rid of the impression that your government can be bought?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: As I mentioned before, the meeting I had with Mr. DeGasperis was well before we even started the greenbelt process because we hadn't received the Greenbelt Task Force report yet. The ministry didn't start working on that until some time in July or August, months after this meeting took place. The meeting specifically took place because he wanted us to remove the agricultural preserve from our commitment in our platform during the election campaign. He did not want us to honour that commitment. He wanted to see that land developed and we said, "No, the agricultural preserve is going to be preserved for farmland." Not only that, we went one step further and put it into the greenbelt to make sure that it is protected for generations to come.

I would like to know, what is John Tory's position on that? Does he want the agricultural preserve or not? That's what I'd like to know. What's their position on that?

LABOUR UNIONS

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): To the Minister of Labour: Wal-Mart is the most anti-union boss in North America. It will go to any length to destroy unions in its workplaces and deny its workers the right to freely, collectively bargain as members of a trade union. You know that a strong, clear majority of the working women and men at Wal-Mart in Windsor have signed union cards joining up with the United Food and Commercial

Workers Union. You also know that Wal-Mart will go to any length to attack, undermine and destroy their union bid. When a clear, strong majority has signed union cards, like those women and men at Wal-Mart, why won't you let them take advantage of card certification to organize into a labour union?

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour): As the member knows, the Minister of Labour would not be commenting on any matter that is before the board. What I am pleased to report is that in the amendments that we have introduced in the Labour Relations Amendment Act, there are two amendments that apply to all workers to ensure—not commenting on this case—that the process of a worker choosing whether or not to be a member of a union will be absolutely scrupulous and fair.

Those two amendments, applicable to all workers, are, first, remedial certification: For those cases in which an employer seriously breaches the Labour Relations Act and removes the workers' effective right to choose, and for which there is no other remedy, the board would have the power, if these amendments are passed, of certifying the union. Second, there is an interim reinstatement power to ensure that if a worker is disciplined or fired because of their involvement in a union organizing drive, the board would have the power to reinstate them on an interim basis to ensure that the process is fair.

Mr. Kormos: Wal-Mart will go to any length to undermine union organization in its workplaces. We've already seen them shut down stores to deny workers their right to freely collectively bargain as members of a trade union.

Card-based certification is hardly a radical proposal. It was the law in Ontario for decades under NDP, Liberal and Conservative governments. You're prepared to give it to construction trades workers, but you exclude retail and other sector workers, showing absolute contempt for those working women and men. And I tell you, in the retail sector, they're mostly women, mostly new Canadians and, in places like Wal-Mart, at some of the lowest possible wages.

Minister, please show the courage that workers expect and restore the laws that even existed under Bill Davis. Why don't you pass NDP Bill 151 and give all workers in Ontario the same right to join a union with the same process?

Hon. Mr. Bentley: I thank the member for the supplementary. We look forward to his support of the labour relations amendment act, which will ensure fair and balanced legislation in the province of Ontario.

We're actually very proud of our legislative record to date for assisting women, for assisting all workers, for assisting the most vulnerable workers in Ontario. Whether it's the first two minimum wage increases in nine years, the family medical leave legislation, the end of the 60-hour workweek—the list could go on—we're very proud of our record in assisting all workers in the province—women, the most vulnerable—in ensuring a fairer workplace system in Ontario.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): The member for Oak Ridges has a point of order.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I rise on a point of order pursuant to standing order 97(d).

You will recall that on March 1, I brought a matter to your attention. At that time, there were seven specific questions that I had put forward to the Minister of Education. There was an undertaking on that day by the House leader—I refer to Hansard—in which he rose and made the statement, "It is my understanding that those questions will be tabled today."

Speaker, to this day, I have only received two of the seven responses. I appeal to you again to use your authority to ensure that the Minister of Education complies with the standing orders of this House. I don't know on what basis the House leader undertook and committed that those would be delivered that day, but it hasn't happened.

Interjection.

The Speaker: My understanding is that all the questions have been responded to. Maybe you might check with the—

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): Check the Orders and Notices.

1550

PETITIONS

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition that's entitled "Protect Our Farmers."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers and rural Ontarians have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen's Park due to the lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government; and

"Whereas the Rural Revolution believes that rural Ontario is in crisis, and will be demonstrating their resolve and determination at Queen's Park on March 9th;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to deal with the serious issue of farm income, as brought forward by the Rural Revolution resolutions to respect property and prosperity, as follows:

"Federal and provincial governments have created—"

Interjections.

Mr. Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I can't hear—

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Order. I also want respect to be extended to the member who is reading the petition.

Interjections.

The Speaker: It seems to me that neither the member from Durham nor the Minister of Agriculture and Food wants to hear that. I'd like some silence in which I could hear the member from Oxford and his petition.

Mr. Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for bringing order to the House. This was the same problem the farmers on the lawn said, that the minister did a lot more speaking than listening.

“Federal and provincial governments have created a bureaucratic environment that legalizes the theft of millions of dollars for rural businesses and farm income. All money found to be removed from the rural land-owners, farmers and businesses shall be returned.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

“Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and economies of the local communities;

“Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into ‘centres of excellence’ to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live.”

I’m in agreement and would affix my signature thereto.

ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): My petition is from the residents of my riding of Niagara Falls.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is no established province-wide standard to deal with anaphylactic shock in Ontario schools; and

“Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylactic shock in the Education Act; and

“Whereas anaphylactic shock is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

“Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

“Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all schools in Ontario;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, request that the McGuinty government support the passing of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, which requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan.”

I’m pleased to sign this petition.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Another group of petitions from the Huronia Regional Centre.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

“Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and economies of the local communities;

“Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into ‘centres of excellence’ to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live.”

I’m pleased to sign my name to these.

WOMEN’S HEALTH CENTRE

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I appreciate, on International Women’s Day, introducing a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on behalf of the Women’s Health Care Centre in Peterborough.

“The women’s health centre supports raped and physically abused women, nursing mothers and women going through menopause. It also provides physical exams for women and information on family planning. The closing of this facility would leave a void that is not filled by any other service in Peterborough.

“We, the undersigned, feel that the Women’s Health Centre of Peterborough, Ontario, is vital to our community and should not have its funding cut....”

I’ll put my signature on this petition.

MUNICIPAL JURISDICTION

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): This petition relates to municipal powers.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers and rural Ontarians have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen’s Park due to a lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government; and

“Whereas the Rural Revolution believes that rural Ontario is in crisis due to lost property rights and a crushing regulatory burden, and they will be demonstrating their resolve and determination at Queen’s Park on March 9th;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to consider the issue of municipal jurisdiction brought forward by the Rural Revolution’s resolutions to respect property and prosperity as follows:

“Resolution number 5: Municipal governments shall be constituted to take control and jurisdiction over matters that pertain to their constituents.

“Resolution number 9: All municipalities forced or coerced with amalgamations shall hold a binding referendum on de-amalgamation at the next general election.”

I affix my signature to these petitions.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into ‘centres of excellence’ to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live.”

Thank you for allowing me to present this petition.

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): I am pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled “Protect Individual Rights.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers and rural Ontarians have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen’s Park due to a lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government; and

“Whereas the Rural Revolution believes that rural Ontario is in crisis due to lost prosperity, property rights and crushing regulatory burdens on rural Ontarians and will be demonstrating their resolve and determination at Queen’s Park on March 9th;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address the issues of respecting property rights as in the Rural Revolution’s resolutions to respect property rights and prosperity as follows:

“Resolution number 1: The right to own, use, enjoy, and the opportunity to earn a living from private property is the basis of freedom and democracy.

“Resolution number 2: Private property shall not be rezoned, redesignated or reclassified in any manner that limits the natural and private use of property without fair and timely compensation.

“Resolution number 7: The proposed greenbelt legislation shall be amended to respect property rights as mentioned in resolutions 1 and 2.

“Resolution number 11: All entry on to private lands by government officials shall only be conducted with the informed consent of the property owner or under the authority of a search warrant.”

I am pleased to sign this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham who feel their rights are threatened.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Garfield Dunlop, the member for Simcoe North, has given me a petition that I am pleased to present.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

“Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

“Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into ‘centres of excellence’ to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live.”

I’ve affixed my signature as well. Page Jason from south St. Catharines is taking that to the Clerks’ table.

1600

CONTROL OF SMOKING

Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas 20% of the adult population, or 1.8 million adults in Ontario, continue to smoke; and

“Whereas hospitality concepts like bars, pubs, taverns, nightclubs, Legions, bingo halls, racetracks and casinos are businesses with a high percentage of patrons who smoke; and

“Whereas more than 700 businesses in Ontario have invested tens of thousands of dollars each to construct a designated smoking room to comply with municipal bylaws;

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

“Permit properly ventilated and separated designated smoking rooms in hospitality establishments that regulate and control employee and customer exposure to second-hand smoke.”

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the table staff.

Nays

Baird, John R.	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Kormos, Peter	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Scott, Laurie
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia	Yakubuski, John
Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 55; the nays are 20.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 3, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 167, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 167, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Pursuant to the order of the House dated March 7, 2005, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Kennedy has moved second reading of Bill 167, An Act to amend the Education Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those against, say “nay.”

I think the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1600 to 1610.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the table staff.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Patten, Richard
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Bountrogiani, Marie	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brown, Michael A.	Kennedy, Gerard	Racco, Mario G.
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Cordiano, Joseph	Marsales, Judy	Smitherman, George
Craiton, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Wong, Tony C.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Oraziotti, David	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Parsons, Ernie	

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION

Mr Kennedy moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 167, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 167, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House dated March 7, 2005, I am required to now put the question. Is it the pleasure of the house that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I wish to inform the House that I have just received a notice from the chief government whip that the vote will be deferred until Wednesday, March 9, at the time of deferred votes.

PLACES TO GROW ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR LES ZONES DE CROISSANCE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 7, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 136, An Act respecting the establishment of growth plan areas and growth plans / Projet de loi 136, Loi sur l'établissement de zones de croissance planifiée et de plans de croissance.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): I'm pleased to join in this debate for about 20 minutes this afternoon on Bill 136, which is the Liberal government's Places to Grow legislation. It's a shame that this legislation is a compendium to the greenbelt legislation, Bill 135. It's being brought forward at a time when there are allegations of scandal around this whole greenbelt and how the maps were drawn. We've been raising it in the Legislature over the past few days. The government refuses to have a full legislative inquiry to get to the bottom and to clear the air

of how at least one developer can have his 100-acre parcel of land put in the original maps by the Liberal government, put in the greenbelt, meaning he can't develop that land, yet once that developer makes the rounds of some senior Liberal people—cabinet ministers, the Premier and the finance minister—and puts \$10,000 into the pockets of the Ontario Liberal Party at a \$10,000-a-plate dinner at Greg Sorbara's brother's house, lo and behold, his land comes out of the greenbelt. It's exempt from the greenbelt, and its value goes from zero—it can't be developed—

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the member to remember the tradition of the House, which is to refer to other members of the House by either their riding name or their ministry name.

Mr. Wilson: The land's worth nothing when it's put in the greenbelt plan originally. As I said, this particular developer admits he made the rounds. He talked to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Later he went to a \$10,000-a-plate dinner at the finance minister's brother's house, along with the Premier. According to his own admission, the developer says that he got his land exempt. It goes from useless and devalued—a nice environmental piece of land to look at, but you can't develop it in the original greenbelt plan—to being worth about, we estimate, some \$15 million. That's quite an investment, when you can plop \$10,000 into the Liberal coffers and end up with almost a \$15-million net return.

This bill is clouded by this whole discussion, and we call upon the government again to have a full legislative inquiry. You can have reduced terms of reference, you can put a time limit on it, but I think it's only fair to the Liberals in this province, actually, that if this greenbelt was going to be their environmental legacy—seven ministers were present when they originally announced the legislation. This is what Premier McGuinty wants his government, in this term—and I think they are going to be a one-term government—to be remembered for, and yet we have all of these problems and allegations that are putting a real taint on what could be a very good process, on what could be a very good legacy for the province.

1620

The fact of the matter is, the bill will be remembered as a scandal unless they get to the bottom, and the only way to clear the air is to have an all-party committee, a full legislative committee, so that that committee itself isn't tainted, there is representation from all the parties, and we can figure out who drew the lines.

We've got one of the mayors who was chair of the task force saying he made recommendations but he suspects the lines were changed in the Premier's office. We've got the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing changing his story all the time. One day he has talked to the developer; the next day he hasn't talked to the developer; then the time frame changes on when he talked to the developer. All we know is that at the end of the day there was a piece of land in the greenbelt and, lo and behold, \$10,000 later, it comes out of the greenbelt and it's worth \$15 million.

This particular legislation is similar to the Smart Growth panels and the Smart Growth plan that our government was working on before the people of Ontario decided that we needed a rest on the opposition side of this House. It hasn't been a rest at all. This government didn't have its traditional honeymoon. Usually the first year and a half or so isn't so bad for a government, but they've had a terrible time. I think the Conservatives along with the NDP have done a very good job in opposition of pointing out many of the flaws in the government plans.

The fact of the matter is, this particular legislation has some flaws. At least we don't see in the Places to Grow book, which I reread again last night—as transportation critic, there is no transportation plan.

I'm talking on behalf of the riding in central Ontario that's probably the most affected by this legislation. I think down in the Niagara area it will have a huge effect with the greenbelt and Places to Grow. But with the leapfrog effect, with the Oak Ridges moraine frozen and with the greenbelt map as it is today, all the development then leapfrogs up to north of Highway 9—my riding goes south to Highway 9—and it starts in the Beaton-Bond Head-West Gwillimbury-Bradford area and it creeps up to—Places to Grow recognizes Barrie as one of the 25 urban communities that is trying to achieve 40% intensification.

The fact of the matter is, we have huge development pressures right now. I want to remind the government, while you did, in your final map for the greenbelt, move the boundaries to include more of the Holland Marsh, and I commend you for that, what's wrong with the land on the other side of Highway 9? It's the best potato land in Ontario. It's the potato capital of Ontario. If you're going to follow through, you're going to have to help those municipalities where there is tremendous development pressure right now.

We know we have to have development. I agree with the government, because they are following our Smart Growth plans, that we need to control that development. But at the end of the day, you have done two things wrong, that I can see, with the greenbelt.

One thing is that you didn't compensate farmers for the land you're taking away from them or devaluing. It's hurting them right now with their bank managers. I'm going to talk more about this in a few minutes, but tomorrow thousands of farmers are again expected to land on the front lawn of this Legislature, this time sponsored by the Lanark Landowners' Association. Randy Hillier is the president of that, and he has made it very clear that these farmers are as angry as the 6,000 farmers who were here last year—last week.

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Standing order 23(b)(i) suggests that my colleague across the hall should address the topic under discussion. As important as farming issues may be, it's not the bill.

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the member for Simcoe—Grey to continue.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your ruling.

I said the farmers who were here last year; I meant the farmers who were here last week.

This whole bill, Bill 136, Places to Grow—I say to the honourable member across the way, where are you going to grow? You’re going to grow in Simcoe–Grey, I assume by your own maps, particularly around Barrie, Bradford, Alliston and Collingwood. Your bill deals with controlling that growth, but your first step in trying to buy people into this process, I’m trying to argue, has been horrible. You have angry farmers whose land has been devalued as a result of the compendium legislation—Bill 135, the greenbelt legislation—which you’ve already passed in this House. They’re madder than heck, and tomorrow, apparently, they’re not going to take it any more.

In fact, Randy Hillier is quoted in the Brantford Expositor of March 4 as saying of the Lanark Landowners’ Association, “The lambs were in to Queen’s Park yesterday,”—referring to last week’s near-riot on the front yard—“the lions will be there next week,” referring to tomorrow’s demonstration. In the article, when asked by the reporter what he plans to do, he says there’s going to be a big surprise. So I would encourage people to stay tuned tomorrow. I don’t want to incite any violence and I don’t think they’ll be violent, but the Lanark Landowners’ Association and the thousands of farmers who will come here will give a very clear message to this government, as last week’s group did.

Bill 136, this very bill, is on their list of 11 resolutions, which I will read in. They don’t like the greenbelt because you didn’t compensate farmers. I haven’t had the time to do the full history, but I did live in Ottawa for three years when I worked for the Honourable Perrin Beatty for three years, and I recall the stories there when the greenbelt around Ottawa began to be bought up in the 1970s by the National Capital Commission. I believe that in today’s dollars it’s about \$1 billion. But the federal government did spend the money to compensate people. John Baird, the member for Nepean–Carleton, indicates that one of their family farms was “confiscated,” as he says, because he says his father—it was either his father or his grandfather—never felt that they got enough money, but at least the government did do fair market value and bought out the farmers with the Ottawa greenbelt.

We argued that that should be done with this greenbelt. It is a significant move forward in the environmental history of this province, I’ll grant you that, but it’s going to breed a lot of resentment. We’ve heard from our NDP colleagues that this greenbelt is, as the member for Toronto–Danforth called it yesterday, the floating greenbelt. People are under the impression that this greenbelt was put in legislation. No; the legislation enabled the planners and developers and whoever else had their hands in drawing the maps to draw the maps, but the actual maps aren’t part of the legislation; they can be changed by future governments through regulation and a

process that, so far—the process that this government has set up— isn’t transparent.

So if we don’t get to the bottom of this alleged scandal now, things are going to get worse because every day developers are going to come in and say, “If that guy paid \$10,000 and he was able to get his land out,” then surely to God they’ll be trying to find ways to do that for themselves to get their land out. I wouldn’t blame individual farm owners in trying to find ways to get their land exempt, given that it has been devalued in a very unfair way.

Secondly, the money isn’t in place with respect to this Places to Grow legislation. We had set aside \$1.25 billion for what we called the Golden Horseshoe Transit Investment Partnerships program, which was our down-payment to at least get public transit and some new roads and highways expanded in the province in those areas where we expected, under Smart Growth, that we would see intensification and greater urbanization in places like Barrie.

The fact of the matter is, this government has put nothing forward. There has been no new road built in this province in the last 18 months—none announced; nothing expanded. In fact, they cancelled Highway 26 in Collingwood. We’re still waiting for an answer on that. I want to thank Terry Geddes, the mayor of Collingwood, and Ellen Anderson-Noel, whom I met with here at Queen’s Park this morning, for their championing of Highway 26 along with myself. That’s a really sad story, and it indicates that the government isn’t willing to put its money where its legislation is. It indicates that the government has no transportation plan; what they’ve done with the greenbelt is actually contrary—I only took two planning courses at the University of Toronto, but both of them said that by this time, certainly by the year 2000, we were all to work near our homes, we were supposed to walk to work and to be able to shop, and our cars would be relics in a garage.

1630

The fact of the matter is that the greenbelt, for my riding, means that some 40,000 cars a day have to drive through the greenbelt to come to their jobs in Toronto—all that smog, all that pollution. All this does is say, “There’ll be no jobs in the Vaughan area; there’ll be no jobs where everything’s frozen.” You have to live in Barrie, you have to live in Orillia, you have to live in Collingwood, but there’s no economic plan for the province to put a plant up there anywhere. In fact, we just had four closures in Collingwood since you guys came in.

The fact of the matter is, we’re all going to have to get in our cars. There’s no public transit. You haven’t even got the GO train to Barrie yet, which is something you promised. Surely to goodness we had laid the groundwork for that. You could have not just announced it in your first 16 months; you could have actually done it by now. The tracks are there. You could actually have done it.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): That’s silly.

Mr. Wilson: The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal says, “That’s silly.” You could have actually done it by now. GO Transit is ready to go. I’ve talked to them as transportation critic, and I don’t know what the holdup is. The fact of the matter is, there’s no public transit from where you want people to live to where their jobs are. There’s no prospect right now, given that—we’ll talk tonight on interim supply. We’ll talk about our uncompetitive tax rates and the huge tax increase this government brought in in its first budget, discouraging employment in this province.

Contrary to good planning—and I’ve been to a lot of seminars with this government, where they’re trying to convince me that this greenbelt is the way to go—they’ve left a lot of pieces out. I’m afraid that this environmental legacy they’re trying to leave is going to fall flat, people will resent it and they’ll all be looking for exemptions, as at least one developer has done, because they are simply fed up with the process. They don’t think it’s fair. There’s no compensation. At the end of the day, it’s going to be a black mark perhaps on the environmental history of this province.

I want to read from the Agromart Group and Cardinal Farm Supply Ltd., which is located on Tottenham Road in my riding of Simcoe–Grey. It’s from Wayne Hawke, the general manager. I think it gives the best overview that I’ve seen as to why farmers are coming here tomorrow, why they’re not thrilled with this legislation: the lack of compensation, the lack of coherent transportation plans, the lack of response to the farm crisis, the lack of jobs in rural Ontario, the pressure that is now being put on by the banks because the greenbelt devalued the farmers’ land. It says:

“Re: Farm financial crisis requires your urgent attention,” and “urgent” is in capital letters.

“Dear Mr. Wilson....

“Cardinal Farm Supply Ltd. is a farm supply and service centre serving the crop input needs of farmers in Simcoe county. We are part of the Agromart Group ... a chain of retail crop input supply centres in Ontario, with almost 300 full-time rural employees working out of 30 locations. We depend directly on the viability of the agricultural sector to support our families. Our farmer-customers are in a severe financial crisis, and all the businesses that rely on farmers are at risk as well. We need your help and support to move this crisis to the top of the Liberal government’s agenda immediately.

“We would first like to state that we fully support the position taken by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and many of the other farm organizations. As farmers, they are in the best position to make the specific recommendations required to resolve this crisis. We ask that you listen to their concerns and address the issues with energy and resolve.

“The complexity of the crisis is related to cyclical commodity prices (grains and oilseed prices at 25-year lows), our high dollar, rising fuel and other input costs, market-distorting subsidies and support provided in other jurisdictions, the cumulative impact of the BSE crisis and

other trade issues (e.g. duties on hogs exported to the US), and new government regulations”—listen up here, government—“such as the source water protection act, the Nutrient Management Act and the Greenbelt Protection Act, to name a few. Our tobacco producers also need financial help by receiving the government aid already promised by the Liberal government.” He goes on to say that a good overview of the issues can be found at the OFA Web site.

“None of these issues are in direct control of Ontario food producers. They are among the most efficient in the world and yet, through no fault of their own, their immediate financial viability is in jeopardy. The public benefits directly from our farmers’ production efficiency, but yet the government representing the public fails to support them.

“In our business, we see many signs of the crisis and how it may play out if government intervention is insufficient. Our customers are involved in a rising number of ‘farm debt mediation’ proceedings. Farmers are re-financing their businesses by extending the amortization period of their long-term debt and are requesting increased supplier credit. We observe the banks pulling away from agriculture and many solid, well-managed farm operators having great difficulty in settling their accounts with us in an orderly and timely fashion.

“The spring is rapidly approaching, and many farmers could have difficulty sourcing the credit they need to plant a crop.

“The Ontario Federation of Agriculture has asked for an emergency meeting with Premier McGuinty and Minister Peters, without a response (as of this date).” The letter is dated February 22. “We find it difficult to understand why the government has been so unresponsive, and understand the level of frustration our customers are experiencing.”

Finally it says, “We ask that you make the commitment to become informed about the issues and champion the ‘farm financial crisis’ cause with your fellow MPPs, the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier. We are asking you to become a part of the solution. Our customers, the farmers and food producers of this province, are depending on you.”

I want to thank Wayne Hawke, the general manager of Cardinal Farm Supply Ltd. near Tottenham, for that. That’s probably the best letter I’ve had in 15 years, and one of the saddest letters. It’s one of the best business letters in terms of the case made, but one of the saddest letters.

You and I, Mr. Speaker, were both elected in 1990. We go to all of our farm MPP commitments every year. This year, Mr. Dunlop and I were at Steve Halls’s farm in Adjala-Tosorontio for the annual Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture meeting with MPs, MPPs and local elected officials. I attended the 64th annual meeting of the Grey County Federation of Agriculture. I have had dozens of meetings with farmers. Thousands appeared here last week; thousands will appear here tomorrow. The farm community is in crisis. This bill doesn’t help

them. This bill aggravates them. This bill puts more planning, more pressure, more regulations on them. I hope the government will deal with the farm crisis before moving and trying to put this environmental legacy, which Bill 136 is part of, in place.

The Lanark Landowners' Association is going to a lot of bother and a lot of work to have this demonstration tomorrow and neither the Premier nor the Minister of Agriculture will be attending. They've said that in the newspapers today. That is awful. In fact, Mr. Peters went out of his way in the last 24 hours to personally cut up Randy Hillier, the chair of the Lanark Landowners' Association, and said that he would only deal with "legitimate farm organizations." I dare him to go out there tomorrow and repeat that. He's too chicken. He's already told the newspaper that he's not going to do that. Shame on him.

This letter from Cardinal Farm Supply asks that the government listen. I'm doing my part by trying to bring these issues to the government's attention. The government needs to respond. You're elected to represent all the people of Ontario, even if you don't like the fact that they're exercising their right to protest.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Thank you kindly, Speaker. I am pleased to have seen you, sitting as Speaker, acknowledge that the word "chicken," when applied to another member, is indeed not unparliamentary. You have reinforced precedent today. Speaker Arnott, you will be cited from now till forever in Parliaments throughout the British Commonwealth or the former British Empire for the fact that the word "chicken," when applied to another member, not just to imply but to outright state cowardice, gutlessness—you have made it clear that it is parliamentary. I thank you. After all, what do we have but words to duel with here? The reason we have words to duel with is we don't want to be doing it with swords. My goodness.

I'm going to be speaking to this bill in a few minutes' time. I'm going to have but 20 minutes to speak to the bill and I regret that. So I'm going to make the best of the 20 minutes I've got. I've got some things to say because this bill does some very dangerous things, not only to rural Ontario but to small-town Ontario too, like the kind of communities I come from, communities like Welland, Thorold, Pelham, St. Catharines, Port Colborne and, heck, all the way down to Wainfleet and through to Fort Erie. Mayors, councils and residents of those small towns should be awfully concerned about what this government is doing to their future. I tell you, this government has been of little comfort to those small towns, small towns like Welland, Thorold, Pelham, St. Catharines, Fort Erie and Port Colborne and, yes, Wainfleet too. This bill is of no comfort to them either.

Just as farmers have had occasion now two weeks in a row to come here in the thousands, there will be points in time not too far into the future when small-town Ontarians will be here too, because they've learned to understand that Dalton McGuinty thinks the province of

Ontario begins and ends at the intersection of Yonge and Bloor.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings): Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: I'm sorry. The member for Prince Edward–Hastings.

1640

Mr. Parsons: Thank you, Speaker. I'm large enough that I'm hard to ignore, so I'm rather flattered by that.

I am pleased to speak to this bill. In my years of training as an engineer, I took one planning course, which is probably enough just to make me dangerous, but it did give me an appreciation of the need to plan ahead. In the next 30 years we are looking at four million more people in Ontario. We're looking at two million more jobs. We need to be prepared.

We can look at some countries in the world where there isn't planning taking place. We know that once a building is built, once the ground is paved, it's going to be that way forever, so we need to look ahead. I think there is an important role for government—and this bill is appropriate—that we do some of the planning.

Municipalities certainly have a strong role in this, but municipalities have artificial boundaries from one to the next. We need to look at much more of a global picture and area picture. I think it's significant that the first area where planning is going to be done is the Golden Horseshoe area, because the boundaries are artificial. We need to have a role for the provincial government to carry the planning from one to the next.

There is an ever-widening split between rural and urban Ontario. It is not intentional on anyone's part, but the reality is that housing is sometimes not a really compatible neighbour with a farm. When you see housing being located in rural areas, it will ultimately force a farmer to not be able to construct an additional barn or addition because of certain minimum setbacks.

This bill will provide a role for the minister to make decisions after extensive consultation with people in the community and with municipalities. It will bring the parties together. That doesn't happen everywhere. In my own riding, we have Belleville, Quinte West and Prince Edward county that have come together to do things. That's unusual, and I compliment them for it.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'm very pleased to respond to my colleague Jim Wilson from Simcoe–Grey. He brought up some excellent points on the Places to Grow Act, Bill 136. What caught my attention was when he started talking about the agricultural community and how they've been left out of this overall process. He started talking about the fact that there are a couple of demonstrations: the one last week from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the one tomorrow from the Lanark Landowners' Association. I thought that we in this province had the right to come to Queen's Park to demonstrate and that the appropriate people—ministers, the Premier, critics—would have an opportunity to go out and shake hands with the folks outside, talk to

them, listen to their concerns and maybe have a few of them into our offices here.

I just came from a scrum outside a few minutes ago where I heard the Minister of Agriculture fiercely putting down the efforts of the Lanark Landowners' Association. He said that they did not represent the farmers in Ontario. I found that disgusting, to say the least. They have a right to be here. They have a right to demonstrate.

We've had a number of organizations, a number of stakeholder groups, who have come to Queen's Park in the past and have demonstrated. They represented different unions, different federations, and the Lanark Landowners are no different. Whether you agree with their principles or you don't agree with their principles and policies, that's their right.

I, for one, believe that Simcoe county will have a lot of representation here tomorrow. I'm not saying that, because they come under the umbrella of the Lanark Landowners' Association, they don't exist. These are people in my riding who are having a very difficult time with what has happened to them as a result of the efforts of this government. I will be standing outside with my constituents tomorrow, representing them, with the Lanark Landowners' Association.

The Acting Speaker: We have time for one last question and comment.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I'm so delighted to have a chance to comment on the member's speech. I disagree with much of what the member said, although I do want to acknowledge the work that former ministers like Chris Hodgson did as far as bringing this forward and knitting together a coalition of municipal, industry and environmental leaders. I want to acknowledge the work of the New Democratic Party and of Anne Golden's task force. I want to acknowledge the work of Les Frost and Bill Davis. I want to acknowledge the work of academics, business leaders and environmental leaders, who all worked to cobble together a vision and a plan to make it happen.

I want to extend an invitation to the member to offer constructive advice and comments. If there is truly a belief that we can strengthen our ability to settle people, to support jobs and the economy, I want this member and all members to know that our government is prepared to work with any responsible individual who wants to see things furthered.

In fact, I had the opportunity to attend eight town hall meetings with some 1,600 Ontario residents. I was up in Barrie, in fact, back in the summer, to talk about our vision and our concept for Places to Grow. We received enormous support, whether it was from people in the member's riding, some local landowners or some of the municipal politicians—absolutely incredible to see that kind of synergy and to tap into that kind of wisdom.

I know the member would want to be fair in his comments and acknowledge the lengths to which our government has gone to engage the citizens of Ontario in developing a comprehensive and a genuine, true vision for this province, which includes all the various com-

munities, be they urban or rural. I know the member is fair-minded. I know he supports the goals of this. Of course, as a good opposition member, he's pointing out some very obvious areas from his perspective.

The Acting Speaker: I turn to the member for Simcoe–Grey. You have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Wilson: I hate to take on the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal in any way, because I'm generally begging him to support projects in my riding. I have the list here. They range from the Fenwick Bridge replacement in the municipality of Grey Highlands to the renewal of aging and deteriorating sanitary sewers in the town of Collingwood and to the expansion of water and sewer services to connect all citizens to municipal systems in the town of Wasaga Beach.

Clearview township has five community halls. You know, you'd be a hero in rural Ontario, I say to the honourable minister and his government, if you'd deal with this community hall issue, which was the result of regulations that came out of Walkerton to improve and bring up to standards the water systems in our community halls.

Just imagine what a small amount of money would do—and I've argued this so many times in this House—and how many church groups, small villages, rural areas and small towns would be so happy if you'd just put your money where your mouth is and actually do something.

We've got people in the village of Angus in the township of Essa who are going to have to pay over \$6,000 for their water hookup because we can't seem to get any money out of the provincial government at this stage. So I hope you'll look at the Angus water treatment plant upgrades and expansion favourably.

The town of New Tecumseth has a whole pile of road upgrades. The town of the Blue Mountains has the extension of water and sanitary sewer services. I know you've spoken personally to Her Worship Ellen Anderson about that. I appreciate your meeting with her, she's a big fan of yours. I met with her this morning. But she's really hoping—finally, I want to say, the township of Springwater, the Finlay Mill Road bridge rehab project.

Minister, it's nice to have meetings, but you don't indicate to the mayors at those meetings when you're going to announce the money. If you want to be cutting ribbons by the time of the next election, in 2007, you've got to get the projects going now. So I plead with you: If you're going to do Places to Grow, put your money in there, get the infrastructure going and truly have a good plan.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): We're debating this bill in the context of the themes that have developed here over the last couple of weeks, and the previous speaker, the member for Simcoe–Grey, made reference to them. He talked about “alleged” scandal. Alleged? It's a full-blown scandal. It's a scandal that's just in flames. It's not an alleged scandal. It's not a suspected scandal. It's not a maybe scandal. It's \$10,000-a-pop access to some of the most powerful people in the

province buying their way into multi-million-dollar properties that are being exempted from the greenbelt. That's a full-blown, all-out—that's the old full Monty scandal where I come from.

So we're talking about the theme of scandal and, therefore, the theme of corruption.

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the member for Niagara Centre to use parliamentary language. I would prefer that he not use that particular word that he just used.

Mr. Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker.

That leads me to walk in here this morning. I was walking here this morning, and it was cold. I was wearing my jacket and a sweater, had my hands in my pockets and was walking here to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): Did you have a hat?

Mr. Kormos: No hat—I should have worn one; I should have known better. I wasn't wearing the kind of underclothing—I'll put it politely—that I would be inclined to wear if I were back home on a cold, chilly, breezy day like this. But I did have my hands in my pockets.

1650

I'm walking here, and it was cold. It was chilly; a little bit of a wind blew right through. As I passed the Whitney Block across the road over here, I see the cannon. You know the cannon on Queen's Park Circle, in front of Whitney Block. It made me think about just how cold today was.

You see, I want to speak to you about what's parliamentary and what's unparliamentary. In old days, in old English, a cannon, a smaller one than the one we saw out there beside the Whitney Block, was called a "monkey." In fact, there were iron monkeys and iron cannons, and there were brass monkeys. An old English word for cannon is "monkey." This is where I'm saying that we've got to be thoughtful. We've got to think about what's parliamentary and what's not. We've got to think about what's really being said before we want to jump up—

The Acting Speaker: I'll be the judge of that.

I recognize the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr. Kormos: —before we jump up and accuse another member of using unparliamentary language.

Let me tell you how cold it was. Not only were these small cannon in old English called monkeys; as I said, brass was a common material used to forge these monkeys, hence "brass monkeys." The plate on the wood decking of a ship was made of brass as well—you understand what I'm saying—because you didn't want to mount the monkey on the wood because of—

Mr. Delaney: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: No one can question the member for Niagara Centre's expertise in shipbuilding, but the scope of Bill 136 doesn't cover shipbuilding.

The Acting Speaker: I would have to agree that I'm unclear as to how this particular aspect of your speech is making reference to the bill that we're discussing this

afternoon. I would ask you to keep your remarks germane to the issue at hand.

Mr. Kormos: Understand that the brass monkey sits on a plate called a brass monkey. You've seen—

The Acting Speaker: Perhaps I'm missing something. Could you explain to me how this relates to the bill?

Mr. Kormos: Precisely, Speaker. You can get to Niagara on the QEW and get there fast, but you're not going to see any of the scenery. If you go down Highway 20, it's going to take you twice as long to get there, but you're going to see a lot more and learn a lot more on your way from here to the heart of Niagara region. Do you understand what I'm saying, Speaker? So I may not be getting to where I want to go as quickly as others would want me to, and I may be taking the tourist route, but trust me: We're going to examine some things, we're going to see some things, and we're going to learn some things on the way there.

I am talking about the themes that we're debating in this bill, and the context. This bill doesn't develop in isolation. Please.

I was telling you about walking to work this morning. I was telling you about seeing the cannon, and old cannons known as brass monkeys, sitting on a brass plate called the monkey. As you recall from going to Fort George or Fort Henry, the cannonballs would be mounted in a pyramid on that plate beside the cannon. When it gets so cold as to freeze the balls off a brass monkey, what's happening is that the cannonballs are contracting, and the pyramid loses its design. The cannonballs literally roll onto the deck. So an old British term, "It was cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey," had absolutely nothing to do—

Interjection.

Mr. Kormos: I hear behind me the heckling by a member who has a simian obsession.

"It was cold enough this morning to freeze the balls off a brass monkey." What's happened is, we've understood that that phrase is perfectly parliamentary; there is nothing unparliamentary about it at all. But had I simply leapt into it—do you understand what I'm saying?—had I simply opened with that, had I simply said, "You know, Speaker, this morning it was cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey," the Speaker probably would have jumped up and said, "That's unparliamentary." That's why we took the tourist route there instead of the fast route, because what at first blush some here might protest as being unparliamentary language, upon reflection is, in fact, very parliamentary and very, very appropriate. So I say to you, this morning it was cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey. That, as you know, is an entirely appropriate parliamentary term. It describes a scenario in a graphic way that to merely say, "It was cold," would not serve; or, "I was shivering." Now I'll tell you how cold it was. You know how cold it was. You were out there, too.

So we're talking about this bill in the context of scandal, in the context of \$10,000-a-pop access to the Premier's ear and the Minister of Finance's ear, and

perhaps to Minister Gerretsen's ear, the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The other theme that's developed is the theme around the government's allegation—government, not me. I know my federal Liberal counterparts down in Niagara, good folks like John Maloney, MP, Liberal—he got elected; he got the majority of votes in the federal election—and Walt Lastewka from up in St. Catharines. I don't support them politically. I don't agree with them politically. I would have far sooner had the NDP candidate win. But I thought they had been doing their best. Well, the government, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals at Queen's Park, have been saying day after day that Walt Lastewka, the federal Liberal member for St. Catharines, is incompetent. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals here at Queen's Park have been saying day after day that John Maloney, the Liberal MP for Welland riding, is incompetent.

Mr. Delaney: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Niagara Centre is imputing motives against a member of this Legislature, which is contrary to section 23(i) of the standing orders.

The Acting Speaker: I do not find that the member for Niagara Centre is imputing motive, but he has to be careful about the language he uses because I will rule him out of order if he uses unparliamentary language.

Mr. Kormos: Precisely. I hope that if Theresa Wilson is watching over in Alliston—I suspect Theresa Wilson was watching her son Jimmy do his speech. Now, Ms. Wilson, if you take any offence at anything I have said, you let me know, you let Jim know, the member for Simcoe North.

It's the voters who are the ultimate judge. Here we go again, the Speaker is admonishing me to be careful about the language I use. The Speaker is saying, "Member, please be careful about using unparliamentary language." But that's why I opened my comments with that tourist road down to Niagara. Remember, Speaker, "It was so cold, you could freeze the balls off a brass monkey"? You started to get up when I started that story, didn't you? The Speaker started to get up to warn me about unparliamentary language. You saw him start to rise. But then when I had a chance to take that tourist route to Niagara instead of the QEW, the Speaker realized the language was perfectly parliamentary. So you can't jump to conclusions. That is why I'm saying, Speaker, quite frankly, of all the people who take the chair here, you are one of the people who take the job most seriously. You know I am not telling stories out of school. I've said that to you and I've said it to other people. I've said it many times and I hope I have a chance to do it again.

So what have we got? A provincial government, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals here at Queen's Park, that is saying that 74 federal Liberal MPs representing the province of Ontario are not doing their job, that they are letting Ontario down, that they are not getting Ontario its fair share? In effect, Dalton McGuinty has been running an election campaign against 74 Liberal Ontario MPs, and I'm coming to their defence. I'm saying, "John Maloney from down Welland way seems to me like a

decent guy," but then Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals stand up and say, "John Maloney is betraying the people of Ontario because Ontario is not getting its fair share of federal money."

Walt Lastewka and I are not exactly close—and if Jim Bradley, the Minister of Tourism and Recreation, were in the room, he could explain that—although I have regard for Mr. Lastewka and his family. Again, I haven't campaigned for Mr. Lastewka; of course not. If I had my druthers, it wouldn't be the Liberal candidate who would have won, it would have been the NDP candidate. But I'm shocked that I have to rise to the defence of Mr. Lastewka against the finger-pointing of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals at Queen's Park. Good grief.

1700

The Acting Speaker: I would like to remind all members of the House, and I would ask them once again that when they're talking about another member of the Legislature to make reference to either their riding name or their ministry name. In the case of the Premier, it is "the Premier," not what you referred to him as.

Mr. Kormos: I will refer to him as "Premier," because everybody knows who I'm talking about: the Premier, right? We've seen the caricatures. We've seen the cartoons. We've seen the references to Pinocchio characters. Everybody knows which Premier I'm talking about. You'd have to be from Mars not to know which Premier I'm talking about: The Liberal Premier of Ontario, the leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, who has been dumping shamelessly on Liberal federal members of Parliament.

I haven't seen Jim Karygiannis for a while. You've got to understand, he's not a provincial member, so I don't have to refer to him by riding. But I haven't seen Jim Karygiannis for a while. I usually see him at ethnic events here in Toronto. I know him to be a pretty outspoken guy, a little bit of a character, and I don't think he'd mind me saying that, and I think people who know him probably better than I do would agree. But I bet you Jim Karygiannis is just smoking mad that he's being dumped on left and right by his Liberal junior cousins here at Queen's Park. Because the provincial government of Ontario, its Liberal Premier and its Liberal Party leader have been saying clearly, day after day, that Ontario's 74 Liberal MPs aren't up to the job, that they're not doing their job, that they're failing the people of Ontario, that in their representation of Ontario they're selling Ontario short; in fact, they're selling Ontario out. I never thought I'd see the day where I had to come to the defence of Liberals from these types of incredible attacks by other Liberals. But who am I to judge? The Premier could be right. The Ontario Liberal Party could be right. After all, they know these folks far better than I do.

So here we are. Thank you, Mr.—

Interjection: Public infrastructure.

Mr. Kormos: Minister of Public Infrastructure. I almost called him "Mr. Caplan," but then Mr. Wilson, who's the member for Simcoe-Grey, corrected me. He came to my aid. Ms. Wilson, I want you to know your

son saved me from the jackpot—the Speaker might well have tossed me on that one—by making sure I called Mr. Caplan the Minister of Public Infrastructure.

Interjection.

Mr. Kormos: So we've got the Minister of Public Infrastructure saving me by reminding me to refer to the bill, Bill 136.

Let me tell you what places like Welland need. You talk about old small-town Ontario, old, industrial small-town Ontario. Old industrial small-town Ontario doesn't need über-planning coming out of the central soviet to tell it how to do smart development of land, especially when it comes to, amongst other things, protecting valuable and scarce agriculture land. For instance, we know down in Niagara that if you extended the 406 southbound to Highway 3 in Port Colborne and four-laned it the way the planning has provided for, you'd do a lot more to save tender fruit land and scarce agricultural land that way than you would with any greenbelt.

You make grape growing profitable. You make it attractive for farmers who grow grapes, many of them for generations; and I know a whole lot of them down there in Niagara. You make it profitable for them to grow grapes instead of having to subsidize their grape-growing operations by working in any number of other places off-site, off the farmland. You do that, for instance, by making sure that wine labelled Ontario wine is 100% Ontario grapes. That's not rocket science, as the guy on the cooking channel says. That's pretty straightforward common sense. You don't have to be a rocket scientist or a genius to figure that out.

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton): Like grape juice from Chile.

Mr. Kormos: Look, where is the corn coming from? We've got US corn feeding our ethyl alcohol operations and Chilean grape and grape juice being shipped in big tanker ships, and I don't have to tell you wine drinkers who are buying so-called Ontario wine that's full of Chilean grape what happens to that grape juice in those ships en route from Chile, all the way through the Panama Canal, up into eastern Canada and down the St. Lawrence Seaway. If any of you have ever been on a ship working with seafarers, I don't have to tell you what happens to that grape juice during the course of a long voyage. Think about it the next time you buy so-called Ontario wine that isn't 100% Ontario grape. This government would do a service to Niagara and Ontario agricultural land by simply requiring that Ontario wine be 100% Ontario grape and 100% Ontario juice.

This government could do a whole lot for small-town Ontario that wants to be smart in terms of its development by giving it the financial resources it needs to remediate brownfields. In cities like where I come from, we've got acre upon acre of old factory land—

Mr. Baird: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to ask you if it's in order that—oh, there was no minister in the House, and it appears that the McGuinty government has produced one to join us for the debate. That's awfully good of them.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much for interrupting.

The member for Niagara Centre.

Mr. Kormos: I'm really grateful to the member for Nepean–Carleton for luring a cabinet minister back into chamber.

What we need in small-town municipal Ontario is the financial support this province should provide if we're going to remediate brownfields that consist of acre after acre of land that, for the moment, is of no use but should be utilized in the very hearts of our communities.

I regret not having more time to speak to this bill, but others—my colleagues—will. I appreciate having had the opportunity to clarify what is parliamentary and what is unparliamentary in terms of language, knowing full well that some of that language, some of those phrases, like “chicken,” amongst others, will be on the list of words that are parliamentary that are kept by the Clerk.

I want you to know that I will be voting against Bill 136. Bill 136 is a backdrop, again, for more of the \$10,000-a-pop private soirée dinners at posh, exclusive mansions in gated neighbourhoods, where the donors show up in their chauffeur-driven Bentleys and Rolls-Royces and Lincoln Continentals and Town Cars to partake of the most expensive of food and bend the ear of the most powerful people in Ontario, like the Premier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and, indeed, David MacNaughton, who calls the real shots.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I listened with great care to the member from Welland's comments, thinking initially that in the first three quarters of his speech there was so little of substance that it would be difficult to respond. But he did, in fairness, get to some significant items later when he talked about what small-town Ontario needs. He even managed to weave into his comments what I know is a very real concern he has about the grape growers and some of their concerns down in Niagara.

Mr. Kormos: And I do my best to support them.

Mr. McMeekin: As we all should. Certainly we stand together on that count.

I come from small-town Ontario. What small-town Ontario needs is a government that has the vision to understand the importance of not only where not to grow but where to grow, and the importance of templating the kind of infrastructure funding over that, which actually gives some substance to terms like “smart growth” and “intelligent planning.” I think that is very much what this bill is about, and then of course having the courage to act.

On the issue of rural economies, I happen to share the member opposite's view that food sovereignty is a very important issue. Without food sovereignty—a province's ability to grow and market and distribute its own products—what's next: oil for food, weapons for food, water for food? I don't think that's the kind of province we want.

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Mr. Baird: I want to congratulate the member for Niagara Centre on his speech. I want to say to the mem-

ber for Mississauga West that the member for Niagara Centre is like a commodity grown in his riding, like wine. Your appreciation for his remarks will appreciate over time. I can certainly say that's been my experience.

We share the concern: The type of centralization of decision-making that this legislation provides is of tremendous concern to all of us. This government can't even issue birth certificates properly. How in heck are they going to centrally plan and override democratically elected councils on a range of issues? We want to inquire as to how they make their decisions and change their minds when they come into this place and don't do that. I share that part of the member's speech.

This is particularly bad for the agricultural community and for rural Ontario. I see my friend from Tweed here, Mrs. Dombrowsky, sitting in the back row. It has certainly come to my attention that there have been some images put up on a Web site by a particular group with respect to that member, and I want in the strongest of terms, on behalf of the official opposition, to dissociate ourselves from some things that should be of tremendous concern to all elected officials. On behalf of the official opposition, I want to put on the record that we dissociate ourselves from those things. I have no hesitation in taking that member on toughly on tough issues and going after her for the stand she takes personally, but that in all respects goes way over the top.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I would make comments on brass monkeys, but I don't want to go there just now.

I just want to take an opportunity to respond to part of the speech by the member for Niagara Centre. He kind of alluded, I thought, but never really got to the point that the government was pretty clear about their promises. They were going to give municipalities the kind of ability they needed to do their own thing when it came to planning and running their municipalities. Isn't that what they said in the last election? Isn't that what they promised in the red book that they ran on in the last election?

If you look at this legislation, it's like my good friend the member from Nepean and official opposition House leader just raised. This is the hand of government reaching over from the Dalton McGuinty central bureau, the commissar of Ontario, down into municipalities, telling them how they are going to deal with issues of planning. Now, there may be arguments for that, but this is not what the government argued and put forward in the last election. They were quite clear. They said they would respect municipal governments, that they would give municipal governments the ability they needed to do their own planning, that they were going to respect the partnership they would have as a provincial government, should they be elected, with their municipal counterparts.

You don't see that in this legislation. What you see is Liberals who basically say one thing during an election—it is like the old saying; they basically say one thing during the election and act quite differently once the election happens and they become the government. I've

always made the point that Liberals campaign like New Democrats, but when it comes to the time of being in office, they certainly don't act like them; they act like a bunch of Tories. I'm not so sure that is in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

Now, with respect to my good friend the member for Nepean–Carleton, I have some disagreements with some of the policies of the Tory party, and those are the same disagreements that I have with the Liberal Party on this particular issue. But I know the member for Nepean–Carleton doesn't lie.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): This afternoon was interesting in question period. I always remember a famous quote from the late John Diefenbaker. The late Mr. Diefenbaker, when he was Prime Minister, once said, "Big game hunters are never fooled by little rabbit tracks."

This afternoon, from the opposition, we saw a lot of rabbit tracks being articulated with regard to Bill 136 and the whole issue of Places to Grow. My friend from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot touched upon a very important point when he made his brief remarks about a province needing to feed itself. If you will recall, at the end of the day, one of the key reasons the Soviet Union broke up was that the Soviet Union could never feed itself. You go back in history, to the 1930s, when Joseph Stalin got rid of all the Ukrainian farmers in the steppes, which was the primary ag area of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union never really recovered from that, and at the end of the day it was part of its breakup.

I relate that to Bill 136, the Places to Grow Act. This piece of legislation talks about preserving agricultural farmland for future generations and the ability of Ontario to feed its people. I think that's crucially important for our economic future. Certainly if we didn't have the ability to grow and feed ourselves, we would become much more vulnerable to pressures outside our borders. We know how the Americans have put stress on us with regard to the trade in live cattle and softwood lumber, and I would shudder at the thought if, through trade and agricultural commodities, they could again put that kind of pressure on us. What would they want from us? They would want our oil and our water. So it's very important that Bill 136 move ahead.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Niagara Centre has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Kormos: Thank you kindly, Speaker. It's nowhere near enough.

Look, small-town Ontario is in desperate need of the funding necessary to restore and rebuild aging existing infrastructure. If this government were to do any specific project that would win it, and not inappropriately so, kudos from the real people of Ontario, from ordinary folks out there, it would be on a concentrated, concerted effort to ensure that small-town Ontario, places like where I come from, Welland, Thorold, Pelham, St. Catharines, yes, Port Colborne and Fort Erie too, towns like Timmins and around Timmins that I have been up to, along with the member for Timmins–James Bay—never

mind places like Attawapiskat and Peawanuck. I tell people in this chamber that if and when they've got the opportunity to travel into ridings like Timmins-James Bay, and I know some of you have over the course of the last year and a half, go to communities like Peawanuck and Attawapiskat and see the hemorrhaging in those communities in so many ways because of government's failure to meet their needs in terms of the most fundamental and basic infrastructures, those which provide that minimal level of safety and security in a community that makes them modestly healthy.

I say to you that Bill 136 isn't going to meet the needs of folks down where I come from. It's not going to meet the needs of the folks across the largest part of Ontario. It may not meet the needs of any of the people of Ontario. Because what small-town Ontario needs now is real assistance in remediating, cleaning up brownfields and immediate assistance in rebuilding infrastructure across the board, both underground and surface infrastructure. I've told you how many times about the sewer project from hell? Well, that's but one illustration.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Delaney: It's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 136, the Places to Grow legislation, and I'll be sharing my time with the member for Etobicoke North.

It has been my privilege and my life experience to have lived in three provinces in Canada, and in four of our country's greatest cities: Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Mississauga. Through the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s and the 1990s, I watched the cities and provinces that I lived and worked in approach the issues of development and infrastructure in very different ways and for very different reasons.

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I watched the city of Montreal get ready for Expo '67 and Canada's centennial year and put together a very interesting program of development that made the city the most unique place in the world to live in at the time.

There was a time, a generation ago, when southern Ontario led North America in how it approached growth, how it approached infrastructure and development issues. People from other regions came here to see what a modern city could be like, to see how it could be clean, how it could be safe and how it could be livable. And then, for an entire generation, Ontario lost its way.

For example, a generation ago, the city of Washington, DC, looked to a progressive and growing city like Toronto as a model of how to move people from where they live to where they work and where they play. Without each person driving two tons of steel from where they live to where they work, Toronto was showing North Americans how you get along, how you get to work, how you get to where you play.

Each year, at that time, the TTC used to win North American awards for being the best transit system in North America. Not any more. That was then. Today, a visitor from the greater Toronto area to Washington would marvel at that city's modern and clean Metro, how efficient it is and how far it goes. Ontario's first and only

subway got started in 1954. Washington got construction underway in the mid-1970s. Toronto had a 20-year head start. Montreal started construction of the Métro in the mid-1960s. Toronto had a 10-year head start. Vancouver started the SkyTrain in preparation for Expo '86 in the mid-1980s. Toronto had a 30-year head start. Today's Toronto subway route would be very familiar to a Toronto resident of the 1970s, of which I was one. That was then.

While Toronto's expansion of the subway was incremental, other cities progressed in leaps and bounds. Montreal never stopped digging. Washington never stopped expanding. The TTC that went from Main to Jane now goes from Kennedy to Kipling. The Métro in Montreal that went downtown now sprawls throughout the entire city. You can get from pretty much anywhere to anywhere else in metro Montreal on the Métro. In Washington, you can get to distant suburbs like German town and Bethesda on the Metro.

Instead of coming to Ontario to learn how to do transit efficiently, Ontarians now buy hotel rooms in other cities in a bid to catch up and to once again become world class.

I focused on transit, but the story is the same in protecting green spaces, in managing our watershed, in protecting our agricultural and recreational lands, in curbing urban sprawl, in coping with traffic gridlock and dealing with smog, in improving employment opportunities and in having housing choices. That is the scope of Bill 136.

Dense urban areas in other regions of North America are often not as prosperous and as fortunate as the Golden Horseshoe. They can't afford to get it wrong once or twice, so they tend to get more things right on the first try. Getting growth issues right is why I'm supporting Bill 136, the Places to Grow legislation. For the first time in a whole generation, an Ontario government has finally got it right. Its vision is need over greed, sustainable prosperity over short-term exploitation and an enduring good quality of life for the one in five Canadians who live here over choking traffic and pollution.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal has taken the good work done by our predecessors in government, be that in Smart Growth, be that in the Golden report, and enlarged its scope. The minister has given all Ontarians a plan to embrace, a vision to be proud of and a future to look forward to with confidence. Given its roots, I would imagine that all three parties would support Bill 136.

Between July 2004 and last fall, some 1,600 people, many of them urban planning specialists, attended eight public meetings, and almost 500 written submissions were received. The result was the Places to Grow Act, a framework for Ontario to proceed with a growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe.

Decisive action by Ontario's government is needed, simply because the pace of growth in this rich, multi-cultural and diverse region that so many of us call home has been so rapid.

We all know that the two densest regions in North America are New York City and Los Angeles; the third is Chicago. Before too many years, Chicago will have stepped aside. Toronto and the greater Golden Horseshoe will have surpassed Chicago and will be the third-densest region in North America.

How does one set the GTA's strong and continuing growth in perspective? Let me explain it this way. My colleague the Minister for Municipal Affairs and Housing, who's also the member for Kingston and the Islands, told me earlier today that Kingston is home to about 130,000 people. Try to imagine building an entire city the size of historic Kingston in just one year, within a one-hour drive of Toronto city hall; not merely the houses but the services, the roads and infrastructure, the power and most especially the schools, the businesses, the economic opportunities and, of course, the people. The dynamic communities that make up the greater Golden Horseshoe have done this equivalent of building Kingston each and every year, not just once but every year for at least 30 years in a row.

Great cities don't just happen. My great city of Mississauga was part of that stunning growth. The Places to Grow Act allows municipalities and communities to be involved in the drafting of regulations that govern the development and implementation of the growth plans of the future. This is an issue I've discussed in my ward, ward 9, in Mississauga with my councillor, Pat Saito. There is nothing that we want more, as a city, in Mississauga than the ability to control the development that goes on within our borders, and that is the type of control that Bill 136 offers municipalities.

In a municipality like Mississauga, with a great mayor like Hazel McCallion, a living legend in her own time—we realize that one of the world's great mayors, a mayor of the stature of, say, Willy Brandt in Berlin, Teddy Kollek in Jerusalem, Ed Koch in New York or Charlotte Whitton in Ottawa, is our mayor in the city of Mississauga, and we're proud of her. She has managed Mississauga from being a bedroom community of Toronto to a point where the city of Mississauga now brings in 2,000 more people per day than it sends out. We are a net importer of people. In fact, we were talking the other week, and we said, "Oh, Toronto—isn't that that rather large suburb just to the east of the city of Mississauga?" No, we don't mean that. Toronto is a great city; we're proud of it.

Bill 136 would, if passed, help our communities promote economic prosperity. It would identify growth opportunities within our communities. It would build the infrastructure that we need. It would protect our green spaces and ensure that the four million new people who will make their homes in the greater Golden Horseshoe will enjoy lives as rich in opportunity as they are in quality.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North): I'm proud to share remarks with my colleague from Mississauga West.

I think it's important to state for all who are listening and for the members of this House that Bill 136, the Places to Grow Act, is really an encapsulation of stra-

tegic vision with a mind to foster quality of life and prosperity. How? By helping to control sprawl and gridlock and actually encouraging smart growth, ultimately to make more livable and prosperous communities. I think we, collectively, should therefore honour and welcome and salute the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal for his efforts.

I quote for a moment an urban planner who said something that I think we might take to heart with regard to this particular bill, and that is, "The leader has to be practical and a realist, yet must talk the language of the visionary and the idealist." I think that vision is very much encapsulated here in Bill 136.

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If I might for a moment make a health and medical argument for Places to Grow and for the establishment of an Ontario-wide greenbelt, I quote, for example, from some reports of the Ontario College of Family Physicians. Before I do that, I'd like to extend a quotation from Sigmund Freud, who was referring to the human body. He said, "Anatomy is destiny." But I think if we extend that argument to the province of Ontario as a whole, we can see how very much our urban planning, or the anatomy of our great province, will in fact affect our long-term destiny.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians: "In their car-dependent world, suburban Ontarians are less active and falling prey to obesity and serious diseases like diabetes, asthma and heart problems....

"More traffic means more engine emissions; the resulting pollution affects our health"—asthma incidence is now reaching epidemic proportions.

"The stress of battling ever-longer daily commutes through almost impenetrable gridlock impacts negatively on commuters and their quality of family life.

"Ontario's sprawl-related health problems are similar to the US situation, but far worse compared to Europe" and other cities and jurisdictions which have actually taken intelligent planning seriously.

To quote from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, "Governments need to recognize that approaches to community design that make it possible, and better yet rational, to walk to destinations has become a health policy issue that's critical" in the way we plan our cities.

There are many things that can be said with regard to the greenbelt. For example, we know that by the year 2031 almost four million additional people will live in the Golden Horseshoe. Much of that influx will actually occur within my own riding of Etobicoke North.

Let's make it into a personal sort of experience. I have two young children, and by the time they are in university, this province will have almost four million additional people. Without this historic legislation, it is entirely possible that great areas of this province may become a paved-over parking lot. I would like to, in my capacity here as a legislator, offer my children and other generations access to nourishing Ontario farm foods, clean air and the nature that we so proudly call our own. The greenbelt will provide that. On the other hand, as

well, given intelligent planning, I want to offer my children the ability to live in comfortable, affordable cities, in safe and healthy neighbourhoods, and this too is what the greenbelt will provide.

This legislation is an historic step to combat urban sprawl and strikes that essential balance between strong communities and a respect for nature. It is a strategic vision taking into account quality of life and prosperity, all the while controlling sprawl and gridlock and encouraging smart growth so that we may have ever-prosperous communities. As Freud said, "Anatomy is destiny," and with this Places to Grow Act we are helping to better ensure the optimization of the anatomy of the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Dunlop: I'm pleased to make a few comments this afternoon on the Liberal speakers who talked about Bill 136 and who brought forth some interesting points. I think, overall, there are a lot of people who generally support the idea of growth areas. There is no question about that. We have seen urban sprawl for many decades now and there is no question that there is support for specific areas in the province.

However, with that, there are a lot of other issues that the government has to address, other than simply drawing a fine map and drawing some circles around municipalities. For example, earlier today some speakers referred to the number of vehicles that travel from their homes in the north, east and west of the province, and they have to commute in literally thousands of cars. It would be nice if it was part of this plan. What the government and the citizens of this province could do is, if we're going to have people living in these growth areas, let's make sure that's where the jobs are; that most of the jobs created are not actually in the GTA; that for every home that's built in some of the growth areas, there would be a job to accompany that, or 0.5 jobs, or whatever that may be.

I think that's all part of the package, along with some of the concerns we've heard along the lines of infrastructure investment by the province as well. If you're going to put people in growth areas, you're going to have to make sure they have schools, hospitals, long-term-care facilities and all the things that transfer agencies require here in the province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

Mr. Bisson: I kind of enjoyed the comments from the two members, although they were from a bit of a different perspective. I would just comment quickly on one. I'm sure my good colleague over here from the riding of Etobicoke North meant it in a positive way, but he was disparaging the differences between rural and urban ridings. I think you were trying to make a point. I don't want to go too far down the point you were trying to make, otherwise I might get a little bit upset, but I won't do that today.

I just want to remind the members that part of the issue here is—philosophically, I can agree that we have to have rules around planning that make some sense

when it comes to the issue of being able to help municipalities have development policies that are in sync across the province. For example, when we were government, we did reforms to the Planning Act that subsequently were undone by another government, but that's for another debate. But the issue was that we thought it was important that we have planning policies and practices that were consistent with the Planning Act. It's something that was subsequently undone.

I notice in the legislation you're going back to the premise that we set up back in 1992, and I guess that is a good thing. However, I think in doing that, we've got to come back to the point the member for Niagara Centre made, which is, we need to make sure that we are senior partners when it comes to funding and assisting the municipalities to do the kind of work they've got to do around rebuilding the infrastructure, because you will know that the infrastructure in many communities across Ontario is really falling fast. It's quite one thing for this provincial government and this Premier to yell and scream at the federal government, "We want our transfers; give them to us now," and how unfair it is that they're downloading on us, the province, but we shouldn't reciprocate by going after municipalities and not giving them the kind of support they need to maintain their infrastructure.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): It's my pleasure to rise and support Bill 136. I want to take just a little bit of a different swing at this and talk about one of the things I feel has been very important as part of the discussion on this bill as it moves forward, and that is, how is our agricultural community affected by this legislation? As many of you know, I come from a rural municipality and many years working with municipal government. What I've heard repeatedly is, what can we do to protect farmland and what does the agricultural community need in order to ensure that their farmland is protected from urban sprawl?

I feel that this bill begins to address the concerns of our agricultural community by identifying where the infrastructure should be placed and ensuring that higher density is also a part of that formula. One of the things my fellow member from Etobicoke North knows, as he said in his previous statement, is that rural communities are different with respect to the density within our communities. But from the agricultural community—and I heard this repeatedly—part of the discussion has been, what do they need in order to ensure that they remain viable? There have been many discussions on the tools that our agricultural community needs.

I welcome the discussion from all of our urban counterparts, so that they understand the difficulties that our agricultural community is facing right now. If we do not begin to protect our farmland within Ontario, the farmers will have to move forward in a way to make sure they have sustainability, and their last crop will be a crop of houses. That's not what we want.

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Mr. Wilson: It was interesting to hear the comments of the Liberal members. But they've got to understand

that our Smart Growth plans—one of the members said he hopes we'll support Bill 136 because they're building upon the work of the previous Conservative government with respect to Smart Growth. But our Smart Growth plans did not envision overriding official plans of municipalities, because we'd had bad experiences in the past, in the Bill Davis government.

In my own riding, my predecessor, George McCague, was accused—about a year after he left this place in 1990, he became mayor of Alliston. Near the end of the first term, a lady went into the local OPP office and accused Mr. McCague, back when he was chair of cabinet and Chair of Management Board under Bill Davis, of having rejigged the official plan of New Tecumseth—Tecumseth township back then—in favour of a developer at the Nottawasaga Inn. It was on the front page of the Toronto Sun and it cost Mr. McCague his second term as mayor; he was doing an excellent job. The fact of the matter is, none of that occurred.

Today we see in this bill that the minister will take powers upon himself to make official plan amendments, to override the planning that is done by municipalities. It's an unprecedented power grab in this legislation, and no one on the Liberal side is talking about that. You don't want to do that. Citizens, like in the George McCague case, get so upset that they go to the bother of going to planning meetings.

I know Simcoe county has spent the past decade fine-tuning the official plan. We required it and the previous NDP government required it: Everybody go back and do their official plans, not just at the local level but at the county level or upper-tier level. All that good work has been done. Now this bill brings in new planning areas, 25 new communities that are targeted for 40% intensification in growth. I tell you, local councils are going to resent this legislation, and you're going to get an earful once you start overriding official plans.

The Acting Speaker: One of the government members has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Delaney: I'd like to thank my colleagues for their very thoughtful comments on Bill 136.

The member for Simcoe North—a member whom I have gotten to know, someone of great commitment, personal integrity and certainly fathomless work ethic—points out that despite our party positions, we do share many elements in common in our vision of what's best for Ontario. I thank him very much for his comments.

The member from Timmins—James Bay points out the very many valid needs of our rural ridings. We know how hard he works in his own riding, which is larger than many countries in this world. We hope that he joins us in helping the greater Golden Horseshoe plan come together so that it can keep on being the goose that lays the golden eggs that Ontario needs to continue to build our north and our rural communities.

The member from Huron—Bruce speaks from her own personal experience in rural Ontario, and I certainly respect that. She talks about protecting land not just at a stroke of the pen, but as a long-term process that needs

very careful planning and consistent application through the type of open process we strove for in Bill 136.

I especially thank my colleague from Simcoe—Grey. He points out the Smart Growth plan of the former government, many elements of which were taken more or less intact to build the Places to Grow legislation. I say to him that it empowers rather than disempowers municipalities in dealing with issues of growth and in managing the challenges that municipalities in the greater Golden Horseshoe are going to face in the next generation.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate on Bill 136?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener—Waterloo): I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 136. Certainly I think we all agree that there is a need to take action in order to contain and curb sprawl. We also need to ensure that we do use all the principles required in order to ensure better urban and rural planning as we take a look at how we want our province to look in the coming years.

I am pleased to say that our party, the Progressive Conservative Party, under the leadership of John Tory, and before that of other Premiers, has a very proud history in urban planning. I think we can best see that exemplified through the Smart Growth planning, which was very well received by communities in this province.

Despite the fact that this bill moves forward and builds on what we have done in the past, I share some of the concerns that have already been expressed by some of my colleagues about this bill. One of the concerns I have is the powers it gives to the minister, and obviously the lack of infrastructure planning. I am really quite concerned about the lack of infrastructure planning. Also, if you take a look at some parts of the legislation, at the intensification targets, it appears somewhat unrealistic.

This is a bill that allows the minister to create an advisory council. I would suggest, however, that this bill needs to avoid the problems of the greenbelt. The minister is having some problems because there have been changes made to the greenbelt boundaries after people paid \$10,000 to speak to him, to the finance minister and to the Premier. So I am concerned about any power the minister has in this bill and what changes might be made in return for donations to the Liberal Party. I think it's important that they make sure they don't get into that type of difficulty.

Section 12 of the bill requires the municipality's official plan to conform to the growth plan, so it gives the minister the power to unilaterally change an official plan should he or she decide it does not conform with the province's growth plan. That is really regrettable. This is an example of this government again pretending to know what's best for municipalities and for people in this province.

But I want to focus on our record, because, as I say, I think our government, under different Premiers, has a very proud record on Smart Growth. As you know, it was in January 2001 that Premier Harris announced the need for a made-in-Ontario Smart Growth strategy. We needed to promote and manage growth in ways that could sustain our economy, build strong communities and promote a

healthy environment. So our government established Smart Growth goals and some of those goals included—I want to really stress them, because I think they were excellent goals. They were very well received by people in this province.

One of the goals was that you use the existing infrastructure and resources to increase the capacity for economic growth. Then you invest wisely in your new infrastructure, after you have built on the existing infrastructure and resources. Another goal was to manage growth by making tough choices about where development should go. Another goal was to expand transportation choices within and between communities. Another goal was to protect our natural areas and our farmland for future generations. That is a very important goal, that we protect those natural areas and that farmland for future generations. Another goal was to encourage growth in those areas of the province where it would have the least impact on the environment.

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I know that in my community at the present time there is certainly debate on some new development that is taking place in Waterloo and the impact it may have on the environment. Obviously some people are going to have to make some choices about more development, more growth, or protection of the environment.

How is our Smart Growth plan, which we developed under Premier Harris in 2001, different from this document, Places to Grow? I think the key difference, and an important difference, is the fact that our Smart Growth plans were made by local decision-makers. They were not made, in this case, by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Our Smart Growth plans covered the entire province and focused on issues that were totally local. They were not dictated by Queen's Park, and, as I said, they were not made by one individual, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Again, our Smart Growth plans were backed up with financial commitments on infrastructure, such as the \$1.25 billion over 10 years through the Golden Horseshoe Transit Investment Partnerships. We don't see that same financial commitment, support, long-term plan for the infrastructure required to implement some of these proposals.

Our Smart Growth plan focused on gridlock, while Places to Grow, combined with the greenbelt, leads to leapfrogging and longer commute times. I can certainly speak to that. Anyone living in Kitchener-Waterloo is well aware of the gridlock. In fact, anybody living in the 905 area is well aware of the gridlock, and we focused on that gridlock. We don't see that same recognition in this paper. In fact, this proposal is actually going to lead people to jump over parcels of land and build further out, but there is no plan as to how people are going to commute to their jobs, which could well be in the middle of the city of Toronto. So it's going to mean longer commute times for people.

Commute times are long enough as they are—I can speak personally. When I was elected in 1990, I could probably get here in an hour and 15 minutes on a good

day. I would be hard pressed now to get here in two hours. In fact, on some days it could well be three. We simply don't have the infrastructure to support taking people from A to B, and this plan certainly doesn't have any plan to improve the problems of gridlock.

Our Smart Growth plan was much more complete, in that it examined affordable housing, waste management, environmental protection, gridlock, and sewer and water resources from a long-term growth perspective. So I think you can see that our plan was very, very different from Places to Grow. It was a much more comprehensive plan, and there was actually a financial commitment to the infrastructure that was going to be required for the implementation of the plan, and it dealt with gridlock and of course other areas that I have just noted.

I guess it's important to take a look at what AMO is saying—AMO of course being the association for municipalities in Ontario. These are very much the people who are going to be affected by this plan. They said in February 2005, as they responded to Places to Grow: "We are concerned that there is now more than one ministry responsible for land use planning and coordination. Rather than having municipalities and the public negotiate with various ministries, the government should designate a lead ministry on these issues." So they've recognized that this plan isn't going to achieve its objectives easily. There's going to have to be a lot of communication with more than one ministry.

They go on to say that some of the municipalities that are currently designated for growth may not be willing recipients of that growth due to any number of issues, including the effects growth may have on their currently stable agricultural community and the environmental pressure growth may place on their already strained resources. I can tell you that this was a concern when the minister came to Kitchener-Waterloo to speak to this issue. There were people from the agricultural community who did have concerns about Places to Grow. There were others who had concerns about the environmental pressure that may result as a consequence of the decision to designate growth areas that might not be willing recipients.

Also, AMO went on to say, "The legislation must clarify the basis for a hearings officer to hear a given matter and what criteria that office will utilize during a hearing." AMO also recommended that consideration be given to an initial review period of five years.

They continued by saying, "There is inadequate focus on social planning requirements in land use planning, as the plan contents do not address issues of human infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and even softer issues such as doctor shortages." You know, it is so important to take into consideration the fact that this document just doesn't address that whole issue of human infrastructure. For example, if we take a look at doctor shortages, we know that at the present time in the province of Ontario, there are about one million people who do not have a doctor. It is important, when you have a document such as Places to Grow, that it consider all of the infrastructure

requirements, not just land use planning but also social planning.

The province also needs to consider, says AMO, “planning and funding any local infrastructure that may be required to support new provincial growth strategies.” They go on to say, “The Development Charges Act must be amended to reinstate the ability for a municipality to collect all growth-related capital costs, including those of building hospitals.”

I guess there are concerns. AMO has concerns, and I know other people have concerns. I certainly hope this government, for once, will accept some amendments. Thus far, over the period of time since this government has been in office, they have adopted virtually none of

the amendments that have been forwarded by the opposition.

I would encourage the government to carefully consider the advice they’re being given, not just by the opposition but by AMO and by other groups. Let’s make sure that we have a bill that actually addresses the concerns of people in this province.

The Acting Speaker: I want to thank the member for Kitchener–Waterloo for her presentation this afternoon.

It being very close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until later on this evening at 6:45.

The House adjourned at 1757.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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