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Tuesday 10 May 2005

Mardi 10 mai 2005

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 10 May 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 10 mai 2005

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CANADA-ONTARIO MUNICIPAL RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I would like to draw attention to the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund application made by the town of Gravenhurst in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. Gravenhurst applied for \$1.8 million for a variety of road projects, including street widenings, building of hydro lines and the construction of sidewalks. The Gravenhurst COMRIF application was turned down by this government. The town received no explanation from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Each and every municipal representative I've spoken with has had the same complaint. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has provided absolutely no information on why applications were denied. Instead, communities like Gravenhurst, Kearney, Elk Lake, Rainy River, Iroquois Falls, Smooth Rock Falls, Blind River and Thunder Bay all received a Dear John letter. As Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson said, "I need to know what, if anything, we didn't do, as well as what we could have done in terms of the application form [and] in terms of matching up to have a better chance next time."

It is unacceptable that the minister did not provide any rationale for denying COMRIF applications. Several of the communities I have mentioned face environmental cautions and work orders; others cite health and safety reasons as the grounds for their applications.

I would like to ask the minister again, why won't your ministry provide any guidance or advice on how these communities can improve their applications for future rounds of funding?

WORLD LUPUS DAY

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): Today is World Lupus Day. This is an important day for Lupus Canada as they try to educate us about this disease. Over 50,000 men, women and children in Canada are affected by this disease, but the primary target for this disease seems to be women of child-bearing age.

Lupus is an autoimmune disease that causes the immune system to attack the body's healthy cells, causing

tissue damage, organ failure and even, in the most severe cases, death. It attacks the skin, the muscles, the blood vessels and vital organs like the heart, lungs and kidneys. A good friend of mine, Mr. Jack Szeman, continues to fight lupus today in a brave, brave fight. It is a hard disease to diagnose, since symptoms vary and mimic other diseases, but there is good news: Early detection and treatment can help slow the debilitating effects and minimize those symptoms.

I want to end by thanking a young 15-year-old in my riding for reminding me of the devastating effects of lupus. Let us use her own words: "I just wanted to let you know that May 10th is World Lupus Day. Not many people know about lupus but it's something that people should know about because it is such a complex disease. And even though I'm only 15 and I should not have this until I'm like 40, unfortunately I do. And so do other kids in the world. If you could help me make this day more aware to people"—I would do so, and I can try to do my best.

Maggie McNiven, thank you for the work that you're doing to raise our awareness of lupus. I would encourage all of us in this House to learn more by visiting the Web site www.lupuscanada.org.

ROMANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I am pleased to do a statement today concerning Romanian Independence Day.

Today, May 10, is the day that many Romanians celebrate as Romanian Independence Day. The kingdom of Romania was proclaimed on May 10, 1866, with Carol I as its first king. The new Constitution was then proclaimed and Romania became a constitutional monarchy.

The Romanian people suffered greatly in the decades that followed, and were robbed of their independence many times. However, they never lost hope in a better future. Their strong faith in themselves and in their country was, no doubt, inspired by the events of May 10, 1866.

I am proud to say that Romania's contemporary monarch, King Michael of Romania, is also a relative of Queen Elizabeth II and is even in line to our throne.

At noon today, I helped to raise the Romanian flag at the courtesy flagpole outside the Legislature for a brief period. The Romanian tricolour flag flies over the Parliament of Ontario as a tribute to the bravery, the courage and the rich heritage of the Romanian nation, a heritage proudly borne by all Romanian Canadians. I am very

pleased to say this today and to contribute to Romanian Independence Day.

MEMBER FOR TORONTO—DANFORTH

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): I came to work today and on my desk was a press release from Marilyn Churley. Marilyn Churley, who we all know in the Legislature as a fighter, as a feminist, as an environmentalist, has announced that she is going to be seeking the nomination for the federal riding of Beaches—East York.

I have to tell you I have very mixed feelings, because I remember how this woman fought so ferociously against the amalgamation of our municipality in this Legislature. I remember when she fought to maintain our civic centre when some of those new amalgamated councillors wanted to sell it off and how she fought so much to make sure that democracy returned to East York by having our third councillor actually pass in this Legislature.

We wish her well in Beaches—East York, as New Democrats, as people in the east end of the city of Toronto and in East York. We wish her well because we know that she will make a real difference in Ottawa. She will fight for what the people of this city and this province and this country really and truly believe in. She will do it in her own beautiful and wonderful style. We will miss her very much in this House, but her future is there and I know every member wishes her well.

HAMILTON REGIONAL HERITAGE FAIR

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): Just before I give my member's statement, I want to add my words of congratulations to a member who is a very hard-working parliamentarian. I admire the work that she has done.

On Friday of last week, I took a bit of time out of my regular appointments to visit a school fair, the Hamilton Regional Heritage Fair, being held at the Dofasco Recreation Centre in my riding. The fair featured the projects and displays of approximately 120 kids from grades 4 to 8. I was absolutely blown away by the creativity, the imagination and the insight that was displayed in these projects.

The idea was to choose a subject that played an integral role in our Canadian history. The variety and subject matter was absolutely amazing: from Metis leader Louis Riel to rock drummer Neil Peart; from the story of one young slave girl making her way through the Underground Railroad to Roberta Bondar's journey into outer space; from the fur trade to the Canadarm; from maple syrup to Tim Hortons.

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I learned a lot about our country that morning and I learned a lot about our young students. As Education Minister Gerard Kennedy says, those kids are a lot smarter than we were—and, I would say, at times are. They also deserve the best that we can give them through our public education and post-secondary education sys-

tems. Those are two top priorities, I'm glad to say, of this government.

Just a quick plug for the 2005 Ontario Provincial Fairs Showcase: It's coming up May 20 in my riding of Stoney Creek at the Dofasco centre, and I highly recommend a visit to get a good take on our past and our future all at once.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds—Grenville): Yesterday we heard of yet another example of Dalton McGuinty's total mismanagement. The deal that Mr. McGuinty got from Paul Martin on the weekend in reality does not even exist. The McGuinty Liberals simply make it up as they go along.

Mr. McGuinty shook hands with the Prime Minister on Saturday and raved about great progress, but when the smoke lifted and the deal was dissected, the devil was in the details. No, wait—there were no details. This deal was old news. Mr. McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have hung their hats on a deal that was struck between Paul Martin and Jack Layton weeks ago. In nine hours, Mr. McGuinty was able to sell Ontarians short, shake hands on an increasingly diminishing deal, and prop up his corrupt federal cousins.

This kind of behaviour reminds me of the old barn cat that brings a dead bird to your doorstep. The cat sits there and presents the bird as a present. The problem is, no one wants it.

Dalton, no one is going to swallow your dead bird.

Only Dalton McGuinty and his back-of-a-napkin approach would allow a face-to-face meeting with a minority Prime Minister to be, effectively, wasted time, a spin-doctoring effort devised to benefit two Liberals and their followers. The Premier just continues to say one thing on one day, only to see the real facts come out the next. Ontarians are catching on.

EVENTS IN HURON—BRUCE

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron—Bruce): I'm very pleased to rise today to speak about all of the wonderful things that are happening in the riding of Huron—Bruce. As you know, I represent one of the most rural ridings in the province, and I'm very proud to talk about some of the recent announcements that we have made for the betterment of rural Ontario.

Recently, Minister Smitherman announced the location of over 50 health teams. Both the Maitland Valley family health team and the Huron county family health team received the good news that a family health team would be coming to their communities. After many months of hard work, their efforts to promote primary health care have paid off.

The provincial government, along with the federal government, recently announced much-anticipated funding from COMRIF. The town of Saugeen Shores, the

municipality of Kincardine, the town of Goderich and the township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh all received funding. These projects included upgrades to water systems and bridge repairs that are essential to the health and safety of these communities. Repairing aging infrastructure in our small communities is critical to our success.

We also recently announced the new funding formula for the Ontario municipal partnership fund, which includes four components, one of them for northern and rural communities in recognition of the unique challenges that we face.

I am proud to represent the riding of Huron–Bruce and a government that understands the needs of rural Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Order. May I ask members to keep their conversations lower. I can hardly hear the members making their statements.

FAMILY HEALTH NETWORKS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I'm pleased to be able to speak in this House today about the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care initiative that I had the pleasure of announcing on behalf of this government and Minister George Smitherman on April 15 at Peterborough's beautiful Royal Gardens residence.

The Peterborough area has the privilege of being the benefactor of five—that's five—new family health teams, including the Greater Peterborough family health team in Chemong; the Peterborough Medical Centre—the Greater Peterborough Health Care Alliance; the Peterborough Clinic family health team—the Greater Peterborough Health Care Alliance; the Peterborough Palliative Plus family health team; and the VON Havelock-Belmont-Methuen family health team. These family health teams include doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and other health care professionals working together to provide comprehensive care day and night, seven days a week. This includes access by phone to a registered nurse.

Family health teams are exactly what our community needs and will ensure that more residents of the greater Peterborough area will receive the health care they need closer to home.

Peterborough's five new family health teams are among the first batch of 52 family health teams and three community network teams approved by the government, serving more than 1.1 million patients in 55 communities across Ontario. The family health team initiative is part of the McGuinty government's comprehensive plan to improve health care in Ontario. It's a plan that includes reduced waiting times for key procedures, increasing the number of doctors and nurses, and investing heavily in community-based health care services.

I'm proud to say that I'm part of a government that is ambitious and proactive and that has the strong foresight to improve Ontario's health care.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): Nine hours. That's all it took: nine hours. Premier Dalton McGuinty was able to do in nine hours what the parties opposite could not do in 15 years of governing Ontario. In nine hours, our Premier and the Prime Minister were able to hammer out an agreement that will benefit Ontarians for years to come.

Over the next five years, Ontario will get an additional \$5.75 billion to ensure that Ontario can continue to grow stronger and thus contribute to a stronger Canada—not some Laytonesque two-year deal for all of Canada, but a deal for Ontario for five years.

This weekend's meeting saw agreements reached in two major areas of unfairness: immigration and training. We've been waiting for this day for a long time. Ontarians have experienced unfairness in immigration funding since 1991. In the case of training dollars, the problem has existed since 1995.

We've accomplished what the two previous governments combined were not able to do in 15 long years. Under the leadership of our Premier, Ontarians are finally starting to get their fair share.

But this is only the first step. There's much more to do. Going forward, we will work to address the outstanding gap in areas like health care and social programs. Those are just two more areas where we continue to receive less funding than residents in other provinces receive.

Ontarians expect their representatives to fight for them, and that's exactly what we're doing. We're not going to whine and whimper like the member from Kenora–Rainy River; we're not going to say “probably” and “perhaps” like the visiting member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey.

Our Premier is resolved and he gets results. That's what we have today in this province.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery Ms. Sandra Anguiano, a member of the State Congress of Colima, Mexico. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guest here today.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on social policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 144, An Act to amend certain statutes relating to labour relations / Projet de loi 144, Loi modifiant des lois concernant les relations de travail.

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

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

MEMBERS' BIRTHDAYS

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): On a point of order, Speaker: I am absolutely sure that everybody in this House wants to sing Rosario Marchese a happy birthday today.

Interjection: And Carol Mitchell.

Mr. Bisson: And Carol Mitchell. Isn't that interesting? Happy birthday, Rosie and Carol.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Happy birthday.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I'm pleased to rise in the House today to inform members of the historic commitment we are making in partnership with the federal government to help Ontario children and families.

I was honoured to host Prime Minister Martin and Social Development Minister Ken Dryden on Friday at the St. Marguerite d'Youville Children's Centre in Hamilton. Together, we signed an unprecedented agreement in principle for the early learning and care of Ontario's children, a commitment founded on the principles of quality, universal inclusiveness, accessibility and development. These four principles reflect values that are shared not only with the federal government but with every provincial and territorial government from coast to coast, and they are shared by child care workers and advocates, children's health professionals and parents.

In Ontario, these principles are the cornerstones of our Best Start plan. At its core, Best Start is a massive expansion of child care and early learning. That means making more quality, regulated child care spaces available to more families and providing more subsidies so that more families can access those spaces. But it's much more than that. Best Start also includes vital services that help children develop and arrive at school ready to learn: infant screening, hearing programs, speech and language therapy and many other services that support early childhood development. All of these services, including child care, will be available in community hubs in schools so it's easy for parents to take advantage of them.

In the past year, we've already created 4,000 new subsidized spaces and we're moving forward aggres-

sively to provide more quality child care spaces for more Ontario families. Quality, affordable early learning and child care helps prepare our young people to arrive at school ready to learn, thrive and excel.

We are pleased that the federal government is providing Ontario with approximately \$270 million this year to help build a national early learning and care program. That is in addition to the approximately \$570 million that is already provided for child care in Ontario. These are important investments: investments that pay dividends for decades as children grow into productive contributors to Ontario's economy; investments in families whose parents can work outside the home knowing their children are in a quality child care program.

Together, we are creating a seamless system of services for young families and, together, we will see the results: more quality, affordable child care, more parents able to balance the demands of work and family, and more children getting the best possible start in life.

As I looked around that child care centre on Friday, I saw a lot of happy people who have been working on behalf of children for decades. We committed to them that we would work with our partners to deliver a quality, affordable child care program, and that's what we're doing. But the most important commitment is to the thousands of children in Ontario. To them, we are providing a lifelong gift of learning and care. They deserve nothing less.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): In April last year, I announced in the Legislature that the government would reduce the consumption of electricity in buildings it owns by 10% by 2007. Today, I want to provide the House with a progress report on our conservation efforts, including a significant step forward with an innovative technology.

The government of Ontario has reached an agreement with Enwave Energy Corp. to bring deep-lake-water-cooling technology to the government buildings at Queen's Park, including the Legislature, the Frost buildings, the Whitney Block, the Macdonald Block complex and 880 Bay Street. This project is about reducing the demand for electricity that comes from our grid and giving us cleaner air and healthier Ontarians.

When added to the rest of our conservation efforts across government over the past year, deep-lake-water-cooling technology will bring us halfway to our target of reducing electricity consumption in government buildings by 10% by 2007.

Deep-lake-water-cooling technology draws water from deep within Lake Ontario, processes it through heat exchangers and uses it reliably, efficiently and sustainably to cool our offices. Extending this technology from the downtown core to Queen's Park will help us to reduce the amount of electricity we use to cool our buildings by 75%. This means reduced electricity consumption of just under 10 million kilowatt hours beginning in 2007. This

is roughly the amount of energy that is consumed by 1,000 homes. This project is not only good for the environment; it's good for taxpayers. It is estimated that this initiative alone will save the government—taxpayers—\$4.5 million over the next 30 years.

We have also taken other steps since April 1, 2004, to bring us closer to our goal. Last year, I outlined the four main areas of the government's conservation strategy: engaging our 62,000 employees in a government-wide conservation effort, aggressively conserving electricity in buildings we own, cutting back on energy consumption in our leased space, and inviting the public to help us attain our electricity reduction goals. I'm pleased today to say that we are delivering results in each of these areas. And, as I said, with this announcement we are now half-way toward the goal that we set for ourselves.

We have made significant progress. We are in the process of completing 154 conservation projects which, when they are finished, will reduce our electricity consumption by a little over 20 million kilowatt hours annually.

Finally, I want to emphasize that we can all play our own role in conserving energy. Management Board has established an on-line suggestion box at www.mbs.gov.on.ca so the public can submit suggestions about how the government can improve conservation in its operations. If any of the public see lights on in government buildings that you think shouldn't be on, please let us know through our on-line suggestion box. As a small aside, if you are concerned about the lights on in the Frost building—and many members have raised this with me—the budget is under preparation, and for at least the next 24 hours they probably will be on. But be assured that after that, we will be looking at it. We are pleased that the public has been sending us their suggestions.

The government has also engaged its employees in a conservation awareness campaign. We have asked employees to continue to look for ways to save energy, and we're implementing many of their ideas.

The McGuinty government is well on its way to reducing electricity consumption in Ontario government buildings by 10% by 2007. We've taken a significant step forward to give the people of Ontario and our children a cleaner, greener province.

MAY IS MUSEUM MONTH

MAI, MOI DES MUSÉES

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs): "May Is Museum Month" is an important opportunity to explore our province's past and discover its rich, diverse history. In particular, Ontario's community museums offer a window into our province's past and play a vital role in preserving and protecting local history and heritage.

First launched by the Ontario Museum Association in 2000, May Is Museum Month has grown in scope and size with each passing year. Hundreds of cultural and

heritage organizations across Ontario participate by offering special May Is Museum Month events. Activities and events are listed on the association's Web site.

Cette année, « Mai, Mois des musées » proposera des activités très enrichissantes. L'adoption du projet de loi 60, modifications apportées à la Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario, va stimuler et renouveler le secteur du patrimoine en Ontario. De nombreux musées communautaires sont situés dans des bâtiments patrimoniaux, et la nouvelle Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario, plus musclée, accordera les outils législatifs nécessaires pour mieux protéger des structures qui sont irremplaçables. Les centaines d'événements amusants et éducatifs offerts dans toute la province durant l'opération Mai, Mois des musées, illustre la vitalité de nos musées.

The Royal Ontario Museum's "View of our Future" exhibit profiles the Renaissance ROM initiative from its conceptual beginnings to the most current Studio Daniel Libeskind vision.

Le lieu historique national de Woodside, à Kitchener, présente « Que c'est beau », une exposition mettant en vedette d'étonnantes courtèpointes traditionnelles fabriquées par la communauté franco-ontarienne. Le site propose aussi la visite de la maison natale du premier ministre William Lyon Mackenzie King.

Meanwhile, in Stratford, the Stratford Festival Archives, Exhibits and Displays offers an inside look at the costumes, props, art, photos and stage sets from Canada's largest classical repertory theatre.

1400

The Perth Museum is offering Ontarians the opportunity to witness an historical re-enactment of the last fatal duel in Canada's history, which took place in Perth in 1833.

Quant au musée de Thunder Bay, il présente « Puttin' on the Ritz », un aperçu de la mode dans le nord-ouest de l'Ontario de 1865 à 1945. Plus de 35 robes de bal, de robes de soirée et d'uniformes portés par des hommes et des femmes de la région sont exposés.

Le musée de Timmins a monté une exposition fascinante intitulée « Sur les routes du Bouclier canadien, hier et aujourd'hui ».

Whether one wishes to explore Ontario's social development, its evolution as a manufacturing centre or its cultural development, "May Is Museum Month" offers something for everyone.

J'encourage les Ontariens et les Ontariennes de toute la province à venir visiter les nombreux événements et expositions dans le cadre de l'initiative « Mai, Mois des musées ».

Je profite de cette occasion pour remercier les nombreux organismes de conservation du patrimoine et les centaines de bénévoles situés dans toute la province qui ont fait don de leur temps et de leur énergie toute l'année pour aider à préserver et protéger le riche patrimoine de l'Ontario.

Happy "May Is Museum Month."

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Responses?

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): I'm pleased to rise for the fourth time in the last 20 months to respond to this announcement on the Best Start program that the government is announcing today, thanks to the federal government and its desperate situation. The reason I say that is because there was a failure to reach a national agreement. The minister went out west to do that. But in the last five days, three provinces have agreed to take money in year one.

What's missing in this announcement is that there is no clear dollar commitment in the minister's statement, which is why she will have to explain why she isn't talking about the out-years and the commitment. I do know that in the Best Start plan, the government promised full-day junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten, which would cost \$1 billion per year at maturity, in the fourth year. They also promised in their Best Start child care program \$1.9 billion over five years for children under the age of four.

What is also missing in this agreement is the fact that municipalities have not been told whether they are going to have to cough up 20% of the cost, as they do today in Ontario. So we're short on details and we're very high on top-line messaging.

I thought it was summed up best by Andrew Coyne in the National Post, who referred to the provincial Liberal McGuinty government as "The best friends money can buy." He says, "Now, what is the significance of this" daycare "story? That the federal Liberals, after running for four straight elections on the promise of a national daycare system, have made good, just in time for a fifth" election?

It goes on to raise the question: "That, to benefit from this program, parents will be obliged to send their children, not to the daycare providers of their choice, but those of the province's choice (since the money goes, not to parents, but to the province, and thence to providers)" of their choice? And the minister is on record as indicating that that will be predominantly in schools, and we'll see more child care money going into the education system.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): I'm pleased to rise to respond to Management Board's announcement today. We're pleased to hear the announcement that Enwave will be extending their cooling system here to Queen's Park and to other government buildings. It is something that Steve Gilchrist, a member of the previous government, was positive on when he was Commissioner of Alternative Energy and when Enwave announced their first projects back in 2001. So we commend the government on doing so.

Energy conservation is a vital part of dealing with the energy needs of Ontario as we go forward, but I want the government to let people be aware that they are talking

about a saving of \$4.5 million over 30 years, which does in fact amount to an average of \$150,000 a year, so let's not overstate just what they are accomplishing here. But it is important that we move, and I think the government has to be on the leading edge of the conservation example here in the province of Ontario.

I must also point out that the plan for energy and energy supply from this government is so full of holes that conservation is going to become an even more important part of it because, as we move forward, the energy supply in the province is very questionable under the leadership of this government.

MAY IS MUSEUM MONTH

MAI, MOIS DES MUSÉES

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): I am pleased to join with the minister and all of my colleagues in the House to recognize Museum Month in Ontario.

Ontario's museums are a vital, living reminder of the heritage and history of our province. In the last few years, our museums have entered a great period of revival and expansion. I'm very proud that our PC government, through the SuperBuild program, was able to launch the renewal of so many museums and cultural institutions.

Just last week, I was honoured to be able to tour the Royal Ontario Museum. An investment of \$30 million of SuperBuild money has given the ROM the seed capital to launch a major plan of new construction and renovation. This reconstruction will help the ROM secure its place as one of the world's great museums with a vast increase in display and space.

Museums are not just in big cities, though. Across the province, museums help celebrate local heritage and history. In my own riding, we are proud of such places as the Sharon Temple, Georgina Pioneer Village and the Campbell Museum.

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James): On est très ravi aujourd'hui que la ministre a pris le temps de reconnaître que ce mois, c'est le mois des musées. Mais, madame la Ministre, vous savez autant que nous que les musées à travers cette province ont une pénurie de financement pour être capables de faire leur ouvrage. On sait aussi que ce mois, c'est le mois du budget, non seulement le mois des musées. On s'attend à ce que la ministre ait fait son ouvrage et que demain on va entendre de belles nouvelles faisant affaire avec les musées et qu'on va mettre du nouvel argent pour les musées dans la province de l'Ontario pour les assister à faire leur ouvrage.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Finally, the goose laid the egg of federal child care funding, and that's a good thing. The problem is, this minister decided to burn the omelette here in Ontario. It's really unfortunate, because this golden opportunity for child care has

been squandered by this minister, who said that she wanted to be the leader in child care for this nation.

Well, guess what? She is far behind the leaders, because she did not commit to a not-for-profit system, which all of the research shows is the appropriate way to get the accountability and the quality in the system. She decided to ignore that research and decided to say, no, we would rather open Ontario up to the big boxes, the big-box child care people who are going to be coming into Ontario as soon as this \$271 million starts to flow. What we didn't hear, though, is when the provincial government is going to put its \$300 million in that they promised back during the previous election. We haven't seen that yet, and we're waiting to see it any time soon.

The problem is, everybody agrees that the minister has ignored all of the research. She says that it's a matter of ideology, but it's not. It's a matter of reality; it's a matter of economics; it's a matter of what we want to see for our children and what is best for the children of the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, this Liberal government is not prepared to put a best start for the children of Ontario.

On behalf of kids and parents and providers, I still stand in my place today to urge this government to follow through on the provinces like Manitoba and Saskatchewan that have committed to the not-for-profit model, and that we'll at least grandfather existing for-profit. Grandfather them. Keep out the big boxes. The problem is, this minister is opening the floodgates for the for-profit system of child care. That's not what we want in Ontario. We don't want to see our not-for-profits squeezed out by the big corporations, like what happened in the home care model. We know that that has happened. It's experience.

Bottom line: This government voted down its own promises on child care. Whether it is a not-for-profit child care system, the national child benefit clawback or autism services, on all accounts, children have been ignored by this Liberal government.

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ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): I want to reply to the Chair of Management Board, who continues the McGuinty government's exercise of trying to pretend that they've got an electricity policy through spin.

The announcement today is welcomed, but it's very meagre. I invite the minister to read this report by the Pembina Institute, Power for the Future, where they point out no less than a couple of dozen ways in which we should be moving toward energy efficiency, yet we hear nothing from the McGuinty government. Just one example: If you were to retrofit major apartment buildings, you could move, within five years, from using 36,674 gigawatt hours of electricity to only 30,000. But do we have an announcement about energy efficiency for the hundreds, thousands of apartment buildings that were built cheap in the 1960s and 1970s? No.

Then there's the other report, this one by Ralph Torrie, Toward Sustainable Electricity Futures. He too lists dozens of policies which could be implemented to reduce our use of electricity, to, in some cases, moving from electric heat to natural gas heat and installing solar panels on our major apartment buildings in cities to heat them that way. Any movement by the McGuinty government on that front? None.

Let me tell you why. The McGuinty government is so deep in the pockets of private energy companies which do not want to see a reduction in the use of natural gas, which do not want to see a reduction in the use of electricity. So we get these spin announcements that mean essentially nothing, while the real work isn't being done.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Order. Could I have some order now, please? Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. There seems to be lots of confusion surrounding the deal reached with the Prime Minister on Saturday, about which you had quite a bit to say yesterday. Can you confirm for us today exactly how much of the agreement is new money that you negotiated for Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): It's a \$5.7-billion agreement; \$4.7 billion is new money. We can devote a lot of time trying to take credit, whether it was Mr. Layton's accomplishment, the Prime Minister's accomplishment, Mr. Goodale's accomplishment or my accomplishment, but I think the single most important thing here is that new Canadians in the province of Ontario win as a result of this arrangement and unemployed workers in Ontario win as a result of this, and we're proud to have brought that success to those Ontarians.

Mr. Tory: Premier, you made reference to real progress yesterday, today and the past three days. We still don't really know, though, how much real progress you've made. The federal finance minister says now that Ontario would have received two thirds of this money anyway and that the other one third won't even flow for another two years. Do you therefore agree that the total new money for the next two years is in fact \$510 million?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition is just not prepared to find some joy in the accomplishments of Ontario immigrants and Ontario workers. Just to be very clear, there had been an unfairness in place for the past 15 years when it came to the amount of money we received in Ontario for our new Canadians. As a result of this new arrangement, funding has gone from

\$819 per new Canadian to \$3,400 over the course of five years.

As well, with respect to our unemployed workers, we have brought the level of funding up to the national average. Again, that is good news for Ontario workers. The leader of the official opposition may want to try to get into some debate as to who might lay claim to this. I think the real winners in this are Ontario's new Canadians and our workers.

Mr. Tory: I say to the Premier, I take great joy, as you do, in finding help for students and for immigrants and so on, and I agree with you on the unfairness, but the real unfairness here, and what we're getting at, is simply to get you to be straight on the details of this agreement, to be straight on exactly what's new and what isn't.

You said earlier today that you were not interested in spinning your so-called deal into a political win for your government, but that didn't stop you yesterday and the day before and the day before that from creating the impression that you were driving a Brinks truck back here from Ottawa when in fact your agreement could have fit inside a smart car with a lot of room to spare. How can anybody in Ontario have any faith in what you say? We will keep fighting for Ontario's cause with you, but we need the straight goods from you on this deal. Will you give us those?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition just won't take yes for an answer. This is good news for our new Canadians. It is good news for our workers. It is good news for our students. It is good news for our businesses. It is good news for our health and the quality of our air. This is good news for the province of Ontario. I'm glad we had the people of Ontario on side when I had my meeting with the Prime Minister, and it would be just a bit better if I could get some more support from the leader of the official opposition, as we put our case to the federal government, to stand up for Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): New question.

Mr. Tory: The Premier knows full well that I've extended my support throughout this process and I will continue to do so, but that is not the issue on which I'm questioning him today.

Premier, your explanatory—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Could I get some order for the second question placed by the leader of the official opposition, please?

Mr. Tory: I will continue to be supportive of the Premier's efforts in this regard, but you do owe this House, I think, some answers. Your explanatory/damage-control sheet handed out this morning lumps post-secondary funding, housing, infrastructure, corporate tax and environment money all together in each of the years of the deal—the five years. Can you tell us in each of the first two years how much new money this deal, your deal with the Prime Minister, produces for post-secondary education?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: We've handed out some detailed background information. If the leader of the

official opposition would like some more, we are more than prepared to provide a technical briefing. But I can say this, once again: Notwithstanding the leader of the official opposition's naysaying on this score, I have always said we should not enlarge this beyond what it actually represents, but neither should we minimize it. We have been able to accomplish something on the immigration file that other governments have sought to achieve over the past 15 years. We enjoyed some considerable success there on behalf of our new Canadians. When it comes to our workers, past governments for the previous 10 years have been unable to find success on that file either. We've been able to secure a new arrangement that ensures our workers will receive funding that's in keeping with the national average.

Why can we not celebrate that modest achievement and keep working together to press the federal government to give us more fairness on other issues?

Mr. Tory: I'm just trying to find out from the Premier what the exact scope of the accomplishment is so that we can celebrate it. You don't want to answer the questions. Yesterday, you actually did answer a question. In reply to a question about whether the \$1.55 billion you announced Saturday night was new money or not, you said, "Yes, to be very direct, what we have done is not new money. I did not negotiate that new money."

Today you have issued the sheet you referred to a moment ago—this sheet here—which does in fact suggest that some of it is money you tried to take credit of, that some of it's new and some of it's not. Since there is some confusion about all this, can you tell me if you and the Prime Minister signed a written agreement after your meeting? If so, when will you make that written agreement public?

1420

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, we had a good and constructive meeting. We didn't agree on everything, obviously, but we were able to agree on some things that have remained outstanding issues, as I said, for up to the past 15 years. There is more work to be done. We have yet to finalize, in writing, an agreement; we are working feverishly on that. I'm looking forward to my meeting with Mr. Harper as well to secure the same kind of support for the people of Ontario.

I'm proud that we've been able to proceed on this particular issue in a non-partisan way. We've had a good agreement now with the Prime Minister. We will seek—and I will gladly use the support of my friend opposite—to secure the very same arrangement, at a minimum, with Mr. Harper. If Mr. Layton would like to meet with me in this regard, we would be pleased to do so. We will do whatever it takes to stand up for the people of Ontario and ensure that they are treated with fairness.

Mr. Tory: When you were able to have a press conference—in fact, several press conferences—when you were able to issue quite a detailed explanatory memo today, although it does lump a lot of things together, I think it is not unreasonable to expect that you would have been able to produce a written agreement signed by

yourself and by the Prime Minister so that we could all see two things: First of all, are things what they appear to be and what you're making them appear to be? Second, just exactly what is the breakdown, for example, about the money, as between housing, infrastructure and so on?

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I'm just trying to be helpful.

The Speaker: You're not being helpful, Minister. You're not being helpful one bit. In fact, the disruption has caused much more—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. There's some disorder in Parliament, and I'd like more respect to be given to the member as he asks the question. I'm getting a lot of disruption from this side. Thank you for trying to help me, but I'm quite capable of carrying on the duties of the Speaker when I can hear who the question is coming to and who will be responding. I would rather have much less disruption in order that we can proceed.

Could the Leader of the Opposition ask his question.

Mr. Tory: Can you confirm, then, Premier, that there's not a single piece of paper, not a single memorandum, initialled or signed by you and the Prime Minister? If that's so, can you confirm that? Second, tell us when you'll be having an agreement that you will make available to the public so we can all see this deal for ourselves and exactly what was achieved and what wasn't.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: It is more than just a little rich. For the last eight to eight and a half years, that government failed to advance this file—both of these files in particular, the immigration file and the labour agreement—one iota. Now the leader of the official opposition seeks to make sure that we put some final gloss on this particular agreement. He reminds me somewhat of the guy who, in the case of a particular fight, offers to hold my coat.

I can tell you, we worked long and hard on behalf of the people of Ontario to secure this arrangement. We will do everything we can not to let this slip out from between our fingers. But it is just a little bit rich that we've been able to accomplish more in nine hours than they could in nine years and that now the leader of the official opposition stands up and pretends to dot every i and cross every t. We will continue on the path that we've pursued already. We will continue to stand up for the people of Ontario and get them the fairness they—

Interjections.

The Speaker: I'm quite capable of handling the matter, thank you very much.

New question; the leader of the third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): For the Premier: Yesterday, you boasted about a \$5.75-billion deal with the Prime Minister. Then we heard from the federal Liberal finance minister, Mr. Goodale. He says that you got \$300 million of new money—a little bit of a difference, Premier.

What is really disturbing about this is that after going to Ottawa and only getting \$300 million of new money, you came here and tried to claim credit for over \$5 billion. Premier, now that you have exaggerated the truth once again, should anyone believe what's in your budget tomorrow?

The Speaker: I heard some unparliamentary language there being expounded.

Mr. Hampton: If there's something unparliamentary, I withdraw it.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I will rule on what is parliamentary or not. I would ask the leader of the third party to withdraw his comment.

Mr. Hampton: I withdraw.

The Speaker: The question was to the Premier.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: There was a reference there to the budget, and I'm glad to speak to that in the limited ways that I can, obviously, the day before it's going to be presented in this very chamber.

Our budget will speak to the priorities held and shared by the people of Ontario. It will emphasize their desire to build a still stronger system of public education, grounded in good public schools. As well, we will speak to, through our budget, a stronger health care system. We will as well, through our budget, do more to build a stronger, more sustainable, more robust, more vigorous economy. Those are the very priorities held by the people of Ontario, and our budget will speak to those tomorrow.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, I want to speak to the facts as known by Mr. Goodale, the Liberal federal finance minister. He says that a third of the money that you tried to take credit for yesterday was already committed in the original federal budget of February. He says that a further third of the money that you tried to take credit for yesterday was negotiated by NDP leader Jack Layton. He says he might give you credit for the remaining third, but that money isn't going to come to Ontario until 2007.

Premier, having grossly exaggerated your talk with the Prime Minister in Ottawa on the weekend, why should anyone believe the McGuinty budget tomorrow?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Yes, from time to time we will have a disagreement with the federal government. The fact that they happen to enjoy the same political stripe as do we is not going to get in the way, ever, of our government doing whatever we feel is in the interests of the people of Ontario. So, yes, I have a disagreement with the federal finance minister's interpretation of our arrangement. That is fine. That is not something that is going to dissuade us, ever. We will continue to advance the cause of fairness on behalf of the people of Ontario regardless of the political stripe that happens to enjoy the privilege of governing through Parliament Hill.

Mr. Hampton: I would say that a disagreement with the federal finance minister to the tune of \$4 billion a year is quite a disagreement, but it underlines the Premier's credibility gap.

Last year, you promised you wouldn't raise taxes. Then you imposed an unfair and regressive health tax

that hits modest- and middle-income families the hardest. Then you tried a \$3.9-billion Enron-style accounting trick until the provincial Auditor General blew the whistle on you. Now you come back from Ottawa and try to claim credit for \$5.7 billion when the finance minister says it's \$300 million; that's all you got for now.

Premier, I say again, given your record of exaggeration, given your own credibility gap, why should anyone believe the McGuinty budget tomorrow?

1430

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I'm not sure what more I can add. I know that there is a lot of excitement to be found in political clashes and who can claim the most credit for what, but I really think this is all about what it is that we have done for two particular groups of Ontarians. I think we have a good new arrangement now for our new Canadians. Yes, this is over the course of five years, but we have been waiting 15 years to get this done. When we can quadruple the level of federal funding for our immigrants in Ontario, I think that is good news. When we can bring the federal funding level up to the national average for our unemployed workers to provide them with greater training opportunities, I think that is good news. No, we have not gone as far as we would like to go, but we are pleased and frankly proud of those modest accomplishments that we have achieved on behalf of those groups of Ontarians.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): A new question to the Premier. We thought we had a good-news story for the lowest-income children in this province with the national child benefit supplement, but your government claws that money back from the poorest children in this province. That's their good-news story.

I want to again ask you about your budget, because we've found out now that you have a scheme to invite private, profit-driven corporations into Ontario's schools, hospitals, and all sorts of other public buildings and public assets. We already have examples of this: P3 hospitals in Ottawa and Brampton. Private corporations stand to make a lot of money out of the health budget.

Premier, I want to ask you, in the context of your budget, do you still claim that those P3 hospitals in Ottawa and Brampton are in fact public hospitals?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Yes, I do. I think it's important, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this issue. It is an important issue and I think it's really important that we strip away the ideology that can cloud our minds. Let me tell you just a little bit about the nature of the challenge before all of us. Obviously, the leader of the NDP has a different approach to this. I understand that, but I disagree with him.

The average age of our hospitals in Ontario is 43 years. We have many schools that have been built in the 1920s. We have water pipes in the ground, in Toronto and Ottawa in particular, that are over 100 years old. We

still have water pipes in Ontario that are made of wood. Everybody knows about our congestion on our highways; it is a drag on the economy here in the GTA to the tune of \$2 billion. We have hold-ups at our borders; congestion there is costing us \$5 billion.

The issue then becomes, what is the best way for us to address that huge infrastructure deficit? We think that we need an alternate way. We think it's time for us to look at new ways to accomplish things that serve the public interest, and I will be delighted to speak to those more fulsomely in the supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, this is what you said a few months before the election: "Public ownership is less costly than the private option. It's the best deal for taxpayers." That's what you told your hometown newspaper in Ottawa before the election. Now, Dalton McGuinty is prepared to invite private, profit-driven corporations into our schools, our hospitals, our water systems, our roads, our transit systems, when you yourself say that it will cost the public more money.

Premier, when you yourself say it's going to cost the taxpayers, the public of Ontario, more money, what could possibly be the justification for this? "Pay more," Dalton McGuinty said. How do you justify it now?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I'm sure that the leader of the NDP will want to be clear about this. I know that in every opportunity he has, he will also make it clear that our minister responsible for public infrastructure renewal has specifically stated that hospitals, schools and water systems will remain publicly owned, publicly operated and publicly controlled. I'm sure he will want to make that clear.

What I would recommend to the leader of the NDP and to all Ontarians is to go to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal's Web site and take a look at a very thoughtful, intelligent speech that he delivered yesterday. If it's not on the Web site—and I'm sure that by the end of this question period it will be—it will be available to the people of Ontario. It lays out, in particular, five very stringent guidelines that will serve to guide us as we explore alternate public financing.

Mr. Hampton: I don't think Ontarians want your most recent idiosyncratic interpretation of your broken promises. Before the election, you called P3 hospitals in Brampton and Ottawa a bad deal, and after the election, you tried to call them public hospitals.

Here's what the Toronto Star says: "In opposition, the Liberals attacked the Tories for plans to have private interests finance and build hospitals in Brampton and Ottawa. But a month after taking power, the Liberals essentially signed on...."

This is what the Kitchener–Waterloo Record says: "You'd need a microscope to tell the difference between the deal cut by the Tories and the one agreed to by the Liberals for these hospitals after the election."

Premier, we can already see how you change your definition of what's a public hospital, what's a public school, what's a public asset, but I'm asking you again—before the election, you said these were bad deals; you

said taxpayers would end up paying more, a lot more. How easily did you change your opinion after the election?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I can tell you on behalf of the communities of Ottawa and Brampton that they are delighted to be receiving their new hospitals, serving important public purposes and meeting the health care needs in their communities.

The leader of the NDP, if he had his way, as I understand it, would shut those hospitals down and deprive those communities of that important health care service. That may be his approach, but that is not our approach.

As Minister Caplan said in his speech, we will be guided by five important principles when it comes to these projects: The public interest will be paramount; value for money must be demonstrable; appropriate public ownership and control will be maintained; accountability will also be paramount; and the process will be fair, transparent and efficient. We will move ahead, and we will, at all times, protect the public interest.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): New question. The member from Whitby–Ajax.

Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby–Ajax): A question for the Premier: I congratulate you on your conversion to public-private partnerships, on your recognition of the need to have the private sector and pension funds investing in infrastructure. There was something peculiar your minister said yesterday, though. He said, “Hospitals, schools and water absolutely will be publicly owned,” but a private company will just hold the mortgages.

Premier, can you help us? You’re a lawyer and you understand this. Can you help us on this new Liberal invention, the McGuinty mortgage? How does this work?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The maker of the Caplan mortgage will speak to that.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): I’m delighted to have a chance to illuminate for my colleague from Whitby–Ajax how we’re going to be moving forward. I would use an example of the Durham courthouse, a project in Durham that this member tried to move forward for eight and a half years. It did not move from concept to actual construction. We are out right now on an RFP, where we’re asking the private sector for construction of a new consolidated courthouse in Durham. The private sector will work to finance it. Over the course of the lifetime of that building, we will pay a fee to the consortium to be able to occupy those premises, to be able to have justice dispensed in a consolidated courthouse. I know that the member from Whitby–Ajax would want to congratulate our government for moving this project ahead, where he and his government absolutely were not able to do that.

Mr. Flaherty: Minister, let me help you. When you mortgage a property, you transfer the legal ownership of the property. That’s what you do. So when you say, “I’m just going to mortgage the property,” you’re transferring the legal ownership from the province of Ontario to the mortgagee. You ought to think about that. Why not just come up and say, “Listen, we finally recognize, as Prime

Minister Blair’s government recognized in the United Kingdom, that this is a Conservative idea”? But it has been proven. It works in Australia and New Zealand, the United Kingdom and various US states. I congratulate you on finally coming to the realization that it works. But you wasted \$30 million of taxpayers’ money by dithering on the Brampton hospital.

Interjection.

Mr. Flaherty: Well, you had your own Premier saying, “But let me be very clear ... we don’t support the P3 funding model.” Why don’t you just come clean and recognize that you’ve finally seen the light?

1440

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I’m disappointed, of course, that the member would not want to recognize that we have set down a principle-based approach to be able to get the kind of investment that we need. I think this is part of the contrast between the former government and our government. It’s why I’m very confident, through the principles, public interest being paramount, that we have appropriate public control and ownership, that we have appropriate and responsible accountability measures, that we be able to demonstrate value for money and, of course, that all processes are fair, transparent and efficient.

I would contrast the record of our government and the previous government, who took consumers for a ride on Highway 407 with the fire sale of an asset, a loss of control. Selling out the people of Ontario is not the way of the McGuinty government; we will move in a principle-based way. That’s what taxpayers would expect from us, and that’s exactly what we’re going to deliver.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Wow. A principled Liberal approach—what a step. I’ve got to say, that’s an oxymoron.

More important, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. He would know that across this province last Friday we had bus drivers driving in front of constituency offices protesting what’s been happening in busing over the last number of years. They have seen their insurance costs go through the roof, their fuel costs go through the roof, repair and maintenance go through the roof, and the purchase price of new buses has gone up as well. What we do know is that, for about the last 10 years, we have seen the funding for school buses go down by about \$3 million in that time that prices have been going up.

My question is a very simple one for you. On behalf of school bus drivers and operators across this province, like Ron Malette of Tisdale buses in Timmins, will you adjust the funding formula to allow them to keep pace with inflation at the very least?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): It does the heart good to see the NDP member up arguing on behalf of the private bus operators. They deserve some attention, I think, from this House, and I’m glad he is here on their behalf.

We have met with the bus operators. We have talked to them about their conditions. One of them, a large Laidlaw concern, has 67% of the business in the province, and I'm sure they have the sympathy of the member opposite as well. They have ours. We are interested in them working well with the school boards.

We increased school bus funding by 5% last year—the first government to get ahead of inflation in terms of doing that. The last government forgot to get a transportation funding formula, and we've worked hard with the sector to come up with one. We have an agenda with the bus operators of Ontario, but at our last meeting we asked them six or eight pointed questions, which we're still waiting for replies to.

Mr. Bisson: We know you have an agenda with school bus operators, and that is to keep the prices down. The number that you flaunt here in the Legislature today is not at all what they are feeling at the actual operational level. We know, for example, that your funding formula coming this fall is actually going to see about half the school boards in this province losing even more money.

I go back and ask you again. There is a serious issue that needs to be dealt with. A lot of these independent mom-and-pop operators across Ontario, in my riding as in yours, are in a situation where they can't afford to operate. The price they're getting to operate their school buses doesn't keep up with all the inflationary costs of running their business.

They met with you 15 months ago. You said you were going to do something, and now, 15 months later, they're waiting. Nothing has happened. My question to you is, will we see something in the budget tomorrow to address the shortfall for school bus operators?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: I think there's trouble with numbers on the other side. We met three months ago with the bus owners. We had a very constructive meeting and in fact, at that meeting, identified a number of the cost pressures. We asked them for information. We have gotten some of that from some of the bus operators.

Our main concern is that kids get transportation; 40% of school kids in Ontario get transported by public busing and publicly paid-for busing. We're going to make sure that is done safely and effectively, and we are going to make sure that the cost base for the boards for those students is covered. We believe that's what the bus operators are looking for as well.

As others have said, right here in this House you'll hear about the budget. You'll hear about good things for education. I'm sure transportation is one of those good things.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, over the weekend, our Premier and the Prime Minister had, as we all know now, a very successful

meeting. Our Premier went to Ottawa to stand up for Ontario, and that's exactly what he did.

I'm very proud to stand here today and say that the Premier and the Prime Minister resolved two major issues that have been unfair for a long time in Ontario: immigration and training. The agreement they arrived at covers more than \$5.75 billion over five years. This is obviously an important start toward narrowing the \$23-billion gap.

I know that, as in my riding—and many other ridings have many newcomers to Canada—the news of this agreement will be very, very well received. What does this agreement deliver, though, in terms of immigration funding specifically?

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I am very proud that our Premier succeeded in making real progress for Ontarians over the weekend. As a government, we have accomplished what previous governments could not do in 15 years: We finally got fairness for immigrants in Ontario.

Funding for immigrant support services will double in the next year and quadruple, from \$819 to \$3,400 per immigrant, over the next five years. These monies will go directly to the agencies that provide the services for new Canadians.

As the Premier has said, this is about more than just government and it's about more than being the Premier or the Prime Minister; it's about a strong Ontario for a strong Canada.

We thank both the Premier and the Prime Minister. We finally have an immigration agreement in Ontario—a strong, fair agreement for our new Canadians.

Mr. Patten: Minister, it's good to hear those words. I understand that the deal our Premier was able to secure with the Prime Minister also included reference to the labour market development agreement which we, in Ontario, have been looking forward to completing for many, many years.

I know that constituents in my riding have complained about the two rounds of training programs; one at the federal level, others at the provincial level—"Which one is better?", "Are they the same?" etc. Like all Ontario constituents, in my riding they deserve seamless training. They have to develop the most up-to-date skills in order to compete in today's ever-changing knowledge society. So I ask you, what will a labour market development agreement really mean for many new Canadians in Ontario?

Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni: The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I want to thank my colleague the member from Ottawa Centre for this very important question. I also want to thank the Premier for bringing to a head an issue that has been outstanding for 10 years. Ontario has been the only province without a labour market development agreement, and I'd like to share with

the House today what that means to the people of Ontario.

For a start, it might surprise you to know that with the previous situation, 70% of unemployed Ontarians did not even qualify for services provided by the federal government that are employment-insurance-based.

This agreement is not just about the additional \$1 billion that will come to the people of Ontario over the next five years, but also about improved client service, a reduction of duplication in services provided, and success through additional training and employment services.

This is an absolutely wonderful deal for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): New question. The member for Erie-Lincoln.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Back to the Premier. Premier, I'm following up on a question from the leader of the official opposition that I believe you neglected to answer. Is it true that you walked away from your meeting with the Prime Minister without a single signed document, a memorandum of understanding or other written record to which you had agreed?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Again, we have a question from a member of a former government which, for eight and a half years, sat on its hands. It luxuriated in rhetoric. What we have obtained for the people of Ontario are results: genuine, measurable results. This is good news for our new Canadians. It is good news for our unemployed workers. It helps move the yardstick forward. There is more work to be done, and we look forward to doing that on behalf of the people of Ontario.

1450

Mr. Hudak: Premier, I'm rather incredulous that you haven't answered this question after three or four tries. I'm beginning to think that if there's any written document, it's on the back of a napkin beneath somebody's drink. Surely, Premier, with this important meeting you must have documented what the deal means and over how much time the deal will be. There seems to be an awful lot of confusion, where you're crowing about your deal but the finance minister says, "Ontario Deal Mostly Recycled" in the Toronto Star, and the National Post reports, "Ottawa Dollars for Ontario Same Ones Promised NDP." Premier, please tell me it's not true. Please tell me you're not making this up as you go along. Will you release the MOU, whatever signed document you have, or just come forward and say you didn't sign anything?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: For the benefit of the member, just so he knows how these things work, after there are negotiations, there is an agreed statement in the form of a joint communiqué, and we do this whether it's a Council of the Federation meeting, a first ministers' meeting or a bilateral meeting between the Prime Minister and the Premier. We did that. What we need to do now, and what we're in fact doing as we speak, is to refine the communiqué and put it into writing so that we can have a signed document. That's the way these things work. I say to the member opposite, as the member of a government

that sat on its hands for a long and painful eight and a half years, we were able to accomplish more in nine hours than they did in their nine years, and we're proud of what we were able to bring home for our new Canadians and our unemployed workers.

WATER QUALITY

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Minister of the Environment. The Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality and Testing Standards submitted its report to you on February 8, over three months ago. The council recommended a new regulation to protect water quality without causing a huge financial burden to small businesses trying to comply. Will you implement the council's recommendations, especially the new regulation, and when will you do that?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I'm very happy to say that I want to congratulate the good work the advisory council on drinking water quality did. They consulted extensively across the province, they went to 12 communities and they brought some very fine recommendations that our ministry is paying very close attention to. One component of their recommendations would suggest that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care would have a role to play in assisting communities and businesses to determine whether or not their drinking water is safe, and so my ministry is working very closely with Health and Long-Term Care to devise a solid plan going forward on how we can help businesses and communities across Ontario improve this flawed regulation.

Ms. Martel: The delay in the government response is causing great uncertainty among business owners: those who own trailer parks, campgrounds, bed-and-breakfasts, etc. For example, Tim and Sue Shannon own a restaurant and a golf course in Alban, in the south part of Nickel Belt. At this point, if there is no change, they will pay between \$15,000 and \$20,000 for a new water system. They will need chlorination. Beginning June 1, they will pay \$185 every month for weekly water testing. Every Monday morning they will drive two and a half hours round trip to the nearest private lab to drop off their water samples.

They want to protect their drinking water, but they need to know what the rules of the game are. They need to know what they will be required to do and how much it's going to cost. I ask you again, when will you be bringing forward a new regulation so that Tim and Sue Shannon and so many operators can know what they are dealing with?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: This ministry and this government are very aware of the challenges this regulation has presented. That is why we are doing the work we are doing. But we also know that when you do not take the time to consult and to make sure you get it right the first time—we have a regulation 170. We have something that does not work well in the communities. I have committed to ensure that we bring back a regulation that will meet

the needs and, at the same time, ensure that water is protected and that water provided within these communities is safe to drink.

We are working with the Ministry of Health. I've indicated to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario that we will come forward with this as soon as possible. But what I am also committed to is ensuring that when the changes are made to this regulation, they will be workable for the people in the communities who need them to ensure that their water is safe.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): My question is to the Chair of Management Board of Cabinet. Minister, our government was elected to help rebuild public services, and I am proud of the work we are doing in the key areas of health care and education.

Unlike the NDP, who ripped up the collective agreements of thousands of public service workers, and unlike the Conservatives, who cut the heart out of public services and caused years of labour unrest, I know we are working hard to ensure that Ontario public service employees have fair agreements. I've met with numerous groups representing government employees, including local bargaining unit presidents from the Ontario Public Service Employees Union in Sault Ste. Marie, who represent 708 members.

My understanding is that earlier today OPSEU provided an update on negotiations. Could you provide the House with any further information regarding the status of collective bargaining between our government and OPSEU?

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The public should be aware that we're in negotiations with OPSEU, which is our largest union. Roughly 42,000 of our public servants are with that union.

I just want to say that we, as a government, believe very much in collective bargaining. We are determined to reach a fair and equitable agreement with OPSEU that's fair to our employees and, I might say, fair to the public.

I think the member from Sault Ste. Marie is aware of this, but the public may not be: Since we were elected, we've delivered on our commitment to public service. There was a concern by the union about outside consultants, and we looked at that. There were 450 outside consultants doing work. We've put those jobs back in the public service for a reason. We saved almost \$20 million that the previous government was wasting.

I want to say to the member for Sault Ste. Marie, we are working very hard with OPSEU to reach a fair and equitable agreement because we believe very much in collective bargaining.

Mr. Oraziotti: Minister, it's good to see that the parties are working together toward a new collective agreement.

As you know, OPSEU is not our only partner. AMAPCEO, the Association of Management, Adminis-

trative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario, is one of the largest public service unions, representing over 7,000 employees in a variety of jobs, including policy, finance, project and program management, and nursing supervisors. The hard-working AMAPCEO employees make an important contribution to public services of Ontario. What is the status of government negotiations with AMAPCEO?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: Again for the public's information, I think 7,200 of our employees are in this union, AMAPCEO, and, as you say, it's many of the people who are involved in our management, administration and professional services.

We have been involved in collective bargaining with them. I'm very happy to let the House know that both sides have ratified an agreement that is, I believe, fair to our employees and fair to the taxpayers. I think 96% voted in favour of it. The vote concluded last Friday. It is a fair salary, and it addressed two or three of the issues that concerned the union: some overtime provisions and some job classifications.

The point I'd make to the member from Sault Ste. Marie and members of the House is that we believe in collective bargaining. We think we have demonstrated with this agreement with our AMAPCEO union a fair settlement for them and a fair settlement for the public. It's my hope that we can do the same thing with OPSEU.

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, almost two years ago your ministry commissioned Cathexis Consulting to review specific services for disabled persons in our province. You received that report last year. What have you done with this report?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I appreciate the question. I am not certain if we're speaking about the same report, but I'm assuming you're talking about a report on intervener services. This is a report that we actually received this year. In fact, it's very open to the public. We posted it on the Web site in the first quarter of this year. Now we are looking to see how we're going to implement it.

If the MPP across the way read through the report that was on the Web site, he would see that the solution is a much more complicated ordeal than it would appear. It's going to take a significant review of how we do assessments for what people truly need in services, so that we can finally apply services in the area for people who need intervener services in a fair and equitable manner.

1500

Mr. Jackson: Minister, this issue has been identified by both the Human Rights Commission and your own ministry's staff through the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. I've raised this issue with you on a couple of occasions; in particular, on behalf of my constituent Barbara Davis, who receives only two and a

half hours of intervener supports per week. There is a whole host of—in fact, there are several thousand—Ontarians who receive very little, if any at all, access to deaf-blind intervener services. Minister, when will you be advising this House that you have a plan in place, that you are going to be able to honour the commitment that was made through the Human Rights Code that all deaf-blind residents of Ontario will receive equal treatment and equal access from the government of Ontario?

Hon. Ms. Papatello: I think the member opposite understands that there is an issue of inequity in terms of how people receive services, people who have a serious need for services. Back in 1992 the government of that day made some serious changes that, in my view, created a series of inequities that, quite frankly, continued right through the last government. In fact, members of the cabinet, that member included, who has the nerve today to stand and ask a question about equity and service delivery—to know that he could stand in the House today after he sat at the cabinet table, knowing that this inequity was going on all those years, and didn't do a darn thing about changing the assessment mechanisms, about making sure that services were being applied in a very fair manner so it's not a matter of who yells the loudest gets the services, because I find that kind of system impossible.

We won't have that kind of system. We are going right back to the basics in our review. The most significant part of that was doing that complete review so we know what direction we need to go in. I will be working with those organizations to see that it is a fair system.

TRANSIT SERVICES

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Yesterday your government signed a memorandum to fund the Ottawa light rail transit project. Hundreds of laid-off workers at the Bombardier transit rail car factory in Thunder Bay hoped that this would be good news for them, that they would be able to go back to work. But then they received a letter from your government, the McGuinty government, that says you are prepared to allow these rail transit cars to be built outside Ontario, not in Thunder Bay. Premier, why should hundreds of workers at the Bombardier rail transit factory in Thunder Bay remain on layoff while your government spends \$100 million to purchase rail transit cars made outside Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): The Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): We are moving ahead with a very aggressive plan on the transit side. As far as the employees from Bombardier are concerned, we are actually embarking, with the city of Ottawa, on a very fair and equitable process. This process will be very transparent. The people from Bombardier and the Bombardier company will be eligible for bidding on this, along with other companies. We look forward to that process unfolding as we move ahead with acquiring the trains for the Ottawa area.

Mr. Hampton: The minister talks about a fair and transparent process. I don't see anything very fair here for workers in Thunder Bay, where 500 or 600 of them are already on layoff. You're going to take \$100 million of taxpayers' money, despite the fact there is an agreement from 1992 that says that the province will use its best efforts to ensure these kinds of rail transit vehicles will be built in Thunder Bay. The TTC purchases rail cars from this factory; they purchase streetcars. GO Transit purchases cars from this factory.

I ask again: Given that they do good work, given that they've done good work for GO Transit, for the TTC, why is the McGuinty government prepared to spend \$100 million on rail transit cars built outside of Ontario while these Thunder Bay workers, hundreds of them, sit on layoff?

Hon. Mr. Takhar: I'm not sure why the leader of the third party doesn't have faith that Bombardier can bid in an open and fair process. From my point of view, it's an open and competitive process. I'm sure the city of Ottawa will engage in a very fair process, and Bombardier, along with other companies, will be able to bid on that.

I also want to point out to you that we have sought two legal opinions on the 1992 agreement. That was only valid for five years. I don't know where you get the illusion that this agreement is still valid.

Having said that, I think Bombardier is a great company, and they can bid in an open and fair process.

EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): My question is for the Minister of Education. I'd like to ask you about the recent amendments you made for the education of children of our recent immigrants.

This government embraces the principle of equity and accessible education for all. It's called public education. Last week, you rose in the House to introduce amendments to the Education Act that actually seek to address this particular issue about children of recent immigrants. You spoke about their rights to an education, and we believe in those rights, because they will build the future of Ontario with the same bricks and mortar of equity and opportunity. As a Liberal, for all of us, these are our principles, and I am proud that you are weaving these through.

Minister, could you please explain these new exemptions and can you explain what effect this has for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): There is, I think, a good basis for everyone in this House to support the bill brought in last week to amend the Education Act. It is simply not acceptable to anyone in this House that there should be children whose futures are interrupted by some kind of administrative limbo in which they find themselves; children whose parents have applied to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for per-

manent resident status and plan to stay in this country; or, alternatively, children whose parents have been received here to study at publicly funded Ontario universities or colleges. It doesn't make sense that we wouldn't provide the foresight to ensure that they could be at school while their status is being worked out. It is something we think is long overdue.

In fact, we know that school boards that are not necessarily anticipating the outcome of this but are so encouraged are already starting to respond positively to these families, hoping this House does indeed provide these provisions in law: that all students should be where they belong—in school, learning.

Mrs. Cansfield: Thank you, Minister. I know the people of Ontario are pleased with how we're addressing this issue.

I know that for many years, the Conservatives had an opportunity to address this issue, but chose not to. As a matter of fact, when you rose in the House last week, the member from Whitby–Ajax actually said that to educate the children of recent immigrants was a burden to the people of Ontario. Educating a child is a burden? I don't think so. Educating children is exactly what our future would be. The real cost is leaving these children in the dark and leaving them behind, but that's in fact what the Tories did for a lot of years: They chose to put their money into private education instead of public education.

Minister, can you tell me what these new announcements will mean to the families of recent immigrants to Ontario?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: We see that fixing this long-standing anomaly is sending a signal that Ontario is still a place where people want to be. I think this province is defined by successive waves of immigrants coming here, hoping to better themselves and certainly their children, and the way they do that is through access to education. I think there was a loss of emphasis on that in the government that preceded us.

This is a small signal but an important and responsible one that that idea continues to live here in Ontario. We are rebuilding education, not just for the few, not just for those who can afford extra education on their own, but for everyone, including those who might find themselves, at least temporarily, in the most disadvantaged and vulnerable position. They belong in schools, and, more than that, they will flourish there because of the commitment of this government and this Premier.

1510

EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): To the Minister of Education: How do you explain the contradiction between your pronouncements of peace and stability in the classroom and the reality that work-to-rule is disrupting classrooms right across this province, particularly in light of David Reid's comments about the state of classrooms in the city of Toronto?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I can only say to the member opposite that we have negotiations taking place in this province, negotiations that have come to a fruitful conclusion already in a number of jurisdictions. We have ratified agreements and we have agreements that are going to be put for ratification. It is simply, I think, an improvement on what the state was before but, most important, it is the way to get the job done.

Running education is not about making pronouncements in this House; it's about what is actually happening out there where children are getting their schooling. That is taking place right now. We are pleased with the conduct in general of the negotiations that are taking place and we're happy that people are taking up the spirit of a new era in education where everyone tries to leave the conflict of the past behind and find an answer that works for education and also for the important people who make education happen.

Mr. Klees: After some \$2.68 billion that you've guaranteed for teachers' settlements, will you also guarantee a similar framework for support workers, for secretaries, for janitors? Will you guarantee that there will be no disruption of classes between now and the end of the school year?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: It's interesting. I guess I have to welcome, if this is his outlook, that he is now advocating for the very people they laid off in droves when they were in government, the people they did not protect in the funding formula. The reason why we have to put \$3 billion toward fixing our schools is because there weren't enough janitors; there wasn't enough cleaning being done in our publicly funded spaces. The member opposite was part of a government that voted to cut money, to take it away from children and from the people who provided services to children.

We have extended the same kind of possibilities for four-year agreements to our support staff. We have also extended an invitation to them to talk to us about the kind of provincial issues—safety is an issue for some of our education systems. There is training that needs to be provided because we've expanded special education services. Those are things that they have to talk about. We're doing things in small schools to ensure that secretaries are in place. We invite the member to continue to support the idea of publicly funded education and leave the bad habits of the last government and the emphasis on private schools behind him where they belong: in the past.

DISCRIMINATION

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Premier. Last week, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation published a report on nurses which found, "The vast majority of racialized nurses ... reported that they felt 'put down, insulted or degraded because of race, colour or ethnicity.'" When they complained there was no accountability in hospitals to deal with the complaints,

they were targeted as problem nurses and they felt they were losing their jobs because they had been targeted.

The report says that the health care sector should establish measures to monitor the working conditions of racialized nurses to put an end to discrimination. It also recommends that the Ontario Human Rights Commission investigate systemic discrimination against racialized nurses and ensure that the race policy that is due to come forward includes fines for employers who resist anti-racism procedures. Premier, can you tell this House if your government will implement the recommendations in the report?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Let me say on behalf of the Minister of Health that we are grateful to receive these recommendations. I know that he will want to take them into consideration. I know that I speak for every single member of this Legislature when I say that we stand against discrimination of any kind, whether it's against our nurses or any other Ontarian.

I thank the member opposite for bringing this matter to my attention. I will ensure that the Minister of Health is made aware of her question. He may then have an opportunity to speak with her more specifically and more precisely about what he intends to do with those recommendations.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): In the west members' gallery we have with us former member Larry O'Connor from Durham–York, from the 35th Parliament. Let's welcome him.

PETITIONS

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

“Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead located in the town of New Tecumseth”—Alliston—“is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

“Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

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

“That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come.”

I agree, and I have signed that petition.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): I have a petition from many individuals wanting the Minister of Education to do something about the following:

“Whereas during the 2003 election campaign Dalton McGuinty promised to establish a standing committee on education to ensure transparency in education funding; and

“Whereas such a committee has not been established; and

“Whereas Ontario's education system is not properly funded and there is no transparency in funding;

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

“To immediately establish a standing committee on education to hold public hearings every year on the effectiveness of education funding.”

I support this petition.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): I'm pleased to submit this petition on behalf of CAW Local 199, Bruce Allen, vice-president.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board adds Canada pension plan disability benefits to an injured worker's deemed earnings to determine the loss of earnings or future earnings lost; and

“Whereas deducting Canada pension disability benefits from loss of earnings or future earnings loss benefits systematically undercompensates injured workers; and

“Whereas the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board bases long-term compensation on deemed earnings that an injured worker is not actually receiving;

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

“To amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act by removing the deeming provisions and providing legislation to base a loss-of-earnings benefit to reflect actual lost earnings; and

“To amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to end the deduction of Canada pension plan disability benefits from future economic loss and loss of earnings benefits retroactively.”

I'm pleased to sign this petition.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Brock township has been declared an underserved area by the Ministry of Health with respect to physician services since 1996;

“Whereas the Ontario government announced the creation of 150 family health teams, just like the community health centre in the spring budget;

“Whereas a CHC in Brock township could provide a range of community-based health and social services provided by a multidisciplinary team including physicians, nurse practitioners, nutritionists, health promotion coordinators, social workers, counsellors and other health professionals needed in our local community;

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

“That the Brock CHC proposal submitted on February 27, 2003, be funded as recommended by the district health council.”

I'd like to thank the former member Larry O'Connor and his team for coming down today and helping me present this.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): I have a petition from one of my local pharmacists, Ranjan Rupal.

“Whereas we, the undersigned,

“Share the concern of Ontario pharmacists that the government is considering changes to the drug program that could restrict access to some medications or force patients to pay more for their prescriptions, placing seniors, low-income families and many other Ontarians at risk;

“Recognize that these changes could affect the ability of pharmacists to continue to provide quality programs and services, decreasing Ontarians' access to essential health care services; and

“Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that pharmacists, as advocates for quality patient care, should have a greater role to play in advising the government when it considers changes that will affect the health of Ontarians,

“We hereby petition the government of Ontario:

“To work with Ontario pharmacists to prevent cutbacks to the drug program; and

“To establish a process that brings pharmacists to the table to provide solutions that will protect patients and strengthen health care for all Ontarians.”

1520

HALTON RECYCLING PLANT

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas noxious odours from the Halton Recycling plant in Newmarket are adversely affecting the health and quality of life of residents and working people in Newmarket; and

“Whereas local families have lost the enjoyment of their properties for themselves and their children, face

threats to their health and well-being, and risk a decline in the value of their homes; and

“Whereas for the 300 members of the nearby main RCMP detachment, as well as other workers in the area, the odours are making their working conditions intolerable;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand that the Minister of the Environment take immediate action to halt all noxious emissions and odours from the Halton Recycling plant, and take all steps necessary to force Halton Recycling to comply with environmental rules, including closing the plant if the odour problems continue.”

GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I keep getting petitions against the eyesore of a bridge on St. Clair Avenue West. The petition is addressed to the minister of infrastructure services and the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel in an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing; and

“Whereas the TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair Avenue-Old Weston Road bridge; and

“Whereas this bridge ... will be ... too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; ... it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both the east and west sides, creating high banks for 300 metres; and ... it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

“Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue West, thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its high banks and blank walls. Instead it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow.”

I sign my name to it since I agree with this petition 100%.

ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I have a petition to present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

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

CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): A “Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Credit Valley Hospital Capital Improvements:

“Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

“Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

“Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite.”

The people are Maria Cescato, Aldo Cescato and Nadia Rosa Cescato.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): This is one of the Save Huronia Regional Centre petitions. Again, it's up to about 45,000 people who have signed this across the province.

“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; and

“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 this and present it to Kaitlin to present to you.

CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition here from the Strathdee family of Glen Erin Drive in Meadowvale, the Sommerfeld family of Hillside Drive in Streetsville, and the Cambareri family of Dover Crescent in Erin Mills, regarding the Credit Valley Hospital capital improvements campaign. It reads as follows:

“Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

“Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

“Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at

Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite.”

I wholeheartedly approve of the petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature to it and to ask Trishaala to carry it for me.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):

“Save the Rideau Regional Centre, Home to People with Developmental Disabilities!

“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 the Rideau 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 the Rideau 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 the Rideau 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;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Rideau Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities and to maintain it as a ‘centre of excellence’ to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live.”

This is signed by hundreds of people within my riding.

CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): On behalf of some of my friends in Mississauga:

“Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

“Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

“Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients, and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner; to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department; and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite.”

I will affix my signature to it, on behalf of my friends in Mississauga.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR L'ACCESSIBILITÉ POUR LES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES DE L'ONTARIO

Mrs Bountrogianni moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 118, An Act respecting the development, implementation and enforcement of standards relating to accessibility with respect to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation, buildings and all other things specified in the Act for persons with disabilities /
Projet de loi 118, Loi traitant de l'élaboration, de la mise en oeuvre et de l'application de normes concernant l'accessibilité pour les personnes handicapées en ce qui concerne les biens, les services, les installations, l'emploi, le logement, les bâtiments et toutes les autres choses qu'elle précise.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 9, 2005, I am now required to put the question.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those against, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1532 to 1542.

The Speaker: Would all members please take their seats.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnett, Ted	Hampton, Howard	O'Toole, John
Arthurs, Wayne	Hardeman, Ernie	Oraziotti, David
Baird, John R.	Horwath, Andrea	Patten, Richard
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Bentley, Christopher	Hudak, Tim	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jackson, Cameron	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kennedy, Gerard	Qadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Klees, Frank	Racco, Mario G.
Broten, Laurel C.	Kormos, Peter	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Runciman, Robert W.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Leal, Jeff	Ruprecht, Tony
Chudleigh, Ted	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George
Craitor, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Tascona, Joseph N.
Delaney, Bob	McGuinity, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dunlop, Garfield	Milloy, John	Wong, Tony C.
Flaherty, Jim	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Yakabuski, John
Fonseca, Peter	Munro, Julia	Zimmer, David
Gravelle, Michael	Murdoch, Bill	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 89; the nays are 0.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mr. David Lepofsky.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION

Ms. Wynne, on behalf of Mr. Kennedy, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 194, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 194, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Ms. Wynne?

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): I'm going to share my time with the member for Guelph-Wellington, Liz Sandals, and the member for Etobicoke North, Shafiq Qadri.

I think it's absolutely appropriate that we'd be speaking to Bill 194, which is a bill speaking to accessibility, after we've just voted on Bill 118, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

I rise today to speak to the legislative amendments that would unlock our school doors for children of recent immigrants. What this new legislation would do is, it would waive school fees for these students who, because of administrative issues, are not at this point able to enter our schools without paying fees.

The number this would affect is about 250 students from around the province who are not able to go to

school. Right now, there are another 200 or so students who are already attending the Toronto District School Board because the board has already allowed them to. In total, we're talking about 450 students who would then legally be able to attend school without paying fees in the province.

We are obviously concerned about all children in the province, and education is a huge priority for this government. The policies that we put in place are intended to deal with education issues for all students, but there are some niche education issues that should be addressed, and this is one of them.

Notre gouvernement croit fermement que chaque enfant a le droit d'apprendre. Nous avons la charge d'enlever les barrières qui enferment des enfants dans un vide administratif à cause du statut d'immigration de leurs parents.

This government firmly believes that every child has the right to learn. We have a responsibility to remove barriers that leave our children in administrative limbo because of their parents' immigration status. Thousands of students across Ontario will benefit from many of the government's education initiatives already underway, as I have said. I want to talk about some of the great things that we're doing in Ontario, but from the perspective of these children who have not been able to access our system and why they cannot wait.

1550

We have put in place an education foundations program, and a key outcome in that program is that every student is able to read, write, do math and comprehend at a high level by the age of 12. This is the age when students are defining themselves in terms of school success. After this age, acquiring these skills becomes harder.

It's clear that this piece of legislation is absolutely in line with what we're trying to do for students across the province. We need to get children into the school system and into a formal learning situation as soon as possible, whatever their immigration status.

We're committed to making progress on giving every student the possibility of a full range of choices in their academic career, and the earlier they start on that, the better. We're going to be able to measure how we succeed on this. You will know that our goal is that 75% of 12-year-olds meet or exceed the provincial standard on province-wide reading, writing and math tests by 2008. That's not an end in itself; that is a means to an end. The end is that those students will be able to go on to have satisfying lives and be part of the workplace and be fully functioning citizens in the province. The means is that they have the literacy and numeracy skills they need.

To date, we've made a number of significant investments to support our education foundations program. Those investments include intensive teacher development and ongoing support—16,000 lead teachers are part of that support; smaller class sizes—we've hired 1,100 new primary teachers in 1,300 schools; and focused curriculum, with a daily emphasis on literacy and numeracy,

again in line with that goal. We've put targeted supports in place, turnaround teams in 100 elementary schools. And we've provided expert coordination through the provincial Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.

I want to talk a little bit about the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. Its primary goal is to work with school boards to create a renewed focus on literacy and numeracy. Many of you will know Avis Glaze, the well-known educator who is heading up the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. One of her goals is to share successful practices among schools and districts, to extend the knowledge base of the profession around the province and to thereby increase the capacity to support learning. In order to do that, we're going to have to engage parents, school councils, business, community members and trustees to support our learning achievement goals.

The secretariat is establishing a new way of collaborating across districts. There are many fine practices in this province. One of the things we need to do is link up those parts of the province that need access to those practices with the areas that have already mastered them. That's one of the things that the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat is about.

I want to talk just briefly about high school. We know that there are a number of students in this province who are having a hard time making it through to an apprenticeship or a job placement or to admission to college or university. The Alan King report tells us that about 30% of students are at risk of not graduating from high school this year due to high failure rates in some grade 9 and grade 10 classes. This isn't the students' fault. The government and the school system have to take responsibility. We have an obligation to those students who are falling through the cracks, and doing that is a priority for our government.

Student success leaders are now in place in every school board. We're also working on an outreach program that will encourage employers to create work and co-op opportunities for students and inform parents of the importance of school-to-work experience. There's a real gap between parental expectation and the reality of where students will land, so we need to close that gap and make sure that parents and students have a realistic idea of where they want to be after they leave high school and how they are going to get there.

English-language boards can offer up to six locally developed courses that students can count as compulsory credits toward their graduation diplomas. That will assist in dealing with the local needs.

Finally, two co-op-related courses are available to students so they can get a head start on developing workplace essential skills and work habits. These courses will help prepare students for job placement.

Nous devons offrir à nos enfants l'avantage d'une éducation en Ontario pour qu'ils puissent acquérir les compétences dont ils ont besoin pour trouver de bons emplois et profiter pleinement de la vie. Notre province a aussi besoin de l'avantage offert par l'éducation ontar-

ienne. Nous avons besoin d'une main-d'œuvre d'avenir, d'une main-d'œuvre qui attire les investissements et favorise la croissance et la prospérité économique.

We need to give our children an Ontario education advantage so they can develop the skills they need to get good jobs and enjoy life to the fullest. And our province needs an Ontario education advantage too. We need a workforce of the future, one that attracts investment and supports a strong, prosperous economy.

We need to support our teachers. It is teachers who deliver education. It is teachers who unlock the enthusiasm and the potential of every student in this province. The minister talks about the new three Rs of education: respect, responsibility and results. Respect has been absent from our education system for too long. We have a policy of respect for our teachers as professionals. We can't go forward without showing teachers that respect and encouraging them to be the best they can be on the job, and we know that we have excellent teachers around the province. It's our responsibility to make sure that the system works. And as for results, it is our shared vision and goals for kids that will drive us to the results. We need to help all kids succeed in school. Everyone in the system, including the government, has to work toward that.

This legislation would mean that our terrific Ontario system would be opened up to more students and would expand the current list of exemptions in the Education Act to allow children of certain classes of temporary residents in Canada to attend school in Ontario without paying fees. Our mission and moral purpose are to ensure that children are educated to a high level. It should not matter where you come from, but where you are going.

Our new exemptions would include children whose parents have applied for permanent resident status to Citizenship and Immigration Canada and plan to stay in the country, and children whose parents are studying at a publicly funded Ontario university or college. Currently, the act requires school boards to charge fees, which can be up to \$10,000 annually per child, for temporary residents. This is an exclusive policy at this point, and we need to change that. The act includes several exemptions, including exchange students, children of parents with work permits, and children of diplomats. Boards would need to be able to claim funding for these students under the grants for students' needs.

This government believes that children of immigrant families residing in Ontario should be able to attend school without the payment of fees, regardless of their immigration status. There have been cases where children of immigrant parents are kept at home for long periods because their families do not have proper immigration status and cannot afford to pay fees. That is simply unacceptable in Ontario.

The second reading of the proposed legislation is an important prelude to ensuring that Ontario students enjoy a good outcome in our publicly funded education system. Ontario's education system must be one that welcomes children and ensures that every child has a place to learn

and grow. We know that newcomers to Canada face many challenges, but getting their children into school should not be one of them. Our school system should be welcoming to parents and welcoming to their children so that their children don't have to have an interrupted academic career.

That is what this legislation is about. A good education is too important to waste. All children in our civilized society should be able to attend school and learn. I ask all members of this Legislature to join me in supporting this bill.

M. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke–Nord): Je prends aujourd'hui la parole pour parler des modifications législatives qui, si elles sont adoptées, ouvriront les portes de nos écoles aux enfants d'immigrants récents. Tous les élèves ont besoin de bénéficier des avantages qu'offre une bonne éducation. Je crois sincèrement que l'éducation financée par les deniers publics est la pierre angulaire de toute société équitable, productive, civilisée et cohésive.

Chaque enfant a le droit d'apprendre. Nous avons la charge d'enlever les barrières qui laissent des enfants dans un vide administratif, sans égard au statut d'immigration de leurs parents.

1600

Notre mission ici et notre objectif moral consistent à veiller à ce que les enfants suivent des études poussées. Votre lieu d'origine ou votre destination ne devrait pas importer.

Speaker, I support Bill 194, An Act to amend the Education Act, or, as it has become known, "The Right to Attend Act." There are many technical issues that could be examined in depth in this particular bill, but I would like to, with your permission, stress a far more important aspect of this legislation: the message that it sends to hardworking immigrant families who are fast becoming the backbone of this province.

As I have stressed, by the year 2011, immigration will account for all net new labour force growth in Canada. As more and more new Canadians and prospective new Canadians arrive in our country, largely in our province, we as a society must take every possible measure to accommodate them and their families. We need to send a message to these families. We need to show them that we recognize that they are more than our labour force; that they are in fact a part of the fabric of this province and this great country. No other government has shown the kind of genuine, heartfelt support for new Canadians that our government has. Other administrations have recognized, certainly, that immigration is a part of the modern world, but they have not taken the steps to welcome and accommodate this profound demographic shift.

Nous devons offrir à nos enfants l'avantage d'une éducation en Ontario pour qu'ils puissent acquérir les compétences dont ils ont besoin pour trouver de bons emplois et profiter pleinement de la vie. Notre province a aussi besoin de l'avantage offert par l'éducation ontarienne. Nous avons besoin d'une main-d'œuvre pour l'avenir, d'une main-d'œuvre qui attire les investisse-

ments et favorise la croissance et la prospérité économiques.

Chaque enfant doit pouvoir être scolarisé et bâtir son avenir. C'est pourquoi je suis fier aujourd'hui de déposer un nouveau projet de loi qui modifierait la Loi sur l'éducation, qui ouvrirait les portes de l'apprentissage et qui offrirait des possibilités aux enfants qui viennent d'arriver en Ontario, des enfants qui deviendront plus tard des membres à part entière de notre société civilisée.

I conclude by saying this is the right step. It is a bill that new Canadians and indeed all Ontarians can support wholeheartedly, as I urge all members of this Legislature to do. I'll be sharing my time with my colleague.

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington): I rise in the House today in support of this important bill. Last week was Education Week in Ontario, a time to celebrate the good work happening in our schools across the province. There is a lot to celebrate this year. The McGuinty government has worked relentlessly to help students get the education they deserve, an education that will help them to succeed in life. We believe that all Ontario students should have an equal opportunity for a quality education.

This year our government invested an additional \$854 million in Ontario's education system, bringing the total amount since coming to office to a \$1.1-billion increase. We invested \$90 million to help bring down the average class size in JK to grade 3, and to help hire 1,100 new primary teachers to teach those children. Students in approximately 1,300 elementary schools—that's one in three schools—are feeling the difference from this investment. For example, during Education Week, Minister Kennedy visited a school that hired a new grade 3 teacher, which helped reduce the class size to 23 students from a projected 32. Let me tell you, as a former educator, that that makes a significant difference in the time that the teacher can spend with each individual student to ensure they have mastered literacy and numeracy skills.

We have focused on providing our high school students with more opportunities to succeed. To make sure that struggling students get the help they need, we'll keep more students in school and better prepare them for life after high school. We recognize the need for a new, consolidated program to lower dropout rates in Ontario's secondary schools. The changes are complete, and the new curriculum is on-line and being distributed this month. It's all ready for September 2005, a year earlier than planned. This curriculum change is something I lobbied for for a long time, to make sure we align the curriculum for those students who are at academic risk, so that we're actually meeting their needs. I'm very pleased to see that this is going to be in place a year early.

Last June, we announced an additional \$100 million to fix curriculum issues, improve technological education programs and provide other alternatives for struggling students. For example, 3,000 secondary students across the province are benefiting from more than 105 innovative projects funded through an additional \$18-million investment. These projects are designed to provide them

with new opportunities for success in school. I'm pleased that one of those projects is in my riding of Guelph-Wellington. Next week or the week after, I'm going to have an opportunity to go and visit the project and see how it's working out. Just last week, Minister Kennedy visited a high school in North Bay with a program that offers students an alternative way to gain the secondary school credits that they need so badly to graduate. It's innovative projects like these that are providing students across the province with greater opportunities for success in school.

We also helped make schools across Ontario more accessible to community groups. Last July, we provided \$20 million to school boards to open up our schools, creating community hubs where all Ontarians can learn and grow. That means schools will be made available to community groups for 7,000 more hours this year. That's 3,500 more basketball games or 5,000 more Brownie meetings, a significant result for local students, parents and members of the community. I know that in my community, this initiative was very well received. It has opened up the schools and reduced the cost of using schools to a number of community groups. Community partners were just thrilled to be able to have better access to the schools.

By investing \$31 million to keep good schools open, we will benefit 1,149 rural schools. Again, we had talked about the need to expand support for rural schools, so that they can continue to do the job that is so necessary in their communities.

These are just some of the results of our education investments. Clearly, there is still much more that needs to be done. The McGuinty government firmly believes that excellent and public education is critical to our students' and the province's future. We will continue to invest wisely in Ontario's publicly funded education system.

Over the past year and a half, the government's partnership approach has paved the way for an environment of peace and stability, which is critical for success. We are mending wounds that resulted from years of neglect, disrespect and friction. By bringing together both the right financial resources and a spirit of co-operation, we have created a new era in Ontario's public education system that is bringing about positive results for students. I can't emphasize how important it is to have all the partners in education working together again. Having teachers who feel that once again their government values their efforts and having the teachers, the boards and the government all working onside are absolutely essential to the success of public education and to confidence in public education in our province.

1610

Ontario's education system has so much to offer children, and that is why it needs to be accessible to all children, including the children of newcomers. We believe it's important for newcomers to Ontario to be able to get a good outcome from the education system. Chances are these children will end up being our Canadian

citizens. We want them to have every advantage our education system can provide so they can be valuable contributors to our civilized society in turn. We firmly believe that every child has the right to learn.

I ask all members to join me in supporting this bill.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'm pleased to be able to rise this afternoon and make a few comments. I look forward to the comments by our critic, the member from Oak Ridges, Mr. Klees.

I didn't hear them mention anything today about education and the transportation issue that I think a number of the school bus operators are facing across this province. I had 20-some buses outside of my office last Friday. They're looking for a meeting with the Minister of Education. My understanding is that he refuses to meet with them. I think everybody in this House, unless they've been on another planet, probably understands that gasoline prices and insurance costs are soaring. We haven't seen any adjustment for the school bus operators. I think all they want is to be treated the same as any other stakeholder. So I look forward in this debate to hearing the comments coming back from the government side explaining how they're handling the transportation system.

They promised to implement the Rozanski recommendations. They haven't done that yet. And the school bus operators of the province of Ontario, who transport 800,000 students each and every day of the year safely across our province, should be compensated and be treated with the same respect that all education stakeholders expect to be treated with.

I look forward to hearing those kinds of comments, because I think that's all part of this debate. If we're talking about all the wonderful things this government is supposed to be doing, I want to ask what wonderful things they are doing for the school bus operators of the province, because they do an excellent job. I look forward to hearing positive comments from the government on how they're going to resolve this. Maybe we'll see that tomorrow in the budget, but I don't really think so.

The least I expect to see is the Minister of Education taking the opportunity to meet with these folks and explain his position on why they are being underfunded.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I listened intently to the members for Don Valley West, Etobicoke North and Guelph-Wellington. I heard a lot said about what is good, at least from their perspective, in the education system of Ontario today. Unfortunately, I never heard anything about what this bill contains or what this bill is supposed to do.

Mr. Dunlop: Pure fluff.

Mr. Prue: No, I'm not sure that it is fluff.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): You haven't read it.

Mr. Prue: I've read the bill. The bill is only two pages long.

What this bill intends to do, and what I think some serious debate, especially from the government opposite,

has to deal with, is that this is going to include additional students in the education system. There is nothing contained within the body of the bill that says where the money is to come from.

I am in full agreement, and when I get up to speak, I will speak about how we need to educate these students of foreign nationals who are in Canada. These are not immigrants' children. They are not permanent residents' children.

If you read the body of the bill, what is being said is not what is contained within the body of your legislation. There are costs involved that have to be accounted for, there is a funding formula that is going to have to be organized, and the government is going to have to estimate how many children who are not included in the program now are going to be included in the future. This same government is going to have to say whether that money is going to be taken from existing programs, to the detriment of the students who are in the school system now, or whether they have money to be added to the system to accommodate these children who need the education. I hope it's the latter. There is nothing contained in here, nor was there anything said by the first three speakers, that gives any indication of how you're going to pay for this.

I think a lot more needs to be said. I hope further government speakers elaborate on what this bill really stands for.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): I am delighted to rise in debate and follow up on the good point that was made by the member for Beaches–East York, because I note that the member for Simcoe North actually didn't discuss Bill 194 whatsoever. Here we are talking about children and making sure they have access, and we meandered over to the issue of school buses. I might add, I want to congratulate Craig Kipfer and nine school bus operators who came to my riding. Craig give me a lift over to Stratford General Hospital for a meeting I had.

Getting back to the question of Bill 194, the ministry tells me that there are about 250 students in Ontario who would qualify. Currently most of those students, about 200, are in Toronto, and the good people of the Toronto District School Board actually do not charge them a fee, because they believe they are going to have the residency requirement. But other school boards across Ontario don't do that. Because of the lack of legislative clarity, which we're going to bring to the issue, other school boards have used this as an excuse to deny children or to get fees or to make these parents pay a fee, and then they say, "When you get status in a couple of months, maybe we'll pay you back and maybe we won't." What we're trying to do is have clarity.

Actually, we know there is per pupil funding, so if there are about another 250 students who would be able to benefit from this, at an average grant of about \$8,200, the amount of money we're talking about is not vast in regard to a \$75-billion provincial budget. It would be in the neighbourhood of \$1 million or so. But we would make sure we would have that fairness of access,

particularly, for example, for international students who are coming here to do their post-graduate work, and the question of whether or not their children can be in the program. We know that clergy come to our country for studies or to be part of their religion. Their children have been unduly denied in some cases.

This bill makes sure there is fairness and equity, and I applaud the Minister of Education for bringing the bill in.

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton): I listened with great interest to the speeches by the members about education and about this piece of legislation, asking for quick passage of it, but they couldn't help but be political.

I was surprised that none of these members talked about the whole issue of school closures. Some people in Nepean were very excited to learn about the moratorium on school closures, and then from this minister, this great—someone called it a white elephant; I call it this great false hope of this great process for school closures. Parents in Nepean, particularly those whose children attend St. Thomas School in Crystal Beach, the Lakeview part of Nepean, are wondering why this government is sitting back and watching the school board close this school. It's a great school board. The chair and the director of education are fine, outstanding people, and so is the local school trustee for this area, but they're redefining the boundaries of the school to basically take all the existing students away so that it falls below a certain threshold and they can close it.

I, as an MPP, never offered any false hope, because I think it's important that you always be honest and up-front with people. That was the hallmark of Frank Klees's time in government. But this false hope has been given to this community. They are just redrawing the boundaries, which will make closing the school lickety-split, with insufficient consultation, according to the community. I'm surprised that the members opposite, when they were speaking, wouldn't have raised the case of school closures, and particularly the parents at St. Thomas School. This goes beyond just a concern that parents at St. Thomas have, but indeed the community association is tremendously concerned. What will this do to the price of people's best, most significant investment? What will it do for the quality of their community if one of the last schools is closed? I would like the members to comment on that.

The Acting Speaker: One of the government members has two minutes to reply. I'll turn to the member for Don Valley West.

Ms. Wynne: I'm going to address the issues that actually pertain to Bill 194 in the comments from the members for Simcoe North, Beaches–East York, Perth–Middlesex and Nepean–Carleton.

I want to pick up on some of the comments by the member for Beaches–East York. As a Toronto member, I'm sure the member for Beaches–East York understands why this is an important issue. I know that as the former mayor of East York, he represented the areas of Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park, and he understands—

Interjection.

1620

Ms. Wynne: I'm sorry; not Flemingdon Park but Thorncliffe Park. He understands why it's so critical that children who come to this country, whose parents have applied for status, be allowed to go to school, and he will know that in Toronto that is already the case, because Toronto has for years had such a concentration of new immigrants and the school board has understood how important it is for these large numbers of children to be in school and learning. That reality has to spread across the province as more new immigrants settle in other parts of the province.

This isn't an issue of where the money is going to come from. As the member for Perth—Middlesex pointed out, this is not a huge amount of money. We're talking about another 250 or so children—the ministry has canvassed the boards, and we believe that's the number that will be applying.

For me this issue is one where we don't have any choice. These children must be in our schools. If we are going to have a skilled workforce, if these children, whose families are planning to stay in Ontario, are going to have successful lives as citizens of this province, then we've got to get those kids into school so that they can become acclimatized to the province and can get the academic skills they need. I'm sure the members understand that.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Klees: I'm pleased to participate in the debate on Bill 194. I'd like, first of all, to address some of the specifics of the bill. As well, I would like to speak to the cost issue; not just the cost to the province, but where I believe the funding should come from. I also want to speak to some of the other comments that have been prompted by some of the debate by the members from Don Valley West and Guelph—Wellington.

Let me begin by speaking to the purpose of Bill 194. Of course, I support it wholeheartedly. There isn't a child living in the province of Ontario who should not have the benefit of education, regardless of the status of their parents. We understand that the immigration process can be lengthy, often not the fault of the individual family but of the bureaucratic process that's in place. The children are often the innocent victims of a process that just drags on.

Is it appropriate that students be able to attend class? Of course it is. I must say that in all the time I have been a member of the Legislature—I have many circumstances come to my office where I'm called on to provide some assistance—I have never experienced a family coming to me and expressing a concern about their child not being able to access education. As the member from Don Valley West indicated, many boards already have a policy, be it written or unwritten, that children of immigrant families do in fact have access to education and are not charged for it. To this point there hasn't been a province-wide policy; there hasn't been legislation that ensures that access. For that reason, we have this bill before us today. I don't believe there is any member of

the Legislature who is going to raise any objection or who wouldn't support this.

The bill itself speaks not only to children of immigrants, however, and that's appropriate. I want to read into the record—those who are observing this debate should know that this legislation effectively sets out certain categories, a list, if you will, of circumstances in which a board will not charge a fee.

The first one is “a person who is a participant in an educational exchange program under which a pupil of the board attends a school outside Canada without a fee.” This is very important. I am familiar, and I'm sure many members of the Legislature are as well, with exchange programs. The Rotary Club, for example, is one organization that, to its credit, sponsors student exchanges. Unfortunately, depending on the circumstances and depending on the board, exchange students who have come as part of that in the past have often had to pay a fee. I trust that the interpretation of this bill will be broad enough to encompass that exchange program. It is a worthwhile program. Our students from Ontario who are part of that program and go to other countries benefit from that, and we should reciprocate here as well.

The next category of person who would benefit from this legislation is “a person who is a dependant within the meaning of the Visiting Forces Act (Canada).” Again, this is a circumstance where we would think it need not necessarily be spelled out that it would be a given, but obviously it is not. It is important that this also be included. We have visiting forces, people who are placed on assignment in Ontario. Should their children be able to access school without an additional tuition fee? Of course. In this bill, we have a provision to address that.

A third provision is “a person if that person ... his or her parent or someone else with lawful custody of him,” or her, is in Canada. This, again, is a very important issue. I was speaking to the member from Burlington, who expressed concern. He has constituents who are in that circumstance. In this case, it happens to be grandmother who has temporary custody of a child and is not normally residing in the school district, and there was assessment of a fee for that child to attend a school within that school district. That, of course, creates a hardship on the family. So I am pleased to see this provision in the legislation. Again, we trust that this will be broadly interpreted so that circumstances like this are taken into consideration.

Another category under this provision is for people are “under a temporary resident permit issued under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada),” and also “under diplomatic, consular or official acceptance issued by the government of Canada, or,” under clause (iii), “claiming refugee protection under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada) or having had such protection conferred on him or her.”

The is effectively the thrust of this bill. There are other categories that are simply further explanations of various categories of immigration or being here on a temporary permit. We embrace that. We think it's appropriate, and

it's good to have a province-wide policy in place that is going to ensure that children have the education that they deserve, that they need, and that it's not a financial hardship to the family.

What I find interesting, though, about the legislation—and I trust that it's not going to be an issue—is that the legislation does not say that these children of these families must in fact be accepted into the school within that school board. It simply says that a fee won't be charged. I think that it's important, if from no other perspective than from the debate in the House here, that it is made very clear that not only should a fee not be charged but that every child in Ontario must be given access to education, regardless of the school district within which they reside.

1630

On the issue of funding, it's interesting that I heard the member from Perth–Middlesex, in response to the issue that was raised by the member from the third party that nothing is mentioned about funding, indicate that for the number of children that's estimated—about 250—the cost would be insignificant: about \$1 million. Well, on two counts I would take exception to that remark. First of all, that \$1 million is not a lot of money: I'm not surprised that I hear that from a Liberal member of this Legislature, because based on how they are treating tax dollars and their track record over the last two years while in office, they obviously feel that \$1 million is nothing, is insignificant. I think that people who are observing this debate should be concerned about that attitude.

A budget is going to be presented in this place tomorrow, and it will be very interesting to see how that budget is communicated. There is no doubt that there will be billions of dollars announced for programs not only in education but in other areas. I can tell you that none of us in this House will be surprised to find that the issue of deficit spending is not going to be a matter of consideration for the Minister of Finance; this coming from a political party that while on the campaign trail made a commitment that they would not spend more than they take in—when a government does that, it creates a deficit; this coming from a government that for the first two years while they were in office claimed day in and day out that they were not able to deliver health care, that they were not able to keep sundry promises because of this \$5.6-billion deficit that supposedly the previous government had left. But what they didn't talk about was that, being the government, they have a responsibility to ensure a balanced budget and to do something about that and to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are being dealt with responsibly. So on that point, I take exception to the attitude that the member expressed: "It's just \$1 million."

Second, I want to correct the member, because not only is it the attitude about \$1 million, but it's not \$1 million. It's at least \$2 million, and it's simple arithmetic. We have again from this government a member who not only does not know how much it's going to cost, but who says, "That is irrelevant." I think that speaks volumes to

people who are observing this debate, because the cost is at least \$2 million.

Is it \$2 million well spent? Yes, it is. Do we deny that investment in our children? No. It's an appropriate place to put an investment.

Interjection.

Mr. Klees: The member from Don Valley West is carping in the background. The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education carps at these remarks. I can say, I would much rather endorse \$2 million being invested here than the \$450 million that this government announced to build a new casino hotel in Windsor. They can do that without even blinking an eye. They can do that without any hesitation of consideration that there are priorities that this government is saying they cannot fund because they don't have the money. And I ask, where is the moral justification for that kind of decision-making? The cost is \$2 million.

The point I simply want to make on the record is that the reason these children are here and accessing education is because of an immigration system that is controlled by the federal government, and I would hope that these funds that are an additional cost to the taxpayers of Ontario are in turn paid for by the federal government, that this becomes part of the settlement strategy that the Premier has been negotiating with the Prime Minister. I think that's reasonable. I would hope that is an item that is on the table with the Premier in discussions with the federal government. I want to reaffirm my support for this legislation. I believe that with every piece of legislation that comes before the House, the government has a responsibility to consider the cost, to consider the source of that funding, and I would expect that in this case they will do so as well.

I want to speak to another issue that arises from a comment made by the member from Don Valley West, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education. She said in her remarks, "Every child has the right to learn." That is, as she put it, a cornerstone belief of this government. I found it quite interesting that the member from Guelph–Wellington reiterated that dictum in her speech. What was it that she said? "Every child has the right to an education." Well, I agree with that too. But I'm going to put the question to the Minister of Education and to the Premier and to the parliamentary assistant and to the member from Guelph–Wellington: If, in fact, your government believes that, then why are you denying that same right to learn to autistic children beyond the age of six? Why?

You know that the Premier made a commitment in writing to parents of autistic children while he was looking for votes, while he wanted the office of Premier. He travelled the province and he told autistic children and their parents, "Elect me as Premier, and I will ensure that this inequity is righted. Autistic children beyond the age of six will receive appropriate funding so that they can learn," as the member for Guelph–Wellington, as the member for Don Valley West—and I don't hear her carping now. She is silenced because her dictum that

every child has the right to learn obviously doesn't apply to autistic children. It does apply to children of immigrants. It does apply to every other child in Ontario, apparently. Why doesn't it apply to autistic children? I find that offensive. Every parent of an autistic child in this province should find that offensive. They should look at the rhetoric of members of the government in their debate over the last 45 minutes on this bill and ask the question, "Why don't you feel the same way about us and our children?" That's what I ask members of the government to do. Read your own words out of Hansard in this debate and then ask yourself the question, "How can I support my own government on the issue of how they're treating autistic children?"

1640

I also want to speak to the issue of transportation. I, too, had visitors in my office this past Friday. I believe every member of the Legislature was visited by individuals who have the responsibility to transport our children every school day. They are responsible for their safety on the road. There are more than 200 private operators, companies that transport more than 800,000 children every day in this province. They do a good job. Their appeal was that this government is refusing to recognize the increased costs of transportation, the increased cost of fuel, the increased cost of insurance, the increased cost of labour, the increased cost of repairs to maintain their buses in a safe manner.

Not only is there not an increase in what they receive—by the way, you will know that the government's response even today in question period was to say, "We increased funding to transportation by 5%." What they're not telling you is that that is a global amount. It is without regard to the increase of actual students that need to be transported within various school districts. It has nothing at all to do with the increase in student population, and it also has nothing to do with where the students are. Isn't it interesting that in the Toronto school boards there are transportation components and transfer payments made to those school boards for students who need no transportation costs. That has to be looked at.

Here's the issue: In York region, not only has there not been an increase in funding for transportation, but there is negotiation today ongoing, with the school boards attempting to claw back 5% from the school bus operators. The question they ask is, "How can we continue to transport students safely in that environment?"

There are a number of issues like that where the government is very good at making announcements and pronouncements, but there is very little substance to support it. On this bill, I believe the government is doing the right thing and we will support them. However, on many other issues this government is not only failing students, they're failing parents.

In closing, I want to bring to your attention that the Minister of Education in the House today, I believe, made a statement that was uncalled for and unbecoming a minister of the crown. In response to a question I put to the minister, he made the comment that private schools in

this province are—I'm going to check my file here because I don't want to misquote the minister. So with your permission I will get this information.

Mr. Baird: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wonder if you could tell the House, while the member for Oak Ridges is checking his files—I notice you like to check your files too in this place, so I assume you would say that it is in order when one wants to check his files, whether they be electronic or otherwise.

The Acting Speaker: I have to say that it is the practice in this House that members are not to use electronic devices in an unnecessarily obtrusive way, so I would ask the member for Oak Ridges if he is prepared to continue his remarks.

Mr. Klees: Speaker, I certainly apologize for that, but in the interest of being accurate, I took that liberty, and I thank you for that.

The minister stood in his place today and referred to private schools as a bad habit of the previous government. I believe the Minister of Education should make a public apology to the more than 100,000 students who attend private schools in this province. He should apologize publicly to every educator employed in the private school system. He should apologize to every institution that has contributed to the foundation of education in this province.

This minister has not made the transition from being a partisan politician to being a minister of the crown. That, I believe, calls for an apology on the part of this minister. I ask you, Speaker, to check the record and assist me in bringing the minister to order on this matter.

The Acting Speaker: I don't think that's the responsibility of the Speaker, but it's kind of you to ask.

I will turn now to the member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): It is a pleasure to follow the member from Oak Ridges, our education critic. I have the greatest respect for the work he has done and his commitment to education for all children. It's a privilege to speak today. I say right from the outset, in support of the intent of Bill 194, that it's sort of like the debate going on in Ottawa as the Liberal government seems to wrap itself continuously in the flag. As to all persons who choose Canada as their country or are visitors here, I think all parties would embrace the notion outlined in Bill 194. It's that kind of occasion in this House where we agree, and what's often missing are the apparent truths that should be part of the full debate.

I was preparing for my opportunity this afternoon rather hastily, because I understand our critic is suffering from a bit of a larynx problem and he needed some support on this bill—not support in his commitment but because of his larynx. He does speak in public; some would say too often. But I have the greatest respect for his commitment. I'm going to repeat much of what he said.

All children should have access to education. That's a fundamental right, in my view. I can tell you as a parent of five children that education is the true passport to one's future. I would encourage education to be access-

ible and available to all children. That is where the real nub of the question comes. It's a difficult challenge for the current government. The Liberal government under Dalton McGuinty has failed people across this province on this file.

I, unfortunately, will now dive into some of the more controversial areas that even the member from Oak Ridges was kind enough to bring to the attention of viewers and those few members in attendance in the House as I speak. I looked at the bill itself. It's rather a small bill. The viewers should know that it's less than one page. Of course, they're printed in both official languages.

1650

The preamble here is quite small. It says, "The bill repeals and replaces subsection 49(7) of the Education Act and makes certain other related changes to the act." The intent here is to make sure that children have access to education without a charge.

Here's the ever-encompassing clause: "Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, enacts" the following changes.

One of the changes that I found here—often you must read the fine print to know what's really happening here—is, "A board shall not charge a fee to..." and it goes on to outline in three sections and some subgroups under what conditions.

This is the condition issue. This is first, under (7)(a): "... a person who is a participant in an educational exchange program under which a pupil of the board attends a school outside Canada without a fee." There is the condition, see? The subtlety of this legal language here is the proviso that if the school outside of Canada—if there's an exchange program—doesn't charge a fee, then we won't charge a fee. If they charge a fee, we will charge a fee; if they don't, we won't. So it's not like it's universal access.

If you go on further, you will see that the section goes on to say, "... a person if that person is awaiting determination of an application for permanent residence...." That's understood.

This is an interesting one here. In (7)(c), it says, "... if that person, his or her parent or someone else with lawful custody of him or her is in Canada...."

Let's imagine that the parents were transferred to the United States and the children were then living with the grandparents for a while or that the children were American, and because of business and other kinds of complications about a country—the implementation question here is, if they would have been charged fees in the United States, what would the case be here in Canada?

I say to you that it's not, in all cases, what one hears coming from the Liberal minister's pronouncements—which often happen during the election. One thing is said under these contexts; something quite different is said on the implementation.

In fact, it's important to bring into debate today that yesterday the House debated Bill 118. We voted, I might

say, unanimously in support of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act—a new era of accessibility beginning in Ontario.

I want to recognize the work done by the member from Burlington, Cam Jackson. Cam Jackson is really the author of the disabilities act. There have been some changes to it. Out of respect, I think there has been work done by all parties.

This bill here says, "A new era for accessibility begins in Ontario." If you talk about children with special needs, it has already been established, but prior to the election, the Liberal government, before they were a government, promised to address the autistic issue. They promised that no child would be denied. It went to the courts, and the courts ruled that they should be fulfilling that commitment. In fact, the NDP have asked several questions, as has our critic, about why they have denied children with autism full access to the services that they need. We're talking about our own students, our own children. I'm trying to see how the implementation of this bill creates some issues—full access to various pieces of legislation. I would say to you that—

Interruption.

Mr. Wilkinson: You're checking your files.

Mr. O'Toole: No, I'm turning off my files now. I didn't know, and now it's off.

The Acting Speaker: Will the member for Durham take his seat.

I'm compelled to remind the House that the use of electronic devices while we're in the chamber cannot be overt.

I would again return to the member for Durham.

Mr. O'Toole: I respectfully acknowledge that I was out of order for doing that. I can assure you it will not happen again this afternoon, because he has taken it from me. I mean that respectfully, Speaker.

The autism argument needs to be reflected on for a few moments, so I'm just going to speak a little bit more slowly here. Children with special needs—and I see Mr. Levac, the government whip. He has a very important bill, I might say, on education, which is an access issue; it's addressing the needs. The member from Brant knows full well that I support Bill 3. These are children suffering from anaphylactic shock and other things that affect their environment. I support the bill. I'm surprised that the Premier hasn't seen fit to bring that bill forward. I hope it's wrapped up into the end-of-session bills and dealt with accordingly, and you will have my support on that. Along with my Bill 137 which is the transit tax credit, it helps people who help themselves. It's a very fundamental Conservative bill, technically.

On the autism issue, I think if you broaden it out to the general special needs, it's very important. I'm hearing quite a lot of difficulty—in the French language, public boards are having problems, the amount of enrolment and the difficulties placed on those families of making sure those children are transported to schools close by in their jurisdiction. I will say on the public record here that that's an accessibility issue. The French Catholic boards,

because they have more density of population, aren't experiencing quite as many deliverable difficulties. But when the minister says that he's making accessibility to education equal so that all children should have access to education, let's be straightforward. Let's look at the First Nations issues, let's look at the French-language issues, let's look at Ontario citizens' access to special programming, not just autism. In a general sense, each individual child today—the Education Quality and Accountability Office has determined that children who don't pass certain testing have to have an individual education plan, an IEP. That's an accessibility issue, because I believe that if they're not delivering those accessible programs for each child because of sparsity or because of resources, then the minister must take responsibility for the ongoing programming within each school today.

I can tell you, it's my understanding from the briefing I have here that if this Bill 194 is passed, there is a cost of approximately \$2 million per year. In the context of an \$80-billion budget and potentially a \$15-billion education budget, that is not considered to be a large amount of money. But if I look at it, it is about 250 children. So in that context, it is a significant amount of money on a per capita basis. If I just did the math on that, I would think that every child should have equal access to equal funding.

Which brings me to the broad, broad argument of why they had the Royal Commission on Learning. The Royal Commission on Learning was all about each child having access to an adequately funded education in the province of Ontario. The Royal Commission on Learning said that the province of Ontario should fund education. What had happened up to that time, prior to 1995—and David Cooke is now working in Thunder Bay on the issue of school closures there, and that's a whole different issue of access. We won't go there. I have a lot of respect for David Cooke. I had the privilege of being a trustee for a few years and so I know the challenges of distance and sparse population. David Cooke from the Royal Commission on Learning set up the EQAO, the Education Quality and Accountability Office. He also set up the College of Teachers. He also implemented the new curriculum program. He also made recommendations that the government fund education, that the province of Ontario fund education.

What had happened was that historically, about 50% of the funding for public education, and in some cases more, came from the province. In the city of Toronto, they had so much assessment wealth, that is, the municipal tax base, that they received very little. In fact, they received negative grants. The city of Toronto, the city of Ottawa, large, well-developed commercial cities, had a significant tax base municipally, so they funded education inequitably. And it was a large issue in the 1980s when I was a school trustee, that said that places like Durham region—and Brant, for instance, would probably be another area with not a very rich assessment base, municipal tax base—were underfunded compared to other school jurisdictions within the province. So if

you fully embrace this accessibility issue, which comes down to funding and equal access to quality programming in a public education system, they are far short of fulfilling that commitment at all.

1700

I put to you that the Royal Commission on Learning had about 130 recommendations, and those were the navigational aid for us when we were government, under John Snobelen and others, in implementing those reforms. We tried to find a way of relieving the municipal tax base support for education and having it funded, for the most part, by the province.

What happened was that prior to the implementation of the per student education funding model, some areas of the province were funded at about \$7,500 to \$8,000 per student, whereas some parts of the province were funded at about \$4,000 to \$5,000. That is not equitable funding. During that time, and going forward even to today, there are certain parts of the province, because of difficulties with French language, sparse population, difficult-to-serve communities and scarce teaching and other resources—it's more expensive to deliver programs to children with special needs and children with language preferences, and I want to be clearly on the record as being all for student and parent choice, more directly and more specifically in the secondary school panel.

In the limited time I have, I will try to wrap this around Bill 194, which says that every child should have access to an education—and I'm broadening it to the children of Ontario, and we welcome the children of people who choose Canada. My history here tells me that all things come down to the financial model. I'm looking at the Liberal government's own fiscal analysis. That is what this document is. It's not a leaked confidential document. It's a public document, and it is about education: Projected School Board Funding for the year 2004-05. This was in their budget, and I'm going to share with the people of Ontario what the actual funding was, prior to the election and post-election.

They say, "We have put in millions and millions and millions of dollars." In fact, in the last couple of weeks they've spent billions of dollars, and I'll get to that. People listening should understand that in education about 75% of the total budget of a school board is wages and benefits. I don't say that's wrong; that's the reality. So when you get a negotiated settlement for 10% over the next four years, that's really about 8% of their total spending that is accounted for on all these grants.

The minister announced he was going to deal with the prep time issue in the elementary panel. I'd probably support that; my wife is an elementary teacher. They probably teach in eight subject areas that are very important in the formation, primarily in the primary grades. They're learning to read and decode information, and I believe they need a lot of one on one in smaller classes to get them an early and quick start in education. I think it is fundamental to their pathway in life. The argument needs to be understood that if you do that and increase the funding, there's really no more service. It's for wages and benefits. Let's be clear on that.

We talked about teacher testing—those who may not be in the right career. There are probably some politicians who aren't in the right career. There are probably some police officers and people working at IBM—people who make career choice mistakes. That could happen in any career, including teaching. The vast majority are qualified, dedicated, professional teachers, and the union wants to turn down the temperature, just like the director of the Toronto District School Board said earlier today, and I will get to that as well. I was talking to David Reid about the article in the paper today—we need to turn down the temperature a little bit.

On education funding, in 1998-99, actual spending was \$12.3 billion; in 1999-2000, it was \$12.4 billion; in 2000-01, it was \$12.8 billion; in 2001-02, still under a Tory government, it was \$13.1 billion; in 2002-03, it was \$14 billion. In 2003-04—now, that's where the government changed—it went to \$14.5 billion. It did go up \$200 million. In 2003-04 revised, it went up about \$400 million. In 2004-05, it went to \$14.9 billion. So yes, they've put more funding into education. I would not disagree with that. But some of their solutions haven't improved access; they really fundamentally haven't improved access.

It's not just as simple as the argument raised this past Friday in my riding, when I had visits from the School Bus Operators' Association of Ontario. Several school bus operators appeared, and I will get their names on the record here eventually. They were saying that the difficulties in delivering children to school—it's hard to break this down, because we're spending more money. At the same time, a greater and greater percentage of the budget is actually for wages and benefits. No one argues with that, fundamentally. But what it means that is you have to increase the footprint of the school, because the non-teaching staff in the school also need to be paid. The more of that pay that creeps up into these is crowding out the amount of money they actually get to spend to defray the cost for the non-teaching—these are the supply, the support, the secretarial, the principals, the librarians—not that they don't teach; they are all part of a team deal. You have to have a larger footprint. The footprint that actually works is about 500 students. When you look at small-town Ontario, you have a larger catchment area, so you get into huge transportation issues. The logistics of bringing those children, whether it's French-language or it's the English panels of the four school systems—in fact, I put to you that there are five school systems in Ontario. The independent schools are a school system. As has been said earlier, the independent schools today reflect over a million students whose family, for whatever reason, chooses to send their students there.

I've established the point that the greatest amount of funding for education—more recently, almost \$2 billion has been committed by Minister Kennedy, the Minister of Education, and that \$2 billion is addressing two issues. Fundamentally, it's sort of a class size issue. Secondly, it's a prep time issue in the elementary school panel, and it's an equalization factor in the secondary panel. I would

say the only thing I disagree with entirely is that there should be some measurement of outcomes or performance, as in any profession. Some are good at it, whether it's lawyers or engineers or doctors. There's a method of oversight from a college. The Ontario College of Teachers needs to have independence to assess the performance and discipline—if it's interfering with a child in some way, to deal with those in the appropriate, independent manner, rather than in a union environment. That's the big issue here. At the end of the day—and I'm not union-bashing—there are workplace issues that need a forum for being addressed, but more importantly, there are professional pedagogical issues that should be dealt with by the college, as the College of Nurses would, as the college of dentists would, as the College of Physicians and Surgeons would. There needs to be a process there to measure effectiveness and outcome and professional due diligence.

But when you look at the overall negotiated issues—I'm just focusing on that for a few minutes. In their own budget document last year, and I'm reading this from the May 18, 2004, budget—we're going to have the budget here tomorrow—this is the impact that you should be aware of. As it applies to OHIP, there are over 21,000 physicians in Ontario. For every 1% of increase in their base, in their formula, the OHIP billable services—it's \$58 million. You can do the math, if it's half a billion dollars for a 10% increase. For instance, there are 40,000 nurses in Ontario. Every 1% pay increase they receive is \$34 million.

In elementary and secondary school, there are 180,000 staff, including teachers, principals, administrators etc. For every 1% increase, it's \$115 million. You can do the numbers: a 10% increase is \$1.15 billion. So when you look at the numbers, it's doing nothing for the access. None of the content issues are being addressed. In the broader public sector there are 60,000 public servants, many professional people who help us do our jobs and perform them as well as we can. Every 1% is \$45 million. All of this, whether it is the \$80-billion budget provincially or the \$15-billion budget of the school boards, is wages and benefits. Ultimately, that is the issue here.

1710

When I heard the school bus operators, Archie Groth and others, speak to me on Friday, I was impressed with their commitment to education. Archie and Brian Lemieux from both Phoenix Transportation and Laidlaw transportation systems, which help to deliver the children in the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board, the Durham school boards—public and separate—as well as probably Trillium Lakelands board, are asking for this small amount of money. The amount of money they are actually asking for is about 20 cents per child, per day to ensure that the children in this large footprint of schools get to school safely. I don't think it's too much to ask or expect and I support the school bus operators on their quest. It actually amounts to \$14 per day, per bus. I feel,

quite honestly, that the delivery of children to schools is about access to education. When you look at reducing the number of schools, closing schools, some would say it's a double-edged sword; it's difficult to deal with.

Here is the director of education for the Toronto District School Board. Talk about density of student population: There are 265,000 elementary and secondary school students involved. The director, David Reid, to his credit, said in this morning's Toronto Star that he was losing patience with the lack of progress in negotiations with the 12,000 support workers. He went on to say such things as, "Education is for our children." That's first and foremost; that's the primary focus of the whole enterprise here. As parents, you should be outraged if this is not meeting the needs of your child, whether it is special ed or cleanliness of the schools. He says, "'We need to clean up our schools, clean up our washrooms and clean up this act,' wrote Reid, who also warned that budget discussions at the board would present a significant challenge this year even though the Toronto District School Board has received an increase in its budget."

He couldn't have said it any more succinctly. He went on to say, "We will need additional capacity to spend money differently." Oh, that word "different" comes in; that is change. All people resist change. I understand that. We did when we became opposition, and I could never become comfortable in opposition, but our duties are different. "'This will require boards to have a serious look at the twinning of schools, the closure of pools and other measures that may not be popular with everyone,' Reid warned in the memo." There you have it: He is making choices by putting children first. That, to my mind, is about access to quality education. Children and their families deserve nothing less.

I've made the argument that no one at all has a dispute with paying professional people appropriately. I want to be on the record with that, as long as it doesn't affect my wife's pay, because that would be a conflict: my arguing in favour of her getting a raise, and a much more lucrative pension than we have. They should have the same pension as we have. No, that is not fair, because we have no pension, so get that straight. I would say that, yes, the pension issue is the issue that took David Peterson down in the 1990 election. Did you know that? The pension issue is what took David Peterson down.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): Big rally down in Hamilton.

Mr. O'Toole: Oh, yes. I would say to you that in every case, whether it's delivering for new Canadians or for children with special needs, what is missing from this discussion is parent choice. I don't like to be personal here, but your wife is a French-language teacher, a French immersion teacher, I believe, and you have three children. You believe in the importance of public education, as I do, as the parent of five; a couple of them are teachers. I think that needs to be said. But what is missing in all this debate—this may be a bit of a wrinkle on Bill 194; Mr. Levac is a former principal as well, from

Brant, and I know his heart is in education as well—is parent choice, which is really key to this whole debate.

Why do I bring it up in this context of new Canadians, people who are coming to Canada? Well, I'll tell you. It does make sense, because if you read about the \$5.75 billion that the federal government announced—Ralph Goodale, Jack Layton and Prime Minister Paul Martin, and Dalton tagged along as well for part of that announcement—even Goodale says it's less than a third. John Baird would know; he'll soon be in Ottawa to actually feed back—

Mr. Baird: I was there to support Dalton.

Mr. O'Toole: He was up there to support Dalton.

Here is what it said. There's one very important piece here. It says, "McGuinty noted that under the agreement the average annual spending on immigration settlement services in Ontario"—settlement services? That's about language, that's about adjusting to the new culture and language and blah, blah, blah—"would rise to about \$3,400 ... from \$819." Now, what is neat about this and how it fits into this discussion about access for all children is that in many cases we're talking about children whose first language may not be French or English. When you look at this whole plan, the jobs and training, what about the adults being trained to teach ESL to new Canadian children whose first language is not English or French, teaching them once they have mastered the literacy?

I think there's money here, in the retraining and re-settlement, to engage new immigrants to Canada who have been here for a number of years and have mastered English to teach it, because they may already speak the native language of the child they're dealing with. That would be the parents' choice, to have their children and their cultural traditions respected. Now it may be a stretch. I know the Liberals have this way of thinking in the box a bit on this, but there is an innovative way for them to really harness the energies and talents of new Canadians, the immigrants of Canada who make up this rich, vibrant multicultural mosaic we talk about, in a really meaningful way, to help the transition of those children to the new languages and cultures in Canada, using the skills of those new Canadians in a teaching environment. They have been underutilized. They are underemployed today, many of them driving taxis. Many of them would have been teachers in those countries, whether it's the Netherlands, Sweden, Afghanistan or Turkey. Who knows where they are liable to be coming from? They have mastered the skills of learning a new language.

I put it to you honestly that when I was transferred to Quebec in my job with General Motors, I went to the French-language schools. I was working as a programmer at the time. I was operating in COBOL, which is common business-oriented language, so I didn't really have a lot of time to use that language, only with the computer kind of thing. The difficulty for me was that the person teaching me had French as their first language. If they had used my native language and taught me how

they learned the transition, I think I would have been more comfortable. They were very comfortable in their first language, but I was not comfortable in their first language.

For instance, say that a person from Turkey who is here as a taxi driver had a reasonable mastery of English, and certainly knew the Turkish language. Dealing with a Turkish child, helping them to make the transition alongside them, partnering with them in learning the skills of a new language, would help both people and they would be gainfully, meaningfully engaged. No, they don't have teacher certification. The unions would say no. That's the problem here. It's just an idea I put on the table, because as I said in my remarks, every child should have access to an education, whether it is special education, language education or just adjusting to living in a new country.

I will be supporting the bill, because, as I said, the cost of schooling these children should fall under the responsibility of the federal government. Yes, it's repatriation. The McGuinty government should be demanding that the federal government pay the cost involved. I agree with that and I think it could be easily argued, as I've established, in the new funding model under Ralph Goodale and Jack Layton, which Dalton helped out a bit with, that this could actually work.

1720

If there's a bit of creative thinking here, there's an opportunity for new Canadians to be fully and gainfully employed with their children, and their relatives' children in many cases, coming to Canada to enjoy and fully be engaged in a meaningful way in this great province. It's going to take courage and leadership. I believe that John Tory, our leader, is the kind of person who understands the dynamics of changing to the demands of the time.

What's missing from this is—the jargon I'm hearing from Gerard Kennedy, repeatedly, is right from the OSSTF handbook or the OECTA handbook. He's been hoodwinked. There's no solution that doesn't fit their equation. That's why there are still work-to-rules in Toronto. I see it into the future. As I look into the crystal ball, I don't think much is going to change here, except the government in 2007. So there's a lot to be contemplated here. It is their turn to govern. I have little confidence in what they say, but it is time to consider the choices that need to be made. Let's put our children first and let's make this bill one example of being innovative and recognizing the talents of all cultures in this great province.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Prue: I listened to—

Interjection.

Mr. Prue: No, I'm not. Thank you.

I listened to the two debaters, one from Oak Ridges and one from Durham, and what they had to say. To the member from Oak Ridges, he was correct. If you use the simple mathematics of what the Liberals have said, if there are indeed only 250 children—I will be disputing that in my own speech—at a cost of \$8,000 on average, the simple mathematics says that is some \$2 million. He

is also correct that this government is not doing nearly enough for other children in this province who need help. It is all well and good to be passing this bill, and I will be supporting this bill provided there is sufficient money set aside for it, but this is the same government that is not doing what they promised to do for autistic children in the school system. It is the same government that is taking parents to court rather than providing extra help for those children in the school system. I know that would cost at least \$2 million, and probably much more than \$2 million in a province the size of Ontario, but I have to look at that in conjunction with this bill. If this government is not convicted—convinced enough to do—

Mr. Baird: Convicted?

Mr. Prue: Convicted: No, that's the other one. If it is not convinced enough to do what is right for the children who live here, I remain a little bit skeptical about whether or not they will be convinced enough to do what is necessary for the children of those who do not have status in this country.

There is also a very real pressure on the boards, which the member from Durham has talked about. There is a very real pressure on having enough teachers, on having crumbling school systems, on having buildings that need new roofs, on having janitors and secretaries and vice-principals. That needs to be addressed too, and it needs to be done in conjunction with this bill to make sure we do not rob from one to do the other.

Ms. Wynne: I'm happy to comment on the comments of the member for Oak Ridges and the member for Durham. In fact, I think the member for Oak Ridges could be named the member for private education, because the theme of what that member talked about really was support for private education. The bad habit that I believe the minister was referring to earlier was the bad habit of closing schools and opening hundreds of private schools, so we have—

Interjection.

Ms. Wynne: No, there is no apology necessary for supporting public education, which is what this government is doing. For the members in the party opposite who are intent upon privatization of schools, that's not what we're about. We are putting our money and our efforts into the public education system.

As for the concern about children with autism, I think what we need to be clear about is that this is not an either/or situation. We're not saying that this legislation is opening the door. There is a system in place for children with autism. There has been \$30 million put into the system for autism—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the House to come to order. Member for Don Valley West.

Ms. Wynne: I'm happy to have struck a chord, Mr. Speaker. This government has put more money into dealing with autism than for many years. We are in the process of putting those supports in place. This is not either/or. What this legislation, Bill 194, does is open the door to a group of students who have been excluded.

Children with autism are not excluded from our school system.

I'm happy that both members are going to be able to support the legislation. They were in office for eight years. It's interesting that they didn't open the doors to the public education system, but we are going to be doing that.

Mr. Dunlop: I'm pleased to respond to the comments from the members for Oak Ridges and Durham on their speeches this afternoon. They actually used the whole hour of the leadoff, which is interesting. We should do that more often in this House.

What's really important—and I heard the member from Don Valley East just say how much they care about public education. If they care about public education, they can start with the school bus operators. Eight hundred—

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron—Bruce): Don Valley West.

Mr. Dunlop: Wherever she's from; I don't know.

It's clear: We saw school bus operators from across this province come to our constituency offices last Friday. They have a huge concern. They transport our children and grandchildren across this province. They are being severely underfunded. So for a government that cares about people, cares about education, let's start with the people who transport our children and our grandchildren to schools. I think that's an important thing.

Second of all, John Tory, Ernie Eves and Mike Harris never lied to an autistic child—never. They have never done that. Dalton McGuinty promised support for autism and has not come through with it. It's as simple as that. Now our offices are being inundated with calls and letters asking why Mr. McGuinty has not supported autistic children over the age of six with IBI treatment. In fact, he's taking them to court to fight them. That's the bottom line. He made a promise; he did not commit to it.

Here we go again. We're starting into another budget tomorrow. There will not be enough money for them.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Dunlop: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line here is that they can stand and brag about Bill 194, but there are a lot of problems in the education system, a lot of problems that this government committed to: more money for transportation, part of the Rozanski recommendations—they have not fulfilled that recommendation; autism—they have not fulfilled that promise. They broke that promise. As I said before, Mike Harris, Ernie Eves and John Tory have never lied to an autistic child.

The Acting Speaker: I'm going to remind the members of the House that we refer to honourable members by their riding names, not by their surnames.

We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): For those who are listening in this House and for those who are listening using the TV, this is about Bill 194. I thought maybe we should

talk about Bill 194 for a moment. We've heard the opposition speak to us for—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Nepean—Carleton, please come to order. Member for Brant.

Mr. Levac: No matter what they say or do, I'm going to talk about Bill 194, because that's what we're talking about. We're talking about Bill 194. This is to make sure that those children who have come from other countries, who were not eligible to get an education, get an education. That's what this is about.

Isn't it interesting that we've allowed this debate to happen for an hour and a half and we've—look, I want to tell you something. I think the member from Beaches—East York has some experience in this area, and I look forward to his speech because I know he's had background in immigration. He's going to talk to us a little bit about the actual content of this bill. I'm more than willing to listen to what the member has to say.

The opposition is doing what it's supposed to do. Let's make sure we understand that. It's supposed to take these little sticks and poke and poke, and try to say that we're doing everything wrong. Quite frankly, Bill 194 is going to correct a wrong. It's wrong that children who are coming from other countries are not getting an education, and that's what this bill is going to do. Quite clearly, it's very explicit about what it's trying to do. It's saying that if we have people coming from another country who are bringing children with them, they can be put inside the education system and not be charged fees. That's a right thing to do. It's an intelligent thing to do. Even if they leave us, they're leaving us with some more education and a good feeling about what Canada is all about, what Ontario is all about. We're sending a signal that we prioritize our children's education as the number one thing in this province.

1730

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

Mr. O'Toole: I do appreciate the response from members. Bill 194 is somewhat harmonious among all parties, I believe.

The member from Beaches—East York talked about the Liberal math program, and he's right. If you look at the briefing note on this, their forecast of about \$2 million is somewhat light, because it could cost \$10,000 per year per child. That's what the notes are saying here.

The member from Don Valley West talked about the arguments being made by our critic, Frank Klees, about choice. It's clear that she's opposed to any choice in education. I understand that. That's the dogma of the teacher-public education community. I would only say with respect to the choice issue that there is an argument to be established on the autism debate, which she has ducked.

When you talk about closing schools, talk to the people in Thunder Bay. When you were in opposition—you weren't here, of course, so you wouldn't know, but there are members here today who were in opposition—you

ranted and railed about closing schools. I'll tell you one thing: Cartwright Secondary School in Blackstock is a classic example. You never want to try to close that school. It will be a hard battle, I'll tell you.

The member from Simcoe North really did address the important issue of school bus operators. They're asking for 20 cents per day per child to ensure safe transportation. No one could deny the importance and the necessity of addressing that need.

I want to put on the record in the brief moment left some persons who have contributed to my appreciation. I thank Cathy Abraham of the Ontario Public School Board's Association for her position paper on special education funding, as well as St. Elizabeth Catholic School, where I had the privilege of reading last week. This was arranged by Jennifer Matesic. I also want to recognize the work done by Willie Woo, who is on the school planning council. Their graduation on June 29 at Clarke High School is very important as well.

I believe there's universal acceptance of this bill. We will be supporting it, but, once again, I have no confidence in their ability to deliver anything the way they said it.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Prue: Before I begin the debate, I would request unanimous consent to stand down the lead for my colleague Mr. Marchese from Trinity-Spadina, who is in committee at the moment, until the next date.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Beaches-East York has sought unanimous consent to stand down the leadoff speech until the next rotation. Is there consent in the House? Agreed.

Mr. Prue: I have 20 minutes, then, and I'm going to try to give you my 20 minutes' worth of immigration experience and what this bill really will do. Many members in this House have been talking about school buses, about the education system and about autism, but they haven't been talking about what this bill is going to do if implemented and the potential costs that are involved.

I have to state at the outset that I am in favour of the bill. I think New Democrats will generally support the bill, because we believe that every child in this province, every child in this country, deserves an education. It does not matter what the status of their parents is, they deserve an opportunity to go to school. They deserve an opportunity to have an education. Even should they not remain in Canada in the long term, it is not in their best interests or in our country's best interests to deny them an education.

Having said that, we also understand, and you must understand, that what this bill will do is involve a lot more children, I am suggesting to you, than the 250 who have been named by the various school boards. I will go through that in short order, line by line, and the people who are likely to be impacted and what these provisions actually mean, because they are hugely technical. I don't think a lot of people even understand the difference between a permanent resident and an immigrant.

They don't understand the difference between a refugee and a refugee claimant. I'm going to try to give

you some experience on what this bill means and what is going to be involved.

I also think the government needs to do a very good cost analysis before this bill actually is put into law, to make sure there are sufficient funds available to do what this bill purports to do and what this bill will in fact do if it becomes law in September as set out in the statute.

The government has an obligation to help all the children of Ontario. It has an obligation to especially help those who are in the most need of education. I would put the three greatest needs quite clearly as being those with special needs, those who are suffering from autism—that's all I'm going to say about that—and those who have come from other countries and who have English as a second language, or even those who do not come from other countries but whose English or French is a second language. I'm talking here about our Aboriginal children, who often speak Cree or Ojibwa at home and who have a very real difficulty in school when they first go to schools where they are required to speak in English. That is the obligation this government and indeed all governments have. We have to make sure there is money for these three areas in order to get rid of the problems, in order to give our children the best opportunity they can have.

If there is money left over—and if this government has money left over, I'm suggesting it is a worthwhile expenditure—then you have to look, as you are doing in this bill, to help foreign nationals who happen to be in Canada. I think we have an obligation to do that.

As I said, I worked for more than 20 years in the immigration department. I left there in 1994, on the day that I became the mayor of East York. I left to become the mayor. Up until that point I was counsel to the Minister of Immigration, appearing before the immigration appeal board and the immigration refugee board, and was considered—I don't want to be too immodest—one of Canada's leading experts on the Immigration Act. I still have my copies and I still read it daily, actually, in the performance of my duties as an MPP.

I will tell you that although the laws have changed from the time I left there in 1994, many of them remain extant and many of the policies and the way the government does business remain exactly the same. Of the things that have not changed in my time, the things that have actually got worse, number one is that there continues to be an enormous backlog in the immigration department. You read about it in the papers. Whether it is sponsorship of a relative, whether it is a refugee claim, whether it is humanitarian and compassionate grounds, whether it is a back-end review, in anything that happens within immigration or the normal assessment of an application, what used to take months now takes years. So we have to understand that we are going into a system that is tremendously backlogged and that no government, no recent government, has done anything to solve that problem.

There is an enormous decline in the number of personnel who work for the immigration department. The

number of officers available to process these applications or to assist people coming to this country or seeking to remain in this country has declined quite disastrously in the last number of years. Even though there may be some officers in some locations, the majority of immigrant applications are processed not in Toronto or in Ontario, where the immigrants who seek to stay here come to, but in fact are processed in Vegreville, Alberta. I challenge you to look at a map and try to find Vegreville, Alberta, because that is where the immigration actions are processed, in a town that probably has not seen an immigrant in some 100 years.

There is also the very political nature of immigration, which has not changed. We have all seen in the newspaper this past year the charges and countercharges against Immigration Minister Sgro. We have seen the machinations of the government and the immigration ministers as they come and go, and how they hand out permits or don't hand out permits, how they allow people to remain or do not allow them to remain. It's a very political office. Thrown into all of that, of course, is the very extensive court system.

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Having said that, and by way of background, in the next few minutes I'd like to go through what this bill does and some of the pitfalls the government may want to look at, because this is not benign in terms of 250 children. I hope someone is taking notes. I had hoped that the PA would remain. Perhaps she's watching on television.

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour): I'm taking notes, Michael.

Mr. Prue: If you're taking notes, thank you.

The whole import of this bill, which is only two pages, is found in section 3. It says, "A board shall not charge a fee," and then it lists the people to whom it cannot charge a fee. There is absolutely no problem whatsoever with (a), (b) or (c). Anybody who is under an educational exchange program, because there is a reciprocal agreement and the Canadian child is generally cared for abroad and is paid for abroad—that's reciprocal and it's good. There is no problem with the Visiting Forces Act (Canada). Canada has an obligation under NATO, and people will visit from time to time, as Canadians will also travel abroad. Recently, I met with some Estonian soldiers who were practising in Canada, at least one of whom had a child. There is no problem with the intent of that.

Clause (c)(i), a person who is "under a temporary resident permit issued under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada)"—there is no problem with that, because the temporary permit is issued in lieu of the actual permit being granted. So there is a process taking place, and we know that that person will be remaining in Canada.

Clause (c)(ii), a person who is "under a diplomatic, consular or official acceptance issued by the government of Canada"—again, we have an obligation to the diplomatic corps of countries coming to Canada to make sure that their children are not denied an education. In fact,

many countries, particularly Third World countries, cannot afford the fees of private schools and are very proud to send their children to Canadian schools, where they get a very good education.

The problem starts at clause (c)(iii), a person "claiming refugee protection under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada) or having had such protection conferred on him or her." I don't have any problem with the second part of that. They've actually had protection confirmed; they are in fact a refugee under the meaning of the Geneva Convention or the protocol signed in New York. I don't have any problem at all with that, because under the scheme of things, those persons will normally be landed in Canada in due course; we know they will be allowed to stay.

But this allows for any person who claims refugee status. I want the members to know who this involves. A great many refugees or refugee claimants come to Canada from countries that have abysmal human rights records and would ordinarily be expected to produce refugees. But I also think the members opposite need to know that this is a loophole for many people, when they are caught working illegally or doing things illegally in Canada, to claim refugee status in an attempt to stay.

In my time, it was not unusual to have refugee claims from Americans or British. I even had one from Sweden once, and some Swiss. I've had them from Portugal; I've had them from Spain. I've had them from countries that you would not think in your wildest imagination could possibly produce refugees.

This process does take a couple of years and I, for one, have to question whether it is within all of our hearts to allow not only a bogus refugee claim to be made that we know is blatantly false and has no chance of success, but also to spend taxpayers' money to encourage it. There are many, many such claims. In fact, even though Canada has the most generous and the most refugee-sensitive policy in the world, more than half of all the claims that are made in Canada at this time are denied. So you have to know that if there are 40,000 or 50,000 claims made a year, at least 20,000 to 25,000 of those will not bear out in the end.

I go on to clause (d), which says, "a person if that person is awaiting determination of an application for permanent residence in Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act." This is generally referred to in immigration parlance as the back-end review. This is where people who have come to Canada and claimed refugee status, and been denied that status, have an opportunity to make a case on humanitarian or compassionate grounds to remain in the country. The process generally takes from one to two years because the backlogs are so enormous. It means that a person who is not a refugee, but is a person seeking to remain in this country, can do so for a period of time—as I said before, usually a year or two to make the refugee claim and then a year or two to make the back-end review. The number of back-end reviews that are accepted is much, much lower than actual refugee claims. In fact, the last time I

saw any statistics on this, it only runs in the 10% to 15% average. So you have a lot of people staying here for what I would suggest is a long period of time without status and for whom this government is going to, under this bill, pay for schooling. If this is running at \$8,000 to \$10,000 a year per child, as the government's own estimates state, there are quite literally thousands of such children who may become available under this plan or who may be brought to Canada or to Ontario to take advantage of this plan, and the costs will not be insignificant. I want the government to take a very careful look if that is what you are planning in this bill, because I am mindful that we have a finite amount of monies available for education.

I would ask the government to look as well at clause (e), subclause (i), a person who is "under a work permit or awaiting the determination of an application for a work permit under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act..." A work permit is generally given to those who have made an application to be a refugee. That is the two-year wait before the actual hearing itself, and it can be longer in some cases. So this is a person who has not even formally made a claim but is eligible or has made an application, even if he or she is ineligible, to get a work permit, and who will be allowed to send his or her children to school. This will quite literally be in the thousands of people in this province alone.

We also look at (ii): "as a permanent resident within the meaning of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act ... or is awaiting determination of an application for permanent residence..." I have no problem with the permanent resident. People use interchangeably the words "immigrant" and "permanent resident." They are different things. An immigrant is a person who is seeking landing, who does not have status but is seeking to remain in Canada. A permanent resident is someone who has been accorded the status and who has not had the status taken away by due process of law.

I don't have any problem with the first part. I think every permanent resident doesn't even need this bill, because every permanent resident and/or his or her child has the right to attend school. But the second part is a person who is seeking that status and who may never get the status. There are quite literally in this province alone tens of thousands of such people. Whether or not their children are attending school, I don't know, but it is simply not correct and it cannot possibly be correct that there are only 250 such children in Ontario, all told.

The last one and the most significant one, which may cause the government to think about this for just a little while: It is estimated in Canada, according to conservative figures—and I'm not talking big-C Conservative—that there may be in excess of 200,000 people who are called illegal immigrants; that is, people who are in this country without status of any kind. They have come to this country. They have chosen to work, to stay, to do whatever they are doing. They are not permanent residents. They are not refugee claimants. They are simply people who have arrived here and who have not left in

accordance with the laws set out in the Immigration Act. There are approximately 200,000 by most estimates. Many of them do not bring their children. Many of them are here and send money back. So I don't think for a moment I'm going to tell you that they all have children here. But if there are 200,000, it goes without saying that there have to be quite a number of those children. They may not be attending school, which is a bad thing. But then again, if this bill is passed, they will be allowed to go to school, and I would suggest that many might come forward that you are unaware of and might seek to avail themselves of the opportunity to go to school.

The last section says it's any class. That makes me think that it's going to include all of those undocumented people who are in this country, all of those people who are subject to deportation orders who have fled, who have taken on new identities, who have moved cities or have changed whatever they had to change in order to remain here. Having worked in immigration, I can tell you that this is quite a regular occurrence. This is a wonderful country. I do not blame people for one minute for wanting to stay here. I do not blame them for one minute. If I came from one of those Third World places, I would do everything in my power to stay here too. But the fact is that there are a lot of them, and the costs to this province, the costs to the education system, may not be as small as what you are estimating. Certainly this bill will open up to a great many people who are not going to school today. I welcome that opportunity. I think those children should have that opportunity.

I want to use my last few minutes to talk about the cost. If the cost is several million dollars, \$10 million, \$15 million or whatever it is, I want to state that the people I represent and most of the people who have talked to me about immigration over the years want to make sure that it does not come at a cost to their own children or to their own school system.

I have a school in my riding that has a wonderful music teacher that was the subject of debate here last week: Earl Beatty school. The music teacher is not going to be there next year. The parents are all very upset that the music teacher is not going to be there. They've had a 5% decline in their enrolment. Maybe if a couple of these kids showed up, it would help, but they've had a 5% decline in their enrolment and they're going to lose their music teacher. They are very upset about that. They are very upset that the school is crumbling. They're very upset that it needs a new roof. They're very upset that there are mice in the basement. They want everything good to happen.

I would suggest that if they were to see that the money that they think is owed to them and to their children was taken away and given to others, it may cause some difficulty. I don't think we as a government should be trying to cause difficulty to potential new Canadians. We should not be causing difficulty to immigrants. We should not be doing anything that causes xenophobia in this country. We are a nation of immigrants and we have a responsibility to make sure that they are welcomed. We

have an opportunity here with this bill to do the right thing, but it cannot be done at the expense of what is wrong with the schools today.

I know that things are perhaps a little better. I talk to the teachers and they tell me things are a little better than they were two years ago. I think that's true. I talk to some parents and they say they are noticing some of the improvements. Some of the janitors have been hired back. Once in a while they even say a secretary is there, or something has happened to the school and they can see that there are some kinds of improvements. I want to see those improvements take place. I do not want this government, however, to take the money and spend it on this bill to the detriment of what you are already doing. If there is a finite amount of money, and I would acknowledge that in government there is a finite amount of money, then continue to do what you're doing. If this

is important, and I would suggest it is, then in your hearts you're going to have to find the money, and I would suggest to you that \$2 million is not an accurate assessment of what you're going to need.

Look at this bill very carefully. Think about who is there. Once this bill is passed, those who have not taken advantage of it in the past are now going to look to this as a good opportunity, and an opportunity which they would want for themselves and their children, and in fact that we want for them and their children. Look at that. If it's a good bill, then find the money for it.

I look forward to the budget debate. I hope to see money for this in the budget.

The Acting Speaker: It being close to 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 in the afternoon.

The House adjourned at 1753.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma–Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton East /	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton-Est	
Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Bramalea–Gore–Malton– Springdale	Kular, Kuldeep (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Huron–Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest–Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kenora–Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Chatham–Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lanark–Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Leeds–Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Dufferin–Peel– Wellington–Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London–Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Eglinton–Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Elgin–Middlesex–London	Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Erie–Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Nepean–Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)
Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Guelph–Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
Haliburton–Victoria–Brook	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ottawa–Vanier	Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L) Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parkdale–High Park	Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Toronto–Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Waterloo–Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakubuski, John (PC)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L) Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough–Agincourt	Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement		
Scarborough–Rouge River	Curling, Hon. / L'hon. Alvin (L) Speaker / Président		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs		
St. Paul's	Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique		
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John O'Toole
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco, Andrea Horwath,
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely
John Milloy, John O'Toole, Jim Wilson
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Finances et affaires économiques**

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Toby Barrett, Mike Colle, Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson
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Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,
Joseph N. Tascona
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Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
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Michael A. Brown, Jim Brownell, Bob Delaney,
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,
Shafiq Qaadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer
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Chair / Président: Bob Delaney
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Donna H. Cansfield, Bob Delaney,
Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,
Norm Miller, Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio
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Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley
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Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Kim Craitor,
Kuldip Kular, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Social Policy / Politique sociale

Chair / Président: Mario G. Racco
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craitor,
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,
Mario G. Racco, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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