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of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 15 February 2006

Mercredi 15 février 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 15 February 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 15 février 2006

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOSPITAL LABORATORY SERVICES

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): There is a serious situation that could negatively affect health care for many of my constituents living in the small town of Perth, and in many smaller eastern Ontario communities like Napanee. Since 1997, the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital and Hospitals In-Common Laboratories have combined into a successful partnership. It is a pilot project that has provided the community with the best laboratory services possible with available resources, allowing residents to receive accurate and timely lab services in their own community.

At the beginning, 75,000 tests were performed by nine doctors. Now eight other doctors have joined up and 140,000 tests are done annually. The problem is that Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has not recognized this increase in workload and not one cent of additional funding has been given to the hospital for this service in 11 years. Without an adjustment to funding, I understand that this particular service will cease on June 1 of this year, not only in Perth but in many other small communities across Ontario.

By all accounts, this partnership has been very beneficial not only for patients but for the hospital, community doctors and the community as a whole. My constituents feel that they rely on this lab. Those who are elderly need this service close to home. Today I call on the Minister of Health to provide the necessary funds to ensure that the people of Perth and other small towns in Ontario continue to benefit from this partnership.

GREAT SKATE

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I rise in the House today to bring everyone's attention to a wonderful event that will take place in Ottawa and throughout the province this weekend. On Sunday, February 19, the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families will host Canada's biggest skating party, the Great Skate, in celebration of physical activity. The Canadian Tire Foundation for Families has been involved in promoting healthy lifestyles across Ontario. In February 2005 they launched

the Canadian Tire JumpStart, a charitable program that aids children in financial need to participate in organized sports and recreation. Since the program was launched, Canadian Tire has helped give more than 21,000 kids a sporting chance, and plans to help 25,000 children in 2006. In order to promote physical activity in children, Canadian Tire has also launched the Great Skate event to encourage a day of healthy outdoor activity for children and their families.

Skaters who are interested in registering for this event may do so in the store, by phone or on the Canadian Tire website. Participants are invited to make a voluntary donation, and Canadian Tire will match every donation dollar up to \$500,000. The proceeds will go to Canadian Tire JumpStart to help support the program and to extend its scope for children in need.

I encourage all Ontarians to come out and participate in this Sunday's event, support Canadian Tire's initiative and promote healthy, active lifestyles in children and adults alike. Lace up your skates and join Minister Watson and all the Ottawa MPs on the Rideau Canal this Sunday. And, yes, there is ice on the Rideau Canal.

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): I rise today to renew my call to the McGuinty government and the Minister of Culture to help save Sir Frederick Banting's homestead in Alliston, in the town of New Tecumseth.

As I've explained to this House before, Edward Banting, the last owner of the homestead, bequeathed the property to the Ontario Historical Society in 1999 on the understanding that they would preserve and maintain it for the benefit of all Canadians. Unfortunately, they have failed to live up to that agreement and the home has been allowed to fall into ruin over the last six years. It's time to repair the damage that six years of carelessness have caused, and it's time to restore those buildings and protect them and the property from potential vandalism and further wearing away.

Recently, the Minister of Culture was in New Tecumseth, just a couple of kilometres away from the Sir Frederick Banting homestead, and she told the local papers there that she hoped the parties involved would keep talking.

Once again, I want to remind the minister just how ill-informed she is and how indifferent she seems to this important issue. The parties, as I've reminded her in this House many times, haven't spoken for over a year now,

in fact for 14 months, yet she keeps telling the media locally, nationally and provincially that the parties are constantly meeting. They're not meeting at all. In fact, while she waits for this issue to get resolved, she should know that the roof has now caved in on the main home and the octagonal drive shed won't last much longer. So again I renew my effort.

Minister, please protect Ontario's culture, please protect this national historic site, and do what you can to make sure the parties do come together and save Sir Frederick Banting's homestead.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): The Tenant Protection Act needs to be replaced.

In 2003, Mr. McGuinty promised "real protection for tenants at all times." Two years later, you still experience above-guideline rent increases based on utility costs. Apartments throughout the city remain in disrepair and landlords still raise the rent by charging tenants the cost of repairs and upkeep year after year.

In a letter sent to the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations in 2003 by Monsieur McGuinty, he says, "We will repeal the Harris-Eves government's Tenant Protection Act and we will bring back real rent control that protects tenants from excessive rent increases. We will get rid of vacancy decontrol which allows unlimited rent increases on a unit when a tenant leaves." He adds that they will implement "other legislative changes, such as costs-no-longer-borne provisions to provincial tenant law." Two years and some odd months later, nothing has happened. John Gerretsen, Ontario's housing minister, has said that a new law is needed to replace the Tenant Protection Act with fair and effective tenant and landlord protection. Two years and some odd months later, close to the end of their mandate, they have done little.

I invite those tenants who are interested in making sure the Liberals keep their promise to go and voice their concerns and press Liberals by going to city hall on Thursday, March 9. The meeting is at 7 p.m.

1340

BUSINESS EXECUTIVES ORGANIZATION

Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): I am very proud to rise today and welcome the Business Executives Organization to Queen's Park. The BEO is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, having originated in 1986, by a group of local Hamilton business owners who believed that sharing opportunities would help each of them grow and prosper. Each company is stronger by the support and mentoring of one another.

The BEO is made up of leaders from across the spectrum of business: retail, manufacturing and service. They meet weekly with the express purpose of increasing business opportunity and building a stronger, connected community. These business leaders are often the foun-

ation of many charities and represent the essence of our great city. They're hard working, dedicated and work with integrity.

While time does not allow me to introduce them all by name, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Art Adams, honorary colonel and founder of the Credit Bureau of Southern Ontario; Mr. Ralph Hayman, from one of Hamilton's oldest law firms, celebrating its 150th year in business; Mr. Dale McDonald, from the respected Ira McDonald Construction; and from a great family business, Mr. Hank Gelderman, representing Jan Gelderman Landscaping. There are so many more, as you can see in the two galleries.

I am honoured to have been a past president of this fine organization. I wish them all continued success, and thank you for coming to Queen's Park today.

FARM INCOME

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): Yesterday, tractors, tractor-trailers, farmers and media converged on Guelph for what I count as the seventh large farm protest in the last 12 months, a protest to get this government to deal with the farm income crisis.

These agribusiness people don't want to have to keep doing this. Their humiliation has now turned to anger. Lots of signs: "Farmers Feed Cities," and one painted on both sides of a huge tanker truck, "Equity with US Farmers." US farmers receive \$123 an acre for their corn. I talked to a farmer yesterday; he gets \$7. How do you compete on the Chicago market? It's like sending David against Goliath without a slingshot. US farmers have had their best three years in 2003 to 2005. Ontario farmers have had their worst three years.

We've now had, as members opposite will know, two federal government announcements of assistance; nothing from Ontario. The line in the sand grows deeper each day this government fails to act. Yesterday, farmers laid out an ultimatum. They want a risk management program by March 9.

Nearly all sectors are in crisis: obviously cash crop, beef, tobacco, horticulture, cull-cow, dairy heifers, deer and elk, even beekeepers. Another sign at the rally: "Our governments are only good at three things: study, stall, study." Step up to the plate before it's too late.

POLICE ANTI-DRUG LABORATORY

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): Last Thursday, I had the honour of joining my colleague the Honourable Monte Kwinter, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, for the opening of the new replica clandestine drug lab at the Ontario Police College in Aylmer. It is the result of our government's \$230,000 investment to both build and equip the replica drug lab.

The new training facility includes both a realistic marijuana grow operation and a kitchen-based crystal methamphetamine lab. It will be used by instructors at

our world-class police college to help both new recruits and experienced officers learn to identify and safely deal with these extremely dangerous illegal drug operations. This lab will give police officers valuable skills in their fight against the scourge of illegal drugs and the violence that inevitably accompanies it.

This announcement is particularly welcome news in my riding of Perth–Middlesex, where crystal meth is a troubling problem for Perth county. Many of the 17 meth lab busts in the province over the last two years have been in Perth county, due to the hard work of our brave police officers.

I applaud the McGuinty government for intensifying the fight by bringing additional training and resources to bear for our front-line police officers. This is in addition to the crystal meth working group already created by Minister Kwinter in June 2005, which has been tasked with determining the extent of the problem in Ontario and recommending ways the provincial government can assist communities.

Locally, I want to thank all of our many community leaders, including our mayors, who have come together with one common vision: to make Perth county a meth-free zone.

OMERS PENSION FUND

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): I rise in the House today to acknowledge the work that police officers and firefighters do every day. This is a group of people who, day in and day out, selflessly put their lives in danger to protect the public. When a firefighter runs into a burning building while everyone else is running out, they have unique job challenges. When a police officer places his or her life on the line to keep our communities safe, they have unique job challenges.

The McGuinty government is recognizing their selflessness. We are allowing police officers and firefighters to negotiate supplemental benefits to the OMERS pension plan that they belong to. We are doing this to ensure that the people who ensure public safety have a greater chance to retire in good health.

Unfortunately, the changes we are making have been subject to a campaign of misinformation and fearmongering, so I'd like to take this opportunity to set the record straight. These supplemental benefits will be paid for on a 50-50 basis by the people who will benefit from them and the municipalities they work for. No one else in any other bargaining group will have to put in a dime. That concept is enshrined in legislation. It is inaccurate for AMO to suggest they will have to increase municipal taxes, as municipalities and their local bargaining groups will negotiate contract details, as they have always done. Bill 206 does not give pay increases to any group, as these are negotiated items.

Devolving the OMERS plan has been discussed for more than 10 years by every government, and transferring control to those who pay into it is the right thing to do. I'm proud to be part of a government that's willing

to recognize the sacrifices made by public safety workers. I'm also proud to say that we've done this in a fair way to all members.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): I rise to share some thoughts on the progress that has been made on local health integration networks. While reviewing this legislation in committee, I came to appreciate first-hand the essential role LHINs will play in reshaping health care in our province. This government inherited a health care system that had been abused and neglected for 12 years. The Tory hit list included hospitals, nurses, doctors and more. We knew the progress we had to deliver would involve a fundamentally different approach.

As the minister said in committee, LHINs represent a radical change in the way health care is administered in Ontario. We are taking decision-making power away from Queen's Park and putting it in our communities, because that is where health care decisions should be made: on the ground, by the people affected. This is not just a cosmetic change: We want to give LHINs control of more than half of our health care budget—that's over \$21 billion.

LHINs help ensure that local health priorities are addressed in a transparent, accountable public forum. The health care needs of Ontarians are not necessarily the same in Toronto as they are in Thunder Bay. Local communities and local health experts need real control over their local health care priorities, and that's what LHINs are all about.

This kind of radical change is not easy, but it is necessary. LHINs are an essential part of our plan for Ontario: transparent, efficient public health care.

VISITORS

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We have some special guests in the Speaker's gallery, and by Speaker's injunction, I am introducing them. The Learning Partnership and Canadian Association of Principals are sponsoring a multi-day gathering of Canada's outstanding principals. That's 30 principals from across the country, representing every province and territory, obviously including a number of principals from Ontario.

Interjection: Do you know any?

Hon. Mr. Bryant: You will recognize them, I say to the MPPs in the room. I'm not going to recognize all 30 of them, but I am going to recognize one of them. She's the principal for George Jay, name of Janine Roy. She's an outstanding principal and she's my sister.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): That's not a point of order, but nonetheless, we welcome you.

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 (Mr. Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 36, An Act to provide for the integration of the local system for the delivery of health services / *Projet de loi 36, Loi prévoyant l'intégration du système local de prestation des services de santé.*

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Shall the report be received and adopted?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1351 to 1356.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour will please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Duguid, Brad	Pupatello, Sandra
Balkissoon, Bas	Duncan, Dwight	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bartolucci, Rick	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Racco, Mario G.
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Ramal, Khalil
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Brownell, Jim	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Bryant, Michael	Levac, Dave	Smitherman, George
Cansfield, Donna H.	Marsales, Judy	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Colle, Mike	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Cordiano, Joseph	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Craitor, Kim	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wong, Tony C.
Delaney, Bob	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	Oraziotti, David	Zimmer, David
Di Cocco, Caroline	Peters, Steve	
Dombrowsky, Leona	Phillips, Gerry	

The Deputy Speaker: All those who are opposed, please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Barrett, Toby	Martel, Shelley	Sterling, Norman W.
Bisson, Gilles	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tory, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John	Yakabuski, John
Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael	
Marchese, Rosario	Runciman, Robert W.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 55; the nays are 19.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 21, An Act to enact the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2005 and to amend the Electricity Act, 1998, the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and the Conservation Authorities Act / *Projet de loi 21, Loi édictant la Loi de 2005 sur le leadership en matière de conservation de l'énergie et apportant des modifications à la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité, à la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario et à la Loi sur les offices de protection de la nature.*

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated February 15, 2006, of the standing committee on government agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 106(e)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LAND RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT, 2006 LOI DE 2006 SUR LES DROITS ET RESPONSABILITÉS EN MATIÈRE DE BIENS-FONDS

Mr. Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to amend the Expropriations Act and the Human Rights Code with respect to land rights and responsibilities / *Projet de loi 57, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'expropriation et le Code des droits de la personne en ce qui a trait aux droits et responsabilités en matière de biens-fonds.*

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr. Barrett, would you like to make a few comments?

1400

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): This bill does amend the Expropriations Act and the Human Rights Code to enhance the protection that Ontario law gives to owners of land and persons with

respect to their homes. Under the Expropriations Act, an inquiry officer, on inquiry, is required to consider the merits of the objectives of the expropriating authority and to add, as parties to an expropriation inquiry, the owners of all lands affected by the expropriation. The decision of an approving authority is subject to judicial review. The amendments to the Human Rights Code recognize, subject to specific limitations in law, the right to peaceful enjoyment of one's land, the moral responsibility to maintain it, and the right to freedom from search of one's property and home and from seizure of anything from it. Those rights have long been recognized in common law, but are largely missing from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

CONSUMER PROTECTION
AMENDMENT ACT (INTERNET
GAMING ADVERTISING), 2006

LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA
PROTECTION DU CONSOMMATEUR
(PUBLICITÉ DES JEUX SUR INTERNET)

Mr. Leal moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 60, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 to regulate the promotion and advertising of Internet gaming in Ontario / Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur la protection du consommateur afin de réglementer la promotion des jeux sur Internet en Ontario et la publicité qui en est faite.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Leal—a few comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): The purpose of the bill is to prohibit the advertising of website addresses of Internet gaming businesses unless the person doing the advertising believes, in good faith, that the Internet gaming business has been properly authorized to operate and has in effect operated in accordance with Ontario and Canadian law.

VISITORS

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to welcome to the Legislative Assembly page Bourgeois's parents, Bernie and Ann Bourgeois; his sister, Rebecca Bourgeois; and his grandparents, John and Marjorie Carter.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): It's not a point of order, but certainly we welcome you.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I believe we have unanimous consent to move a

motion without notice regarding the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The government House leader has asked for unanimous consent that a motion be introduced without notice regarding the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated Thursday, June 17, 2004, regarding the schedule for committee meetings, the following committee be authorized to meet as follows:

The standing committee on finance and economic affairs on Monday, February 20, and Tuesday, February 21, 2006, at the call of the Chair to no later than 6 p.m.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH
AND INNOVATION

RECHERCHE ET INNOVATION
DANS LES UNIVERSITÉS

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): We know that communities that invest in innovation, invest in the creativity of people and market their ideas most effectively will become home to the most rewarding jobs, to the strongest economies and to the best quality of life. We know that when we can infuse innovation into all aspects of our society, we will see more highly skilled people working in a more robust and productive economy. It means better jobs for more people.

Le premier ministre McGuinty, qui fait aussi fonction de ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation, a indiqué que notre gouvernement élaborera une stratégie à long terme en matière de recherche et d'innovation pour nous aider à réaliser notre objectif d'assurer le succès d'un plus grand nombre de personnes.

The Premier aims to build an Ontario where creativity is sustained, ingrained and developed in every sector and as part of everyone's job description. Our government's goal is to foster a culture of innovation.

One of the cornerstones of innovation is research. Investment in innovative, high-calibre research helps to increase economic productivity and will unlock the potential that is essential to our province's future.

Today, I am pleased to tell this House that we have taken another step to strengthen Ontario's economic advantage and create a culture of innovation in this province. Our government will establish eight new research chairs at six universities. Each of the areas to be researched is critical to the future health and success of our province.

The universities that have been selected to receive endowments and the areas of research are: McMaster University, one chair in education policy and at-risk students; Queen's University, one chair in bioethics; University of Toronto, three chairs—one in post-secondary education policy and measurement, one in health policy and system design, and one in biomarkers in disease management; University of Waterloo, one chair in environmental policy and renewable energy; University of Windsor, one chair in urban policy; and York University, one chair in economics and cross-cultural studies.

With this announcement, we are both increasing the number of leading-edge researchers at our universities and ensuring that the next generation of graduate students has the skills to help find innovative solutions to problems that affect all of us.

In last year's budget, our government provided \$25 million to create new Ontario research chairs at universities across the province. We asked the Council of Ontario Universities to partner with us and oversee this project. The council established a selection panel that developed criteria and made the decisions on which universities would receive the endowments. The panel was chaired by David Strangway, the former president and CEO of the Canada Foundation for Innovation and past president and vice-chancellor of the University of British Columbia. I want to thank Dr. Strangway and his panel for their exceptional work, and I want to thank the Council of Ontario Universities for partnering with us on this important initiative.

The universities that have received the endowments are now seeking out distinguished researchers to fill the chairs. Each of the Ontario research chairs will be held by an outstanding researcher acknowledged by peers as a world leader in their field. The endowment for the research chairs is part of Reaching Higher, the McGuinty government plan for post-secondary education. Through the plan, the government will invest \$6.2 billion more in post-secondary education and training by 2009-10, the single largest infusion of funds in the sector in 40 years.

Part of that plan is to support today's research and to prepare for innovation in the coming years by supporting more students to continue on in their studies as graduate students. These are the people who are the researchers of the future. You will be hearing more about our plans for increasing the number of graduate students in Ontario universities in the future.

Our government is committed to research and innovation that will lead to exciting new products, policies and services, which will in turn create wealth, raise our standard of living and enhance our shared quality of life. That means more opportunities for more Ontarians to build a better life for themselves and their families to reach their full potential.

1410

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Response?

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I applaud the minister's announcement today. I also want to thank the dis-

tinguished panel: Dr. Strangway, Dr. Art May, Judith Maxwell, Harold Shapiro and Harry Swain for the work they've done. There were, I believe, 37 proposals, of which there were eight awards, and six universities participated. Clearly, there's more to be done.

In the minister's remarks he commented on creating a culture of innovation. Innovation, as we all know, creates opportunities for people. Building the human infrastructure in our universities and our economy is critical to our economy and our way of life. I might say for the record that it's important to recognize that creating this culture of innovation started when we were in government by the creation of the first Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation.

For the record, it's important to note some of the contributions made by the academic researchers already today. We started the Cancer Research Institute of Ontario in 2003 with a \$1-billion commitment; the biotech commercialization centre fund; MaRS—that's the Medical and Related Sciences discovery district—was announced by our government in February 2002; the biotech cluster innovation; also the Centre of Excellence for Electricity and Alternative Energy Technology.

Clearly you're building on the work that was started by our government. In that aspect, I contribute a compliment to the work that you're continuing.

Building innovation was started with the Ontario Innovation Trust, which is a \$1-billion fund. The Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund: \$1.25 billion to date.

There is clearly more work to be done, but I think it's important to link prosperity to having the culture of innovation and also incenting a competitive economy.

This comes to mind when you look at the economy today. I think there's more work to be done. Certainly I look to the University of Waterloo. They can work with our Minister of Energy today. There seem to be, in my view, very few plans. They need more help from the research group at the University of Waterloo looking at renewable energies. I would encourage the minister to work with them on that file.

But on many fronts, this competitiveness starts with the government itself. The innovation in health care that's required started with their increasing the tax on health care in this province—over \$2 billion.

I commend building a strong economy, building a strong culture, building a strong quality of life—the quality of life we've come to expect and have seen little of from this government. For today's announcement, I think what it means to me is that students and researchers in our universities will have the resources they need, the encouragement they need, and clearly there's more to be done.

At the same time, in the limited time I have left, I've met with the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, which is Canada's newest university. They are the first university in Canada to have a department directed toward nuclear engineering. In fact, they've just received a Premier's Research Excellence Award in fuel

cell technology. I was pleased to attend and show respect to that academic community for the great work they're doing.

I know that this party, under our leadership of John Tory, will keep a close eye and a close watch on the investments this government makes to keep Ontario competitive and our economy prosperous so we can sustain the quality of life that we all expect and deserve.

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): New Democrats want to acknowledge that the creation of eight new research chairs is a positive development. We also note that there's general support in society and acknowledgement by the business sector that investing in research and innovation is key to our ability as a province and as a country to be able to be competitive with other countries in the world.

When this announcement was made last September, I had a criticism of it that I don't believe has been corrected. The criticism of this announcement was that Ontario academics could not apply for these positions as research chairs. Requests for proposals issued to universities indicated that people coded by the universities for those jobs "must not currently be working in an Ontario university." We believe this is disgraceful. Having noted the criticism, I have not seen Monsieur Bentley deal with that criticism. In fact, Michael Doucet, president of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, said that the restriction could be seen as a backhanded swat at home-grown academics. Rosario Marchese of the NDP says it is a backhanded swat at home-grown academics. It offends all of Ontario academics and researchers. It suggests, and not so subtly, that our own Ontario academics and researchers are neither eligible nor brilliant. I suggest to you that this is an egregious error that the minister is clearly aware of, and he hasn't made any effort to correct it. I point this out because it merits repetition.

I also want to raise another objection, a concern and a worry that has been raised as well by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, which says:

"Ontario academics are also concerned about provincial government funding for basic research, which dropped from 20% to 15% over the last decade. The Premier's enthusiasm to fund commercialized research, while welcome, raises new concerns that funding will be diverted from basic research in the social sciences and humanities—both of which are critical to the economic and social development of our province. There needs to be a comprehensive and balanced approach to provincial research support, including the need to fund both basic and applied research in the sciences, social sciences and humanities."

If there are ministers on the other side who believe that this is not true, they could prove it by making announcements that deal with the concerns that OCUFA and I are raising here today.

The third point I want to raise is that the government says they will be spending \$6.2 billion by 2009-10. I

raise this as a concern, and I raise it each time it comes up, because so far the government has spent little or next to nothing based on the promises they have made and the announcements they made last year. As of today, based on all indicators, we are last when it comes to the contribution of government to our post-secondary institutions for universities and colleges. It speaks badly of this Liberal government unless they address it. We still remain last on all indicators. I urge the ministers who are smiling on the other side or who perhaps don't want to believe that this is the case to do a little research of their own or maybe consult Monsieur Bentley as a way of correcting this problem. I suggest to you it's a big problem.

They're coming near the end of their third year, and very little money has flowed to our universities. We're coming to the end of this regime where they are about to retire and/or be retired, and we will have seen very little or no money come to the university sector. I suggest to you that you'd better deliver some money quick and you'd better deliver some money by the end of your mandate, so people can say, "Finally, after four years the Liberal government produces some kind of financial contribution that makes our universities and colleges competitive across Canada and the world."

Monsieur Bentley, I await for your promises to come through within your mandate. Can't wait. Thank you.

1420

ORAL QUESTIONS

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. I hope you've had an opportunity to read Bill 36, the LHIN legislation. Can you explain to us why you thought it was necessary to significantly expand the power your minister has to close or amalgamate hospitals without any oversight or limitation? You have said, and your minister has said, that this bill is all about expanding power at the local level and giving people more local responsibility. Why does he need expanded power to close hospitals without anyone else involved?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'm pleased to take the question. I know that the Minister of Health is eager to get in on this as well.

Interjections.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: He'll bat cleanup.

I do want to say that we are eager to move forward with this legislation. It's based on the premise that the most important place in which we can make those decisions connected to health care in the community is at the community level. We just don't believe we can micromanage all those things that go into delivering good-quality health care from downtown Toronto, here at Queen's Park.

We have 154 hospitals, 581 long-term-care homes, 42 community care access centres, 37 public health units, 55 community health centres, 16 district health councils and so on and so forth. There are over 1,200 health organizations that aren't talking to each other. We're changing that. We're bringing them together and asking people in the community to make those decisions.

Mr. Tory: You are absolutely not making that decision the responsibility of local people. In fact, what you have done is taken a situation where, since 1999, the minister has only had the power to issue orders to close or amalgamate hospitals that had previously been given a direction, and you are now, in sections 28 and 29 of this bill, allowing the minister to close hospitals without a hearing, without cabinet approval, with no consultation except with his hand-picked people on these LHINs, whom he appointed. So you are in fact centralizing the responsibility and giving the power to close those hospitals to the minister where he doesn't have that today. So I ask you, why have you done this? Why have you in fact centralized that power with the minister and removed the public interest test that existed before? Why have you done that?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Just so we can be clear on this and so Ontarians have the benefit of a clear contrast, under their watch, the previous Conservative government cut \$557 million from hospitals over two years and closed 28 hospitals. What this Minister of Health has done for the first time ever is put in place multi-year funding to ensure our hospitals are fully aware of the strength of their ongoing existence and of our continuing commitment to them.

LHINs are all about acknowledging that we have every confidence in the people of Ontario to assist when it comes to making important decisions that will improve the quality of care delivered by them, to them in their communities.

Mr. Tory: If you were giving the power to local people to make those decisions and if you weren't intending to close any hospitals or amalgamate them, why would you give this minister or any minister under this bill the power to close or amalgamate hospitals, a power that minister has not had since 1999? Why would you do that?

Furthermore, why would you give your own cabinet the power to remove and shut down services in hospitals in secret, without any consultation with anybody whatsoever, under this bill? If you've read it, that is exactly what this bill does. Check it out: Sections 28, 29 and 33 give your minister the power to close hospitals and give your cabinet the power to remove services from hospitals without consultation and without hearing. Why do you feel it necessary to do that if you really believe local people should be making these decisions?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'd like to point out to the honourable member, which has been well said by my leader, the Premier, that there are parties in this Legislature that

have a record of closing hospitals willy-nilly, and you're leading the party that has been principally associated with it.

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The honourable member who was the longest-serving Minister of Health in the previous government wants to talk now about her record, but the record is very, very clear: In communities across the province stand relics of buildings that once stood as important service providers. That is their legacy; it is not ours. Our commitment to hospitals has been clear. Multi-year funding has been established.

With respect to the powers that were in the Public Hospitals Act, which have been extrapolated into this bill, due process has been added and public interest concerns remain paramount. What we seek to do in this piece of legislation is affirm our important accountability to the people of Ontario for the stewardship of the health care system and delegate significant powers to the people in local communities, who are better able to exercise those important decisions about what priorities must be supported in a circumstance where resources will always be more scarce—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. New question?

Mr. Tory: You make all the decisions under this bill, and you know it. You just have to consult them on the people you appointed.

My question is to the Minister of Health. Could you please explain why, in the period of the fall of 2005, without even knowing what you've blown since then, you spent more than \$2 million in health tax money on furniture and design alone for the swanky offices your LHIN bureaucracy is going to occupy? Can you tell us why you couldn't have used some of the old furniture you had when you closed down the district health councils at a cost of more than \$100 million and used this \$2 million instead to hire dozens of nurses that you could have hired, as the taxpayers would expect?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: In part measure, I would have expected the honourable member to stand in his place and repeat one more time what he has fondly said so often, that this is just another layer of bureaucracy. Now it's very clear to people across the province that, in a sensible fashion for once, we've brought together the powers and the responsibility for policy, planning and decision-making and put them under one roof. We've said that those people from local communities who will make those decisions will make them in full public eye, at public meetings open to citizens and patients of Ontario.

With respect to the very excellent suggestion that the honourable member makes, that as we equip new offices to do their work we take advantage of existing furniture and existing contracts associated with things like fax machines, printers and copiers, we have done exactly that. We have sought to make sure that any expenditure and asset of district health councils was put to work as we brought these new offices to life and these new responsibilities and opportunities for patients to life.

Mr. Tory: With respect, what complete rubbish. If you weren't hiring a lot more people, then why do you need to spend \$2 million more on new furniture and new design for these offices—and that's just in the first few months.

Still under your LHIN bill, why, I ask the minister, can you, by ministerial order, transfer property to a hospital which donors have given to another hospital—no hearing, no cabinet oversight and no involvement by the courts, as is the case in other provinces. You could just decide that an MRI machine given by Mrs. Smith to the hospital in Belleville be transferred to London—no hearing, no oversight by anybody. You could decide \$1 million given to a hospital in London could be transferred to Toronto. People want to support their hospitals locally and make sure the money stays there. Why do you want, need and insist on putting in this bill the power to transfer those donations, at will, any time you want, with no supervision and no oversight? Why do you want to do that?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The answer to the honourable member, if he would apply a practical test, is a very simple one: If a decision was made at a point in time in the future where two services currently operating came together as one, what would be the reasonable sense in leaving behind a piece of equipment that no longer had an operational role? This is the suggestion that the honourable member makes.

There will be circumstances, and there have been circumstances, in the Ontario health care system where there has been an evolution in the roles of hospitals and the services provided. I know this rather well as the person who had the privilege of running the Staying Alive campaign at the Wellesley Hospital. We sought and we fought to keep that hospital alive, but when that was no longer the case, the taxpayers of Ontario were asked again to pay for assets that they had already played a role in paying for. They double-paid for assets that were important in terms of being able to provide the services that St. Michael's Hospital had the obligation to provide. This is a mechanism that takes advantage of the considerable opportunities that are there to make sure that the donations made in good heart by the people of Ontario can continue to serve the patients of Ontario.

Mr. Tory: If you know what you know about raising money—and you know that I know the same about raising money for hospitals—then why wouldn't you have put in this section either a requirement that maybe the poor old donor who gave the money could be consulted as to what happens with the property, or a requirement, as is the case in other provinces, that it go to court for some kind of court approval. You know, as I do, that people are going to stop giving if they think any Minister of Health—starting with you, because you're the one who's giving yourself this power—can simply take their donation and transfer it somewhere else, perhaps even out of their local community. Why, if you have raised this money before, as I know you have and as I have, would you not take that into account and put

some safeguards in here that will allow donors to continue to give with the confidence that the money will stay where they gave it?

1430

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The very safeguard that the honourable member asks for is there, and it's a prudent one. He adds to his hyperbole and speculation by suggesting that this asset could be transferred to some other part of the province—rather inconsistent with the very principle of local health integration networks in the first place.

The key principle is well established in law; it's there. It says that any transfer of the assets that the honourable member speaks about must be done in a circumstance that is clear, and this circumstance goes something like this: The charitable purpose of the donation must be maintained. If Mrs. Jones gives money to an MRI for service and activity in her local community, I stand before you and I give this assurance, and it is clear: This service will continue to be the one that Mrs. Jones offered the dollars for in the very first place.

OMERS PENSION FUND

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier and it concerns a very specific promise the Premier made in writing in order to avoid a potential province-wide work stoppage.

Premier, this is a letter that you sent to the head of the OMERS pension plan. In it, you promised a mechanism to settle pension disputes modelled on the teachers' pension plan. It would have meant that if workers and employers under the OMERS pension plan are deadlocked on a pension issue, that issue would go to arbitration to be decided. But when you introduced your most recent amendments to the OMERS pension legislation, your promise wasn't there. Instead, you substituted a dispute settlement mechanism that would be grossly unfair to the lowest-paid CUPE workers in the province.

I'm asking you, Premier, will you keep the promise that you made on a dispute settlement mechanism with respect to OMERS, or will you be responsible for a province-wide work stoppage?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'm more than happy to take the question. Just so the leader of the NDP is clear, the legislation specifically provides that if employers and employees cannot come to an agreement in terms of a two-thirds majority with respect to a change to the benefits, then the board can, by way of a 50%-plus-one majority, send it to mediation. If that mediator's report comes back and it is not accepted by the board, again by a two-thirds majority, they can again, by way of a 50%-plus-one majority, refer that to arbitration. When that comes back, it is binding.

Just so we're very clear about what we are talking about, at the end of the day, this is all about a mediation and binding arbitration process that can be instigated by a 50%-plus-one majority, and we believe that to be fair.

Mr. Hampton: Just to be clear, that is not what you promised, Premier. You promised a very simple dispute settlement mechanism modelled on the teachers' pension plan, and what you've provided in the legislation is so complex and so riddled with delay that it is grossly unfair to some of the lowest-paid CUPE workers in the province.

You thought it was a good idea then. In fact, you thought it was such a good idea that you put it as a promise in writing. All the people who are involved in this dispute are asking you to do now is to keep the very promise that you, Dalton McGuinty, made. You can avoid the controversy, you can avoid the potential province-wide work stoppage simply by keeping the specific promise that you made. Will you do that, Premier—simply keep the promise that you made?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: We are pleased to be keeping our promise.

The leader of the NDP is saying that, as we might expect, if anything untoward should unfold, if there should be an illegal strike in the province of Ontario, then that could be no person's responsibility other than my own. I see it a little bit differently and I'll tell you why, and maybe my friends will agree. We have followed and respected the process throughout. We ran on this commitment; we are now delivering on this commitment. We introduced a bill in this Legislature. We had two rounds of committee hearings; I think those lasted some 11 days. We've entertained all kinds of amendments, friendly and otherwise. I think we've adopted three that were put forward by the NDP—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Answer.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: What we propose to do now is to move ahead for third reading. Someone in the province is saying, "Notwithstanding the fact that you have respected the process and respected opposition to this, if you should continue to honour that process and move ahead in third reading, then I will break the law."

We will do what is right. We will always honour the process and we will respect our opposition.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, people are trying to be quite reasonable in this process. Mr. Tory has suggested to you that you come to the table. Sid Ryan and CUPE have suggested to you that there is a way out of this. All they are asking is that you do what you promised in writing in this letter. But you have decided to draw a line in the sand. What is your line in the sand? You positively refuse to do what you promised, even if it should result in a province-wide work stoppage.

I say to you again, Premier, you made the promise. When you start messing around with people's pension plans, you start messing around with their retirement security. It's a very serious issue.

The Deputy Speaker: Question.

Mr. Hampton: You can find a resolution to this merely by keeping your promise. Will you keep the promise that Dalton McGuinty made and bring in a simplified dispute—

The Deputy Speaker: The question has been asked. Premier.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I know there are many people who are concerned about this bill, and I just want them to have a good understanding of what in fact it is all about. Again, it provides for, effectively, a 50%-plus-one majority required if there is a dispute to send something to mediation and, ultimately, to binding arbitration. That's what this does. Beyond that, I want to be clear to Ontarians that we have, throughout this matter, respected the process: We introduced a bill in this Legislature, had that bill debated in this Legislature, two rounds of committee hearings, we're going to bring the bill back, and there will be an opportunity for third reading debate. I think it is unreasonable and objectionable for someone to say, "Notwithstanding the fact that you have throughout respected the process, should you proceed as a duly elected government to continue to follow due process, I will encourage people to break the law." I just think that's wrong. I think we have an obligation to move ahead, given everything that we have undertaken and by respecting the process, and we will continue to respect our—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. New question. Leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: To the Premier: You promised a specific dispute settlement process for pensions. What you promised is what teachers have. It is also what firefighters would have under this bill; it is also what police would have under this bill. But the lowest-paid CUPE workers, many of them women working as caretakers in our schools, you will deny them the same dispute settlement mechanism. If it's good for teachers, if it's good for firefighters, if it's good for police, tell me, Premier, why isn't it good enough for those lower-paid workers, especially when you promised it?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I can understand that 50% plus one is not something the NDP would support, but I think for the overwhelming majority of Ontarians 50% plus one makes eminently good sense. Again I say to the leader of the NDP, and I say to Ontarians especially, that we have throughout this process respected the process itself by ensuring that people had ample opportunity to make presentations. We've had two days of debate in the House so far; 11 days of committee debate; we received 141 submissions; we heard from 54 presenters. A number of amendments were introduced and, as I say, among those that we adopted were three that were moved by the NDP.

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We have heard from many, we have worked hard to improve the quality of this bill, and, of course, we look forward to moving on.

Mr. Hampton: Do you know what, Premier? Most of those submissions were from lower-paid workers, telling your government how unfair your OMERS amendments are going to be to those lowest-paid workers in the province.

I say to you again, Premier: If a dispute settlement mechanism of 50%-50% is good enough to send it to arbitration for teachers and it's good enough to send it to arbitration for police officers and good enough to send it to arbitration for firefighters, why do women who work

as caretakers in our schools have to have a two-thirds majority in order to have it sent to a dispute settlement mechanism under Dalton McGuinty's legislation?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I'll explain it again for the benefit of the leader of the NDP. What the legislation effectively provides—and I'll be more than delighted to have the ministry provide him with a briefing on this. It specifically provides that, in the event that they cannot get the two-thirds majority for a change to the plan, what they can do is ask for a mediation. All that is required in that regard is 50% plus one. Once the report is received, all they need, again, is 50% plus one to move it on to binding arbitration.

So what we're talking about, again, is a 50%-plus-one majority that is required to make changes to the plan. I think that is fair. The leader of the NDP says he believes it is not fair. To that end, he's prepared, I gather, to support the unfortunate—hopefully, an eventuality that can be avoided: an illegal strike. I just don't think that that would be the responsible thing to do.

Mr. Hampton: Here is the process in your legislation. If those low-paid workers who are caretakers at a school that my son or daughter goes to want to improve their pension plan, they have to get a two-thirds majority. If they don't get a two-thirds majority, they need to get 50% plus one; in other words, they need one of the employers to vote with them. How often do you think that's going to happen? Even when they get that, if it gets to mediation, it requires a further two-thirds majority to accept the mediator's report—another roadblock. If the mediator's report is turned down because they can't get a two-thirds majority, it requires 50% plus one to go to arbitration. They need another employer to vote with them.

Premier, that isn't a dispute settlement mechanism; that's a roadblock, and it's an unfair roadblock to the lowest-paid workers in this province.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Just so all members are aware, what municipalities—AMO in particular, of course—were asking for was that, in order to make changes, there be 100% support. What CUPE and some others were asking for was that all you'd need was 50%. So we have come up with 50% plus one, which we think is very fair in the circumstances. We think that enables the employers and employees to have a good foundation on which to build the kind of support that is necessary in order to bring about change. It is hardly an insurmountable obstacle over which they must jump. We're talking about 50% plus one.

Again I say to my friend opposite: We have worked long and hard on this bill, we have received many amendments, we have adopted many amendments, and we look forward to moving ahead.

The Deputy Speaker: New question.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Premier. Premier, the province is on the brink of an illegal strike that we all oppose and only you can prevent, simply by agreeing to facilitate a resolution to Bill 206. Why are you prepared to subject thousands of students and their parents across this province to disruption in the

classroom? You promised peace and stability in the classroom, and now it's in your hands to ensure that peace and stability. Yet across this province students will be prevented from studying. Why will you not agree to do your part to facilitate a resolution to this issue and ensure continuation of study in the classrooms across this province?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I can understand why Ontarians are confused when it comes to the position of the Conservative Party on this particular issue. Of late, we hear that they have some serious objections to the bill, but a while back, I received a letter from John O'Toole, who said, "The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association supports an autonomous governance structure that includes the ability to negotiate local supplemental plans for pension benefits. I would like to express my support for this request and commend it to your immediate attention." As well, Ernie Hardeman said recently, "I am pleased to hear that the government has decided to go with a two-thirds vote on major decisions." So Ontarians are justifiably confused about where the Conservative Party is coming from on this issue, and it would be good to know where they're coming from.

Mr. Klees: I'd like to know at what point, since the Premier became the Premier, he stopped being concerned about students and about parents and about individuals.

I have a letter here from the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board regarding this issue. It reads as follows: "In the event of a walkout by our CUPE employees, the usual level of service and support in the schools will be impacted... There will be no one in the schools to provide personal care and hygiene for special needs students."

Premier, I would just like you to simply answer this question: Why are you prepared to allow a disruption of thousands of special-needs students across this province, when it is in your hands to facilitate a resolution that would prevent that disruption? Why have you stopped caring about special-needs students and their parents in the schools of our province?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I appreciate the caring and concern being expressed by the member opposite but, you know, I wish he would have cared when, during the Tory regime, Ontario students lost 24-million school days. On top of that, 430,000 high school students were deprived of an entire year of extracurricular activities under the Tory watch. Again, not only did I receive a letter of support from John O'Toole in connection with this bill, but I also received letters of support from Ernie Hardeman, Ted Arnott, Joe Tascona and Elizabeth Witmer. So what I'm prepared to do is provide copies of those letters to the leader of the official opposition so that he might have a fulsome discussion at their next caucus meeting.

MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Premier. The city of Toronto again this year is facing a massive budget deficit pegged at some

\$414 million. In the last election, you and your party campaigned on a platform to put Toronto on a sound fiscal footing; and you promised resources, money and a new deal. When will you personally make good on the \$250 million that the city of Toronto council says this province owes that city?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): To the Minister of Finance. 1450

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I'm pleased to respond to the question. Toronto is indeed not only the capital of Ontario but the capital of Canada in so many ways. I'm proud of our government's record, and I'd like to review some of the achievements this government has made for Toronto since we came to office.

On the question of the gas tax and TTC funding: In 2005, we flowed \$217 million, \$80 million more than the previous government provided in 2003. The TTC now receives more annual funding from senior levels of government than ever before. We are contributing to the city's needs on an ongoing basis: funding to the city increasing through the provincial gas tax funding and the federal-provincial-city five-year TTC capital funding agreement.

The Canada-Ontario affordable housing program allocated \$116 million to the city of Toronto. Under the strong communities rent supplement program, Toronto receives over \$20 million per year; the strong communities housing allowance program, \$3.6 million.

We are committed to working with Toronto in a responsible and prudent fashion and will continue to—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Prue: Mr. Minister, you and your government promised a new deal, but in fact all Toronto is getting is the same raw deal. Toronto is short \$59 million—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Stop the clock for a second.

Order, please. Let's get the question in. The member for Beaches—East York.

Mr. Prue: Toronto is short \$59 million this year for the cost of disability and drug benefit plans—\$59 million that you should be paying. The TTC is short \$180 million over the funding that they received a decade ago—\$180 million less. This is not sustainable for the city. It is not sustainable at all.

In opposition, the Premier promised “to put the city of Toronto on a sustainable footing so it can properly assume its responsibilities.”

The Deputy Speaker: Question.

Mr. Prue: Toronto needs a long-term plan, and that starts with \$250 million now. Will you give it?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: No government and no Premier in the history of this province has done as much for the city of Toronto as this government and Premier Dalton McGuinty.

This year alone, I say to the member opposite, \$130 million in gas tax funding—the first time ever. The City

of Toronto Act, which for the first time treats the city of Toronto as a government of an equal basis, as a government that deserves our respect and support and gives them the tools they need to manage many of the challenges they face.

We remain committed to working with Toronto, indeed with all municipalities, to deal with the difficult decisions resultant from the downloading of the Conservative government. But let me be clear—

The Deputy Speaker: Answer.

Hon. Mr. Duncan:—municipal governments at all levels must take responsibility for their budgets. They must be prudent, as we must be prudent. They must work to eliminate their deficit, as we are working to eliminate our deficit. Working together, we will help Toronto. We'll make this—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

OMERS PENSION FUND

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. There have been a number of criticisms tossed about regarding the timing of Bill 206 and the amount of consultation that was involved. I find this somewhat puzzling. OMERS devolution has been talked about for a decade; that is, there have been years and years of discussion on this issue. Back in 2002, the OMERS board provided their recommendations on this issue, and finally there is a government at Queen's Park that has the courage to do something about it. I'm proud to be part of this government.

We knew it would be a difficult challenge, but we didn't back away. Unlike the previous government, which rammed legislation through, often without any committee hearings, I know first-hand that we've taken the time to listen—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Question.

Ms. Matthews:—to all sides of this debate.

Minister, could you please elaborate on some of the work that was done in committee and the extent to which we listened to all sides of this issue?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'd like to thank the member for the question. She's quite correct: OMERS devolution has been talked about for at least 10 years by numerous governments.

We had 11 days of hearings. As a matter of fact this bill, in an unprecedented or very infrequent way, was referred to committee after first reading. It was referred again after second reading. There were something like 74 submissions made at the first hearings and 67 at the second hearings. There were a total of 86 motions presented to change the bill after we had listened to the various stakeholders. As a matter of fact, a number of NDP amendments were accepted as well.

It's kind of interesting to note that the official opposition only made two amendments to the bill at that

point in time. As a matter of fact, two later amendments were withdrawn by them. We've had enough consultation on this bill; the stakeholders have spoken. It's time to act and give governance back to those individuals who pay into the system: the employers and the employees.

Ms. Matthews: I appreciate hearing about the work that was done at committee. But I have to say that I've been pretty disappointed by the official opposition's engagement on this bill. They can't seem to decide where they stand. First, John Tory wants it withdrawn, then he wants further study and now he has asked for a joint meeting. I ask him, where was your party during committee? With all the debate around this issue, they managed to suggest a whopping two amendments during the first round and another two during the second round, both of which were withdrawn; zero amendments on the second round of clause-by-clause. Interestingly, they seem to be experts on that issue now and have no shortage of advice to offer us.

The Deputy Speaker: Question?

Ms. Matthews: Minister, there are many who are engaging in fearmongering. Certain stakeholders have embarked upon a campaign designed to scare OMERS members who rely on this pension. As a result of this campaign—

The Deputy Speaker: I think the question has been asked. Member for London North Centre, please take your seat. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Let me first of all thank the member for the supplementary question. Let me be absolutely, categorically clear that under this bill no pensions are affected; no pensioner loses anything with respect to this bill. As a matter of fact, for the first time the pensioners are given something they never had before: They have a vote on both the administration board and a vote on the sponsors board.

But this government has done so much more for low-income workers of this province: It has abolished the 60-hour workweek, it has raised the minimum wage for the first time over the last three years and it has increased the number of occupational health and safety officers by nearly double the number that were there when we first took office. The supplemental plan that will be there for our emergency providers will be paid for by those emergency providers and their employees once it's negotiated at the local level.

MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. You attended a meeting at your place of business, the Chalmers Group, on April 29, 2005, which by all appearances was contrary to the Members' Integrity Act. Given that you know that meetings with your trustee should be reported immediately, according to the act, why did you wait until June 10 to finally report to the commissioner that you may have broken the law, and why did you do this only after being contacted by a reporter?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): I was not aware of the requirement that I needed to report this issue in the beginning. Since then, I have become aware of that and have said that I accept the recommendation of the Integrity Commissioner in its entirety. I have acted very promptly to work with the Integrity Commissioner to change my trustee and have made all the changes he requested.

1500

Mr. Wilson: In the Integrity Commissioner's report, you stated that your schedule was too busy to get a brief moment to speak with your wife because "I get home late." Minister, we now have your schedule, and you're definitely not the busiest person in the world. In fact, for a cabinet minister, you have a remarkably empty schedule. From January 1, 2005, to April 30, 2005, you had 31 days, excluding Sundays, with one or no appointments, and on 52 other days—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Stop the clock. I would like to hear the question, please. The member for Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Wilson: From January 1 to April 30, you had 31 days, excluding Sundays, with one or no appointments, and on 52 other days, you finished work by 6 p.m. Given that you clearly had plenty of time, would you now like to revise the story you gave the commissioner as to why you had to meet at your place of business?

Hon. Mr. Takhar: Let me say this: This is my ministerial schedule. It basically takes into account all the appointments that I perform on behalf of the ministry. Other than that, I perform work on behalf of the constituency, and in addition to that, I have a lot of other work that I perform on behalf of the ethnic community as well. On average, I have nearly six to seven appointments that I keep, even on Saturdays and Sundays. I leave at maybe 8 o'clock and come back at 11 o'clock. I have a busier schedule than you will ever have.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): My question is to the Minister of Health: When you appeared before the committee that was dealing with Bill 36, the local health integration networks act, you said to the committee, "The constitutional rights of aboriginal people and our government-to-government relationship must be recognized." First Nations community leaders took you at your word. They worked hard in order to bring forward amendments that my colleague, Shelley Martel, brought to the committee. Among them was a non-derogation clause that would recognize your responsibility under the act and their right. Why did you break your promise to First Nations leaders and not accept those amendments?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Well, here we go again. The honourable member's reputation with respect to advancing

information on this subject has already been besmirched, in my view. I want to say very directly that I have, in a very regular series of meetings with the regional chief and grand chiefs, expressed the view that I would work with them to establish a better capacity for the government of Ontario and First Nations people to work together, both at the highest levels influencing the ministry, and at the local levels, at the LHIN level. This has been done in the legislation, very specifically, on the non-derogation clause. They asked me about it at the very last meeting that we had. I told them that I would review it with lawyers. Upon seeking advice of government lawyers, I was told that it, in fact, would be inappropriate, unconstitutional. I made no such commitment to First Nations communities. I work very closely with Regional Chief Angus Toulouse. The commitments that I made to him have been fulfilled. Accordingly, I would ask the honourable member to be a little bit more cautious in the language that he appropriates towards me.

Mr. Bisson: This is not me saying this, Minister; this is Angus Toulouse, the very person you talk about. They're saying—not only Angus Toulouse, but other chiefs across this province—that you did not maintain your word. If anything has been besmirched, quite frankly, it's what's happened with what they've had to say to you.

Listen, First Nations have heard it for years: 130 years of being ignored and not being taken seriously by provincial and federal governments. You know because you've been with me, and you know very well the conditions of the communities across Ontario when it comes to health services.

I ask you again, why did you break your word to Angus Toulouse and others, and not put a non-derogation clause within the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: It's my understanding that, at legislative committee, the health critic for the NDP had the opportunity to ask legislative counsel why the non-derogation clause was viewed as inappropriate. I am not a lawyer and, from time to time, I seek the advice and accept the advice that is offered by lawyers. They offered that view to Ms. Martel.

I repeat again, in no meeting with Angus Toulouse did I commit to a non-derogation clause, but rather committed to a representative, I believe from Treaty 3, but I'm going by memory here, that I would take that look at it to see if it was appropriate. I did that and I was told that it was not appropriate. Ms. Martel, your seat-mate, voted in favour of an amendment, the community engagement section amendment, that included creating aboriginal planning bodies at the community level with LHINs and with a higher First Nations health council that would have the capacity to work alongside the government—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Answer.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: —on the stewardship of health care. These are the commitments that I made repeatedly to First Nations leadership in the very regular series of meetings that I asked them to engage in with

me, and we're meeting again in the next week or two because we're very concerned about moving, not just in a process fashion, but in a content fashion, to address the underlying health circumstances of our First Nations.

The Deputy Speaker: New question. The member for Brant.

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. My constituents are concerned, and rightly so, about the information they're receiving about Bill 36, also known as the LHINs bill.

I know that they understand and support that changes and improvements are needed in our health care system, but they have some questions that I'd like to pass on to you. Some of my constituents have been told they will have to travel great lengths, and if not, then from one side of a LHIN to another to receive routine treatment. This makes no sense to me, and I understand that's not the case, but it does cause them concern.

They also want to know whether local community voices will be respected when decisions are made regarding how their health care is provided.

Minister, will you address those concerns specifically and tell me and my constituents the role that LHINs will play in planning their local health care?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I've been clear in saying that I think there has been a deliberate and sustained misinformation campaign designed to create a fearful circumstance for people about the consolidation of health care in a few centres.

We fundamentally believe that the best health care is the health care you find as close to home as possible. The evidence of that is in the hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars of community-based investments we've made across Ontario in the smallest communities. We've been pursuing an aggressive agenda of moving these services out to communities. But we cannot pretend that there will not be circumstances, as health care evolves, where there will not be specialized services that are best delivered in a centre-of-excellence model where technology, as an example, or the expertise of health professionals dictates that you can't do this on every street corner. But the responsibility for these decisions is being vested in people.

Earlier today, Mr. John Tory said these are our hand-picked people and we shouldn't respect them. But we've reached out to people like Tony Fell in your local community, Mr. Speaker. We've appointed Carolyn King, and we have proposed Vince Buccini and other local representatives because we believe fundamentally that health care decisions should be made locally by people who have on their—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Levac: Minister, I deeply appreciate the fact that it is going to be indeed a local concern, because there are concerns with some of the LHINs that the local voice is not going to be heard. It's obvious from today's answer that we're going to get that.

I've heard that some people really see Bill 36 as a means to extend home-care-style competitive bidding

systems to the rest of the health care system, something we both know is not acceptable. Information being disseminated suggests that the government will move to promote greater contracting out of clinical services after legislation passes; in other words, privatizing our health care system through stealth and using LHINs to do so.

Minister, can you address these claims and make sure we have a clear understanding that that's not the case?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: Here in the province of Ontario we have a government that fundamentally believes in a public health care system. Entrenched in the preamble of the legislation is our commitment to the Canada Health Act and to our Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, which rules out two-tier medicine in our province. We stood at the borders and prevented Lifeline from coming. We worked to repatriate MRIs. We sent a strong message to Copeman that his proposal for private clinics in Ontario is a no go.

The circumstances are clear: There are those who are pretending their way through this that we should in no way ever ask about a health care service in the context of the cost to deliver it. We believe fundamentally that there are opportunities for health care providers to be challenged to provide good-quality services with a consideration of cost.

The NDP offered an amendment yesterday that basically said that no health care decision can ever be made with a view to its relative cost. The circumstance we would be forced to tolerate, then, is the one we inherited, where hospitals in Ontario, the same health care system, offer a price range from \$450 to more than \$2,000 an eye for cataract surgery—the same service. That is the status quo that the NDP wishes to support.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. I want to ask her about some very vulnerable people who are living in Rideau Regional Centre, and some other people who are living at Huronia Regional Centre and are being transferred out of the homes they've lived in for over 40 years because this government wants to empty those particular residences.

On January 26, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice said that the families of those residents had to consent to the movement of these individuals. The court also declared that any disagreement between a family and the ministry would have to be resolved by the court. So no longer can the minister unilaterally transfer these people out; she has to have the approval of the court.

Madam Minister, have you changed the procedure and the administration procedure to take into account the ramifications of this court's decisions?

1510

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I'm very happy to be asked this question

because, as you know, many people—families and individuals—and the staff who work at these centres have been waiting to see how the courts would rule in this challenge. I was very pleased with what the judges had to say in their ruling; that is, a significant acknowledgement about the role that the staff of community and social services have played in the planning and development of that move into the community.

In specific answer to the member opposite's question, he needs to be aware, as do all of the members of this House, that never in the history of anyone moving from those facilities, including the 1,000 who were moved under that member's government, have any of them been moved without family consent when families are involved with those individuals.

Mr. Sterling: First of all, those people who were moved early on didn't have nearly the vulnerability nor the multiple challenges that the ones have who are left. I am told now by the families of these residents that your ministry is using very high-pressure tactics to move their loved ones out of these residences.

Minister, why will you not provide these families with outside professional expert assessments of each individual that will assure the families that the new homes for these highly challenged people will meet their needs? And will you reimburse the family that challenges your decision with their legal and expert assessment costs so that they can look out for their loved ones?

Hon. Ms. Pupatello: I think it's important to repeat that never in the history of any individual living in our facilities, where a family has actually been involved with that individual, have they ever been moved without consent. For anyone to suggest that that has not been the case is simply not true.

Let me say as well that our jurisdiction stands as a leader of moving people into the community, with plans that, bar none—and even the acknowledgement in the court decision by this judge's panel suggested a tremendous effort on the part of our planners; the best, in my opinion, in this nation. We have the very best planners at work with the 1,000 who are still in our institutions and are moving. What I would dearly love to have is the opportunity to sit with this member to talk about the number of success stories, not only in the move since we became the government, but the success stories of those who that member opposite was involved with in moving them into the community, because they are legion.

SALE OF FOREST LAND

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Premier, under your government, 485,000 acres of prime forest land in northwestern Ontario was recently sold off to an American investment company for a mere \$113 per acre. To put this in perspective, 485,000 acres of prime forest land is more than three times the area of the city of Toronto. Thousands of jobs in northwestern Ontario depend upon having access to timber that would come from that forest land.

Can you tell us, Premier, why you allowed half a million acres of prime forest land in northwestern Ontario to be sold off to an American company that doesn't even operate a sawmill, a paper mill, a pulp mill, any kind of mill in northwestern Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): To the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I'd like to point out to the member, and certainly to the members of this House, that this land historically has always been in private hands. It was under the ownership, as of late, of Abitibi paper, and they put it up for sale. They had an open bid process. The government was part of that, and the government didn't succeed in that.

Since we lost that opportunity, I have met with the owners of the company. I'm sure that in the supplementary I would have the opportunity to maybe inform the member more fully as to how that land is going to be managed.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, here's the situation: Thousands of forest sector workers in northwestern Ontario have lost their jobs. Why? Because of the high cost of wood fibre and the high cost of electricity. Now you allow half a million acres of prime forest land to be sold off to an American company that will be quite content to allow this timber to be exported to American mills in Minnesota and Wisconsin, to supply jobs there.

Abitibi put this timberland up for sale in April of last year. All it would have taken was a phone call from you or the Minister of Natural Resources to Abitibi, telling them that Ontario wants this forest land, and Abitibi would have come to the table and sold it to you for a mere \$113 an acre.

Tell us, why was your government asleep at the switch? Why are you now allowing timber to be exported to mills in Michigan and Wisconsin while forest workers in northwestern Ontario are losing their jobs?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I have to say to the member to just hold his horses. No timber is going across the border to the United States. I have met with the owners of the land, and they have described how they are setting up a local management operation for this in Thunder Bay.

The history of this company—and by the way, as we checked with environmental groups in the United States, they have a very good record of sustainable development of their forest lands there. They generate their revenue by selling to the most local forest operations in the vicinity of the land, and that's what they're continuing to do. They have assured me that they're going to honour all the contracts that are existing today with that land that feeds the existing mills. So that wood is going to go to the local mills.

EARTHQUAKE IN SOUTH ASIA

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship

and Immigration. I understand you recently returned from a visit to the earthquake-affected region of Pakistan. All Ontarians have followed the tragedy that happened there and have consistently done their part to help through fundraising and donation of goods.

As you know, my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh is an increasingly multicultural one, with the Pakistani population being one of the fastest-growing in the city of Cornwall. All of my constituents, but particularly those of the Pakistani community with family and friends in northern Pakistan, are concerned as survivors face a harsh winter. We all want to ensure that these victims are not forgotten, despite their geographic separation from us.

Minister, can you tell us what we have done for Pakistan, and how Ontario's support is actually helping on the ground?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I thank the member from Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh for his deep concern about the victims of the South Asian earthquake. In fact, that deep concern goes from Cornwall to Windsor to Mississauga, where many Canadians of South Asian origin have relatives who are part of the, sad to say, 86,000 victims who lost their life as a result of the earthquake. There are still three million people living in tents. Every school in the Kashmir area has been destroyed, every hospital, every clinic. So the people and the NGOs that we're supporting there, like the Canadian Red Cross, are very appreciative of the fact that Ontario has been generous in supporting their relief efforts in Pakistan.

Mr. Brownell: I know Ontarians take great pride in their role in relief efforts; they have for many, many years. In October, I attended a Pakistani relief fundraiser in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh that was organized by the leaders of the Pakistani community. The event was certainly a success, and after that event, I reported here in the House that over 200 people were in attendance and close to \$30,000 was raised.

The generous people of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh are not alone. Many other Ontarians generously donated both their efforts and finances to help those affected by the Pakistani earthquake. Minister, can you tell us a little more about how the funding will be allocated and how Ontarians can continue—I believe that's important—to support those in Pakistan?

1520

Hon. Mr. Colle: As you may know, I travelled to the earthquake area with the former chief of police of the city of Toronto, who's now the Commissioner of Emergency Management for the province of Ontario: Julian Fantino. He and I were very well received, and there was deep appreciation for the generosity that Canadians have shown for the earthquake victims. The message they gave to Commissioner Fantino and myself was to come back to Ontario and say thank you to the government of Ontario; to the government of Canada; to the DART members, who did excellent work; to NGOs like the Canadian Relief Foundation from Brantford, Ontario; and

to the IDRA here in Mississauga for all their generosity. They are so deeply thankful that there is this caring overseas, and they asked me to pass on the message to please keep on thinking of them in their prayers, their hopes and our generosity, as they still need help in the earthquake area.

PETITIONS

HIGHWAY 26

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

“Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 was approved by MPP Jim Wilson and the previous PC government in 2000; and

“Whereas a number of horrific fatalities and accidents have occurred on the old stretch of Highway 26; and

“Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 is critical to economic development and job creation in Simcoe–Grey;

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

“That the Liberal government stop the delay of the Highway 26 redevelopment and act immediately to ensure that the project is finished on schedule, to improve safety for area residents and provide economic development opportunities and job creation in Simcoe–Grey.”

I want to thank Kim Taylor of ReMax Wasaga Beach for circulating that petition.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

This has been signed by over 100 people from northwestern Ontario, and I have affixed my signature as well.

OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we have read over the petition for the application of good governance of Oxford county and appendix A, Oxford county budget comparisons 2000-04; and

“Whereas as ratepayers and residents of Oxford county we would like to inquire as to how good government is defined and whether the Oxford County Library Board and Oxford county council did due diligence in restructuring the Oxford county library system; and

“Whereas we are all concerned that the financial records of Oxford County Library Board are questionable as there are discrepancies in the figures between the consolidated statements and the budget statements;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of the province of Ontario, under sections 9 and 10 of the Municipal Affairs Act, to initiate a provincial and municipal audit of the financial affairs of the county of Oxford to make an inquiry into the affairs of Oxford County Library Board.”

I sign the petition and give it to Amelia.

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): I’m pleased to present a group of petitions from my riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“Protect Our Farmers

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the Rural Revolution believes that rural Ontario is in crisis and they will be demonstrating their resolve” and have demonstrated it “at Queen’s Park;

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

“Resolution number 4: Federal and provincial governments have created a bureaucratic environment that legalizes the theft of millions of dollars of rural business and farm income. All money found to be removed from rural landowners, farmers and business shall be returned.”

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

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the so-called Tenant Protection Act ... has allowed landlords to increase rents well above the rate of inflation for new and old tenants alike;

"Whereas the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal created by this act regularly awards major and permanent additional rent increases to landlords to pay for required one-time improvements and temporary increases in utility costs;

"Whereas the same act has given landlords wide-ranging powers to evict tenants;...

"We, the undersigned, residents of Doversquare Apartments in Toronto, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately scrap all Tory guideline and above-guideline increases...;

"To shut down the notoriously pro-landlord Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal;" and finally,

"To abrogate the Tory Tenant Protection Act and draw up new landlord-tenant legislation in consultation with tenants and housing rights campaigners."

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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

"Whereas the Minister of Culture recently announced that there would be funding cuts totalling more than \$1.2 million from Ontario public library services; and

"Whereas over 69 million people visited public libraries in Ontario in 2003, with more than 100 million items circulating; and

"Whereas these cuts will impact us as library users, resulting in delays in how libraries receive new books;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Culture to restore the funding for Ontario public library services so that libraries can continue to promote literacy in our communities."

I have affixed my signature to this.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children with autism who have reached the age of six years are no longer being discharged from their preschool autism program; and

"Whereas these children should be getting the best special education possible in the form of applied behaviour analysis ... within the school system; and

"Whereas there are approximately 700 preschool children with autism across Ontario who are required to wait indefinitely for placement in the program, and there are also countless school-age children that are not receiving the support they require in the school system; and

"Whereas this situation has an impact on the families, extended families and friends of all of these children; and

"Whereas, as stated on the website for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 'IBI can make a significant difference in the life of a child with autism. Its objective is to decrease the frequency of challenging behaviours, build social skills and promote language development' ;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of IBI for all pre-school children awaiting services. We also petition the Legislature of Ontario to fund an educational program in the form of ABA in the school system."

I agree with the petitioners and I will affix my signature to this.

REFUNDABLE CONTAINERS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Davenport.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again, on this very important petition. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and is specially addressed to the Minister of Finance. It reads as follows:

"Whereas we find lots of pop cans and beer bottles in our parks plus children's playgrounds;

"Whereas it is therefore unsafe for our children to play in these parks and playgrounds;

"Whereas many of these bottles and cans are broken and mangled, therefore causing harm and danger to our children;

"Whereas Ontarians are dumping about a billion aluminium cans worth \$27 million into landfill every year instead of recycling them;

"Whereas the undersigned want to see legislation passed to have deposits paid on cans and bottles, which would be returnable and therefore not found littering our parks and streets;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, strongly urge and demand that the Ontario government institute a collection program that will include all pop drinks, Tetra Pak juices and can containers to be refundable in order to reduce littering and protect our environment."

Since I'm in agreement with this petition 100%, I am delighted to sign it.

1530

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I have a second petition on this issue from the riding of Durham, an agricultural riding. This one is protecting individual rights.

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

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

"Whereas the Rural Revolution believes that rural Ontario is in crisis" due to lost property rights and a crushing regulatory burden on rural Ontarians, "and they

will be demonstrating their resolve and determination at Queen's Park" and in Port Perry "on March 8;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to respect our individual rights as addressed in the Rural Revolution's resolutions to respect property rights as follows:

"Resolution number 3: The will of the majority can never justify injustice upon individuals or restrictions on their freedom of choice in private matters."

I am pleased to present this on behalf of my constituents.

HANDGUNS

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):

This one is titled "McGuinty's Handgun Ban is Not the Answer." It begins with a quote from Premier McGuinty. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"I think a handgun ban is an absolutely essential component of any intelligent, comprehensive plan to address shootings, especially those that are taking place here in the city of Toronto. I think we owe it to our young people in particular to take guns off the streets, and I can't think of anything more powerful in that regard than a handgun ban." (Dalton McGuinty, Hansard, Dec. 8, 2005)"

It concludes by saying:

"We, the undersigned, respectfully disagree with Mr. McGuinty and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take action on violence and young people by providing resources for police and fixing the justice system."

I agree with the people who have signed this and hereby affix my signature.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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

"Whereas the Minister of Culture recently announced that there would be funding cuts totalling more than \$1.2 million from Ontario public library services; and

"Whereas over 69 million people visited public libraries in Ontario in 2003, with more than 100 million items circulating; and

"Whereas these cuts will impact you as a library user, resulting in delays in how often your library receives new books;

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

"That the Minister of Culture restore the cuts to funding for Ontario public library services so that our library can continue to promote literacy in our community."

I want to thank the good people at the Collingwood Public Library for that petition.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that's been signed by hundreds of people. It's been sent to me by Marion State of Thornhill. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario has an inconsistent policy for access to new cancer treatments while these drugs are under review for funding; and

"Whereas cancer patients taking oral chemotherapy may apply for a section 8 exception under the Ontario drug benefit plan, with no such exception policy in place for intravenous cancer drugs administered in hospital; and

"Whereas this is an inequitable, inconsistent and unfair policy, creating two classes of cancer patients with further inequities on the basis of personal wealth and the willingness of hospitals to risk budgetary deficits to provide new intravenous chemotherapy treatments; and

"Whereas cancer patients have the right to the most effective care recommended by their doctors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to provide immediate access to Velcade and other intravenous chemotherapy while these new cancer drugs are under review and provide a consistent policy for access to new cancer treatments that enables oncologists to apply for exceptions to meet the needs of patients."

I agree with the petitioners and I've affixed my signature to this.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition also to do with library service cutbacks. It says:

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the \$700,000 cut in funding to the Ontario Library Service (OLS) budget will have a significant impact on the delivery of public library service across the province in areas such as:

"—reductions in the frequency of inter-library loan deliveries;

"—reductions in the SOLS consultation services and the elimination of a number of staff positions;

"—the elimination of province-wide research on library and socio-demographic trends that all libraries need for their own planning;

"—the reduction of consortia/charitable purchasing, a service that provides economies-of-scale discounts to libraries on a variety of goods and services; and

"—a reduction in the amount of material that is translated for OLS French-language services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"To restore funding to the Ontario Library Service in order to signal support for the Ontario public library system."

I support this petition.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that has been sent to me by OPSEU. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas sharp medical devices such as syringes, IV catheters, blood collection needles, suture needles, lancets and scalpels put not only health care workers but also the general public at risk of injury and/or infection; and

“Whereas an estimated 33,000 needle-stick injuries occur in the health care sector alone in Ontario every year; and

“Whereas the annual cost of testing and treating needle-stick injuries in Ontario, in health care alone, is \$66 million; and

“Whereas, since the cost of using safety needles in all workplaces is relatively minimal, we can save \$8 million every year in Ontario by eliminating unsafe medical sharps; and

“Whereas safety needles protect health care workers and the general public, eliminating about 90% of sharps injuries where they are mandated by law;

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

“That the Legislature pass a law requiring the mandatory use of safety-engineered medical sharps in all workplaces where workers are exposed to blood-borne pathogens.”

I agree with the petitioners, and I will affix my signature to this.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that the Legislative Assembly adopt the report of the Integrity Commissioner dated January 4, 2006, and approve the recommendation contained therein.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time this afternoon with the member from Mississauga Centre.

On January 4, the Integrity Commissioner issued a report that the Legislature must now consider. I know that the Minister of Transportation will speak in detail to the content of the report and the issues it examined. But first, it's important to outline for members of this House what the recommendation of the Integrity Commissioner was and what the law provides in terms of our response.

The Integrity Commissioner concludes that the minister “did not go about intentionally trying to short-circuit the system.” That's important. The minister has acknowledged an error and has taken the appropriate steps to correct it.

The rules outlined in the Members' Integrity Act ensure that the public interest and taxpayer dollars are protected. Throughout this entire process, there has been no evidence to suggest that the public interest was compromised or that taxpayer dollars were at risk—none. But the Integrity Commissioner did find that a rule was broken and he made a recommendation to this House, and that was to issue a reprimand. In fact, the commissioner wrote, “I think it would be unfair to sanction the minister beyond issuing a reprimand under section 34(1)(b). Upon the filing of this report with the Speaker, that reprimand will be duly recorded.”

In my opinion, the penalty imposed by the Integrity Commissioner is appropriate. Anything beyond that penalty would be unduly harsh. In short, the penalty proposed matches the breach found by the commissioner.

According to the Members' Integrity Act, subsection 34(2), when a report is issued that contains a penalty recommendation, “The assembly shall consider and respond to the report within 30 days” of it being tabled in the House. The motion that I have just moved fulfills the requirements set out in the Members' Integrity Act. The act outlines our responsibilities as legislators quite clearly: We either reject or adopt the report and its recommendations, nothing more and nothing less.

The Members' Integrity Act specifically states that “the assembly does not have power to inquire further into the contravention, to impose a penalty if the commissioner recommended that none be imposed, or to impose a penalty other than the one recommended.”

It is clear. It is our duty to ensure that we stay within those parameters. The Legislature should ensure that we follow the act as written.

I would like to thank the Integrity Commissioner for his thorough investigation and thoughtful report. The motion we have before us today adopts the report in its entirety and includes the recommendation for reprimand. I would urge all members to support the recommendations outlined in the Integrity Commissioner's report and vote for this motion.

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Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): On January 4, 2006, the Integrity Commissioner, the Honourable Coulter Osborne, issued his report that reviewed allegations made by a member of the opposition. I stand here today to accept the report's findings and to take responsibility for them. I would like to thank the Integrity Commissioner and his staff for the time and effort they put into conducting this thorough review.

As a result of the allegations, an impression has been made over the last seven months that there has been a misuse of my privileged position as a member of the executive council for personal gain. This is not the case, and I am glad to have the report of the Integrity Commissioner to put this to rest. I made the error, but it was not deliberate, and the findings make it clear that there was never any intent to circumvent the rules, nor any implications of personal gain of any description whatsoever.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak today so that this report can be considered in its proper perspective. The report dealt with three issues, and I think it is important to look at what the Integrity Commissioner says.

The first allegation was whether I had at any time used my position or knowledge gained as a minister to further the interests of my family-owned business. This allegation relates to section 2 of the act. The Integrity Commissioner said there was, and I quote, “no merit” to the contention that my business or I have personally benefited from my position as minister. He also says, and I quote, “there is no evidence—direct or circumstantial” to support that claim.

The second assertion was whether I participated in the management of those companies after I was appointed minister. The findings of the Integrity Commissioner clearly confirm that I have never used my position or knowledge gained from my position to further my private interests.

I did attend a meeting with my wife at my family-owned business. We discussed the financing of my daughter’s future education plans. I made an error in judgment by attending the meeting at this location. But the Integrity Commissioner clearly states that although I made, and I quote, “error in judgment,” he was, and I quote, “not satisfied that the evidence establishes that the minister was engaged in the management of a business carried on by a corporation.” He goes on to say, and I quote again, “I therefore conclude this aspect of the complaint has not been established.” These are the words and conclusions of the Integrity Commissioner, not mine. I have not participated in the management of the business.

The third matter dealt with my failure to inform the Integrity Commissioner when the trustee of my management trust also became the CFO of the Mississauga Centre riding association.

A year after my election, the members of the riding association elected my trustee to the position of CFO. The Integrity Commissioner originally approved my trustee. In his report, the Integrity Commissioner writes, “Although there is nothing explicit in the act” mandating this, I should have told him about this change, and I agree. The Integrity Commissioner has clarified a process that I was not aware of. Had I been aware of my obligations, I would have done so.

In his concluding remarks, the Integrity Commissioner wrote, “Although I regard this as a serious matter, I have to recognize that the minister did not go about intentionally trying to short-circuit the system. I accept his statement that had he realized that his arm’s-length relationship ... was compromised, he would have taken steps through this office to straighten things up.”

Immediately after receiving the report, I worked closely with the Integrity Commissioner to put a new trustee in place, and the Integrity Commissioner confirmed compliance with the act.

The words of the Integrity Commissioner have taught me a very valuable lesson, and I want to thank him again

for his guidance. I apologize for not informing him, and I take his recommendation of reprimand very seriously.

As I have said since receiving this report, I accept the Integrity Commissioner’s report in its entirety. In all of this, it is important to recall why some of these rules are in place. They’re meant to ensure that the public interest is protected, no personal gains are realized and taxpayers’ dollars are put to their proper use.

While I should have recognized and should have informed the Integrity Commissioner about the added role my trustee took on, I want to make it clear that at no time was the public interest in jeopardy, at no time were taxpayer dollars at risk and at no time did I personally gain from this. In fact, I went beyond the call of my duty to place all my assets, directly or indirectly owned, into the management trust. The Integrity Commissioner has now clarified what assets ought to be in the management trust.

I entered politics for the right reasons. It was not for money or power. I entered public life to serve the people of Mississauga and the people of Ontario.

I have done quite a bit in my life. This wonderful province and great country have been very good to me and my family. Like most immigrants, I came to this country with very little but a burning desire to succeed. I worked hard during the day and studied at night, and the rewards of my hard work and determination have been very fulfilling for me.

In my professional life, I reached heights that I could never have dreamt when I came to Canada. In my personal life, I got married here, raised my children here and gave them the very best education and opportunities that we, as a family, could afford.

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My family has also achieved success in the business world. I believe in values such as family commitment, respect for each other, appreciation for hard work, desire to succeed, giving back to the community, and fair and open dialogue. I built my career based on the concept of life-long learning, doing the right thing, and letting the reality determine the perceptions, not the other way around.

After receiving so much from this great country, I always felt that I needed to give back to the society that afforded my family so many opportunities. I got involved in the United Way, our local hospital and in the community in general to do my part. This is what led me to enter politics in the first place. I want to use my experience and share that with people, to share that experience in serving the people of this beautiful province of ours.

Politics is a new profession to me. To some of my colleagues, politics may be their career, but to me, it has been an opportunity of a lifetime to make some real difference. I want to use my position in this government to further the interests of students, parents, seniors and children, rural and urban Ontarians. The past two years have been a tremendous privilege for me because I have been able to do just that.

We have made some significant progress since 2003, including improvements to public transit, infrastructure investment and road safety. We are making progress for commuters by delivering two cents of the existing gas tax to municipalities. We are providing 83 transit systems in 110 municipalities with stable, long-term funding. This has enabled transit systems to add new buses, new routes, to hire new drivers and other staff. We opened the first-ever high-occupancy vehicle lanes on Ontario's highways so commuters can spend less time on the roads and more time with their families. We launched special veteran licence plates featuring the word "veteran" and a poppy to honour and acknowledge the great populations and sacrifices of other veterans.

The GTA fare card is on track toward an early 2007 launch date, with system-wide implementation planned for 2010. The Border Transportation Partnership is proceeding on schedule to identify a single preferred new Windsor crossing by mid-2007. We are very close to establishing the GTTA, which will promote better planning and the delivery of transit services across the GTA and Hamilton. We permitted the use of studded tires for residents in northern Ontario to give them more options and improve road safety in icy conditions. We are developing and launching a new, more secure Ontario driver's licence card.

We launched the northern Ontario highways strategy to ensure better planning and coordination of improvements to northern area highways. We are continuing to fight on behalf of 407 users. We are cracking down on illegal taxi scoopers so that when people arrive at an Ontario airport or travel in one of our cities, they get into a safe and licensed cab. And we are making progress for children by making school buses safer and child booster seats mandatory in Ontario.

While we have accomplishing a great deal in the first half of our mandate, I am looking forward to achieving even more in the second half and working in the best interests of all Ontarians. I want to assure everyone that I will continue to work as hard as I always have. I stand here today on my record of personal integrity and public accomplishments to urge everyone to read the report and, from that, draw your own conclusions.

While this issue has not distracted me from my responsibilities as Minister of Transportation, it has affected my family. So I want to thank especially my wife, children and my parents for their continuing encouragement and support.

I also want to thank the Premier for giving me the opportunity to serve in this position and for his ongoing guidance, support and confidence in me. I want to thank all my colleagues and staff for their support as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): For the record, because this does not happen very often, there are no questions and comments in a debate like this.

We will go now to the leadoff speaker for the official opposition, the leader of the official opposition.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I think this is an important debate to take place in this House. I think it marks an important series of events. I want to begin, as did the government House leader, by saying a word of thanks to the Integrity Commissioner for the work that he did, for the thoroughness with which he did that work, and for the completeness of his report.

I would also like to say a word of thanks to the minister for having the courage to come in and speak to the report today. I know that it took a great deal of courage for him to come in and speak to the report and to say what he did.

I also am quite prepared to stand here in my place and say that I accept the fact that the minister entered politics for the right reasons, and I'm furthermore prepared to accept the fact that the minister entered politics in order to try and give back. I would go a step further than that and say that I accept the fact that every single member of this House, without exception, entered politics for the right reason and entered politics in order to try and give back.

What that doesn't take away from, however, is the need—which the minister himself, I believe, referred to—when matters of this kind come up, to deal with them; to deal with them in an open and transparent way; to make sure that they are dealt with in a way that engenders confidence on the part of the people who sent us here, in the system of which we are a part.

The minister talked about the distinction which often exists—we all know this—between perception and reality. But at the end of the day, there is a connection between perception and reality oftentimes. Certainly, in the public's mind, the perception that they have often can be erroneous. It certainly can often be damaging. It is important that a process like this exists and that a debate like this can take place on a report such as the one that has been written, so that we can make sure that people understand what has happened in the eyes of someone, in this case, who is objective, who has written the report, so that they can maintain that confidence in the system and make sure that these things are done, as I say, in ways that are transparent and open and engender confidence in the system.

I must tell you that one of the lines in the Integrity Commissioner's report that was important to me was the line in which he stated unequivocally that he did not think that the complaint in this instance, which was filed by me as Leader of the Opposition, was in any way other than filed in good faith and that the complaint was not frivolous or vexatious.

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The Premier made reference, on the day we left for Christmas, to the fact that the leaders of the opposition parties and the members of the opposition have an important role to play in our system of government in order to make sure that transparency, that confidence in the system, that accountability continue to exist, and when there are instances in which things need to be looked at, things need to be examined, when the differ-

ence between reality and perception, or the facts that lie behind a given perception, need to be examined, that it is done and that somebody raises it. Because in our system, as members will know, the executive council, the Premier and, in particular, a majority government are given immense powers to do all kinds of things. The check that exists in our system, as distinct perhaps from the United States, is the existence of an opposition party, or parties in this case, which are here to ask the questions that sometimes the government would rather not have asked. They're here to raise the matters that the government would rather not have raised. They're here to do things that make sure these things are aired in an open and complete fashion, such that the public can see, one way or another, what has transpired in the judgment of someone—in this case objective—given powers and responsibilities by this Legislature to deal with complaints and matters of this kind.

I can assure you that had the Integrity Commissioner come forward with a report that said, "Absolutely nothing transpired here. There was no breach of the law. There is no cause for a reprimand. I've looked at this whole thing, and absolutely nothing took place that was even worthy of me spending my time," that in fact if he'd gone on to make any comment about whether this was frivolous or vexatious or a complaint made in bad faith, I would have stood in my place and acknowledged that he had said that, and said that most particularly to the Minister of Transportation. I would have done that, because I think that is the kind of honour we have to have in this place. I think it is some of the kind of honour that did cause the minister to come here today to speak and to show the courage to do that, as I indicated earlier.

I think we make a mistake all the time on matters of this kind when we conclude or assume that this is about Harinder Takhar, Dalton McGuinty, John Tory or anybody else; it isn't about that. It is about the paramount need that exists to make sure that people have confidence in the system of which we're a part, that they have confidence in us as individuals, that they have confidence in the standards that are set and adhered to here, that there is a consistency that people can count on in the administration of their affairs, the management of their money, but generally in the administration of the public interest. That's really what this is all about.

If you start with the Members' Integrity Act itself, which is what led to this entire process and this complaint and the report of the Integrity Commissioner, that act was passed by this House at a point in time in the past for a reason. The reason was to set out a regime by which members could guide themselves, and ultimately pursuant to which others could review the conduct of members and make sure that at all times members maintained a standard of behaviour and integrity in the discharge of their duties regardless of what party they're from, what riding they're from, who they are, what their name is, where they came from or anything else.

The regime is governed by the act. It appoints a commissioner to adjudicate objectively, and I don't think

there's been a single question raised by the minister or the Premier, and certainly not by myself, with respect to the completeness and the objectivity of the work done by the Integrity Commissioner on this and other matters. I am sure there will be days when I will stand in this House and be called upon to comment on a report written by the Integrity Commissioner where he has gone against something I have said or done or a complaint I have filed or whatever. I think it is important that we recognize that I will understand on that day, as you have to with people in positions like his—judges and so on—that they call them as they see them. They're objective people who understand very clearly their responsibilities in that regard and the important part they play in the process.

Here is the standard that was set out in the statute. It's a partial quote. It says, in paragraph 3, in the preamble, "Members are expected to perform their duties of office and arrange their private affairs in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity of each member, maintains the assembly's dignity and justifies the respect in which society holds the assembly and its members." That is the standard set out in this act, where there's an elaborate regime set out to say what happens if there's any suggestion that anybody didn't follow this set of guidelines or this legislative language.

It's interesting that there really isn't a similar standard set out anywhere. There is in respect of the very direct and complex and legal question, if I can call it that, of a conflict of interest; there are statutory provisions we know that deal with that. But there are no written provisions at all dealing with the very difficult question of judgment that is involved and exercised by a Premier, and only by a Premier, in deciding who should be in his or her cabinet and what qualifications those people should have, but perhaps even more importantly than all of that, what is the acceptable standard of conduct in order for someone to be and to remain as a member of the executive council.

You can look far and wide, but there is no statute, there is no code. There is the conflict-of-interest code, but that deals with a fairly narrow area, and I'm going to come back to this based on some comments the Premier made yesterday or the day before about that. But there is no place where it's all written down as to what the acceptable standard of conduct is. So what that leaves it to, as is the case with many things, is the judgment of the first minister of the day. You can be guided by precedent, you can be guided by what people write in the newspaper, by what the opposition says, but in the end—it is one of the aspects of the job that I respect and understand because I worked for a former Premier of this province and I've watched Premiers exercise their judgment. It's the difficult part of the job. People think the difficult part of the job is dealing with big sums of money or having to spend many hours traveling around the province or this and that. The really difficult part of being Premier or being the head of any organization, which both the minister and myself have been, is to exercise the final judgment that rests only with you when it comes time to makes decisions on certain kinds of matters.

If you start with the standard that is set out in the Members' Integrity Act and say that is the standard that we—we—have prescribed for the conduct of members, you then move to the next very interesting question, to which there is no answer written down and contained in the statute: Should the same standard basically be applied to ministers in the conduct of their affairs as ministers? Should a higher standard perhaps be applied to ministers in the conduct of their business? In the end there is no answer to that question, but as I said earlier, it is the Premier who sets the standard.

It is interesting because we do have lots of commentary on this. I'll give you one comment that came from the current Premier of Ontario when he was the Leader of the Opposition on June 25, 1997. Here's what he said in Hansard on that day: "If it is indeed an arm's-length, quasi-judicial body and the Integrity Commissioner has in fact made the finding that this minister is in breach of the law, that he has contravened the act that governs our behaviour in this Legislature, then you have no choice, Premier, but to stand up once again, tell us that you are going to ask for the resignation of Minister Al Leach, of Minister Cunningham and of Minister Runciman, because they have all clearly, in keeping with the words offered by the Minister of Health on numerous occasions in this House, broken the law. You have no choice."

Now, I guess it's possible to say that if you break, contravene or breach one law, somehow it's more serious than another, and so forth and so on. It's possible, I suppose, to say that if a member of the Legislature contravenes the Members' Integrity Act, that really doesn't have anything to do with the discharge of their responsibilities or the standard of behaviour expected of them as ministers. The one thing we know for sure is that the Integrity Commissioner did make a finding that it wasn't his place. When I say he made a finding, that's not true; I apologize. He wrote to me upon being asked by me as to whether it was his role or responsibility or if he had the authority or intended to make any statement whatsoever about the standard of behaviour to be applied to ministers or about what should be done in this particular case with respect to the continuation of Mr. Takhar as a member of the executive council. In his reply to me on February 9, Mr. Justice Osborne, in answering my question—which I don't have in front of me, precisely, but it was, "Do you have the authority, the mandate under the statute or otherwise to make recommendations or give advice with respect to the continued role of Mr. Takhar as a member of the executive council?"—chose to quote his predecessor, the Honourable Gregory Evans, who said, a number of years ago: "Whether a member of the executive council remains in cabinet is not a matter for my office. It would not be correct to draw any inference that my recommendation ... has any relationship to a member's status as a member of the executive council." Justice Osborne went on to say, "I agree with his conclusion," meaning Justice Evans's conclusion. "I do not have the jurisdiction to advise the Premier or make recommendations as to who should be on the executive council."

Really, all this did was confirm what I think we knew before, and what I said a moment or two ago, which is that the responsibility for determining and enforcing the standards of behaviour that are appropriate for ministers of the crown rests with the Premier, as it always has. There were probably years in times gone by when there were no Members' Integrity Act; in fact, I'm sure there were no conflict-of-interest rules. At that time, the only person who was the arbiter of what appropriate behaviour was and what sanctions should properly be applied was the Premier. In this case, it still is the Premier, even though he now has some help from some of the statutes that we have passed over time.

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I think what the public want to see is one set of consistent standards. I don't think they expect, nor would they accept the fact, that the Members' Integrity Act and the objective gentleman appointed by the Legislature to review and adjudicate upon behaviour under that act should apply one standard, and that the standard the Premier would, and should, apply with regard to his ministers would be something quite different. In fact, if you asked people if they would accept as a standard of behaviour for ministers some of the words very similar to what is in the Members' Integrity Act, most of the public would say, "What's the difference?" The objective of these pieces of legislation is to maintain and uphold confidence in the electoral system—in ministers, in members, in every part of the system—of which all of us are a part. In this case, the only difference is that the person who reviews the evidence, the person who makes the findings when it comes to appropriateness to serve in cabinet, is not the Integrity Commissioner, it is the Premier.

We heard the Premier's old standard before. I don't want to put words in his mouth; I read you the quote from Hansard and we can all go and read it any time we want. I read another quote from Hansard, I recall, yesterday in question period which was very similar. It was about Mr. Leach again, the same set of facts. The Premier was very clear in saying that if Mr. Leach breached the law then he had no choice but to resign, and if Mr. Leach didn't do the honourable thing himself, having been found to have breached the law, the Premier had an obligation to ask him for his resignation. That was the standard that was articulated by Dalton McGuinty when he was the Leader of the Opposition.

Yesterday, when this matter came up for discussion in question period, the Premier said—and indeed the minister devoted himself to this in his remarks today—that in fact what we were looking at here was a standard that said—again, I'm going from memory, but I don't think I'm doing any injustice to the Premier's remarks—that if it wasn't about steak dinners, if it wasn't about expensive hotel rooms and if there was no evidence that you had abused the taxpayers' money or misused it in some way, that, therefore, was the end of the discussion. To be fair to the Premier, the way he put it was, "Since there is no suggestion here of steak dinners, hotel rooms, abuse of

the taxpayers' money or personal enrichment"—that was the other point the Premier made—"I therefore see no reason why this gentleman should retire from my cabinet." I suggest that that is not an appropriate or adequate standard. I don't think the Premier himself—and I asked him yesterday, "Do you really mean to suggest that that is the standard and that anybody who does anything other than those things—"

Look, question period is what it is. It's part accountability, part debate and part theatre. I don't think it's a place where you necessarily articulate standards, because it does require a lot of care and forethought to do that. That's why I gave the Premier the chance to tell me, no, that really isn't the standard. In fact, I asked him one question yesterday when I just said to him, "What is the standard?"

I say, with respect, to my friends opposite, to the Premier and to the minister—and this is where it has nothing to do with this minister and this matter—I think the Premier of Ontario, if he is not going to agree with the standard that we are suggesting and with the one indeed that I think he articulated in the past, he has an obligation to come forward to this House sooner rather than later—much sooner—and tell us what the standard is. Again, I think it's not about Mr. Takhar or Mr. McGuinty or Mr. Tory or Mr. Anybody or Ms. Anybody Else. It is about the public understanding what the standards of this Premier are, it is about the public understanding that if those standards are breached action is going to be taken and it is about accountability so the public know what the standard is and then can measure the Premier and his ministers against that standard.

So, for now, all we have on the record is the Premier indicating that the standard seems to have something to do with expensive hotel dinners and, frankly, if you've just shown you haven't enriched yourself and you haven't abused the taxpayers' money and you haven't had steak dinners in hotel rooms, then that is good enough to stay in the cabinet.

Well, I don't think it's good enough, and I would venture to suggest that the public doesn't think it's good enough either. I would venture to suggest, furthermore, that Mr. McGuinty, when he was Leader of the Opposition, didn't think it was good enough either, because he said at the time—to repeat the point—when Mr. Leach was found to have contravened the law, Mr. Leach should have resigned, and if he didn't, the Premier should have asked for his resignation.

I'm going to quote from a number of newspapers, but let me quote from an article that was written under an editorial—I don't know which it is—on January 9 in the Toronto Sun, because I think there are some interesting thoughts here. It says:

"But McGuinty said since Osborne recommended that Takhar be reprimanded, but not removed from his seat in the Legislature, there was no reason to dump him from cabinet.

"This is absurd. Only McGuinty has the power to fire his minister. Instead, the Premier argued there was no suggestion Takhar had tried to profit from his actions.

"Incredible. Is that the only standard McGuinty has for his cabinet? Before anyone is bounced, they have to be caught red-handed attempting to use their public office for private gain?

"Besides, Osborne is not an investigator. He can't conduct searches or subpoena records. He talks to the parties involved and even on that basis, he concluded Takhar broke the rules.

"Now, it's not only Takhar's integrity that's in question, but McGuinty's judgment. He should go, Premier. You shouldn't need anyone to tell you that."

That's what they had to say at that time. It talks of, hints at and suggests a standard that should be applied that isn't just about self-enrichment or the abuse of the taxpayers' money.

I will say this to you, Mr. Speaker—and I sort of alluded to it in question period yesterday—that I very much regret the fact that, until I had to write to the Integrity Commissioner—and I can't put it any other way than this—the Premier tried to hide behind the Integrity Commissioner's judgment and to suggest somehow that the Integrity Commissioner had opined on or made any comment or finding on what should be done vis-à-vis Mr. Takhar's continued membership on the executive council of Ontario.

I gave him the opportunity yesterday, which I think he should have taken. Even if he had said, "Well, you know what? When I read it, the interpretation I took from it was that Mr. Osborne was saying that nothing more should be done at all in respect of the minister, both as a minister and as a member, but I was wrong. The Integrity Commissioner has now clarified that, and I apologize for the fact that I have suggested repeatedly, over and over again, that the Integrity Commissioner was making a decision or a recommendation on the matter that only the Premier has responsibility for, which is the setting and the enforcement of that standard of behaviour on the part of his ministers." He didn't do that. In fact, even when I offered him the opportunity to do that in question period, he failed to do that. I think that says something above and beyond the failure of the Premier thus far to come to this House or anywhere else he wants to go and set out the standard.

If anything comes from this matter, I think the first and foremost thing that should come from it is that the Premier should, at an early date, set out in some way or other—and I would suggest if he wanted to do it in a way that would try to engender the respect and participation of all members, he should invite members from all parties to sit perhaps with Justice Osborne.

It's interesting; the Minister of Finance couldn't have mocked me more often in the last two or three days in heckling in the House about the fact that I suggest quite often that people should sit down and try and sort things out. I'll tell you this, and it's not germane to this debate, but if I had a choice between seeing an illegal strike unfold in this province that will affect thousands and thousands of people—parents, drivers, kids, people who use recreational facilities and the rest—and I thought for

one minute that a meeting taking place in the Premier's office under his good offices, using the prestige of his office to bring people together, would avert that strike, I'd say absolutely, 10 times out of 10, the meeting should be held.

I would say in this case—and the minister can come in here tomorrow and mock me all he wants—if it is going to help to set a standard of behaviour that will enhance confidence in the public administration and public affairs of this province, which we so desperately need—and I'm going to talk about that in a minute—to have a meeting with the Integrity Commissioner and representatives of the party and to give some advice to the Premier as to an appropriate standard of behaviour, which he can then accept or reject, adopt or not, as he wishes, I would have that meeting and I would get that advice.

I'll give you another idea that just came to me. Why wouldn't we ask Bob Rae, David Peterson and Bill Davis, just to cite three examples—or it could be any of the others. They're our former Premiers. We're blessed to have former Premiers who are alive and well and totally interested in this process today. Why wouldn't we ask Justice Osborne to sit down with them and say, "Would you like to give Mr. McGuinty a little bit of advice as to what standard might be?" that you could then put in writing? It's not carved in stone. Other people could change it, but at least we'd have something that would govern these very difficult kinds of issues we're confronted with today.

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The question arises, why does any of this matter? Why do we need to have a Members' Integrity Act? Why is it important, as I believe it fundamentally is, for Mr. McGuinty to make some effort to come forward with a standard so that we can all know what it is? If it isn't steak dinners, hotel rooms, self-enrichment and abuse of taxpayers' dollars—if that's not it, if that's not his full articulation of the standard—then what is it? Why does it matter?

It matters because I think that if you wanted to name the most serious issues affecting Canada and Ontario today—I heard the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration talking about his trip to Pakistan. I was similarly blessed with a trip to Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka in January. I think the minister would agree with me that when you go and see something like the devastation of that earthquake, when you see those towns and those villages utterly destroyed by that earthquake, when you go, as I did, to Sri Lanka and see the same thing with respect to the tsunami, you realize that any of the problems we have here—any of them, regardless of what they're about: social problems, economic problems, problems of all kinds, problems to do with faith in politicians—pale in comparison to the horrors that people have to live with in countries, whether it's about those things or about AIDS in Africa or a whole bunch of other things. However, our issues are our issues. Thank God we don't have a lot of natural disasters in Canada and we're blessed in many respects.

When you look at our roster of issues, I would suggest that one of the ones that is the most pressing today, because I think it speaks to our ability to address a whole bunch of other issues that are very important, is the lack of faith or the loss of faith that has taken place in people who are in politics in Canada today. It's not about this House. It's not about the Parliament of Canada. It's not about Liberals or Conservatives or New Democrats or anybody else. It is about politicians generally.

I'll be honest with you. I've told the story before, I think, of when I was going door to door in the by-election when I got elected to this House. I found the experience quite disconcerting, because I went to many doors where people would greet you the minute you introduced yourself with some kind of blanket statement. I don't know whether the new member for Scarborough–Rouge River experienced this. I'll bet he did. People would greet you with a kind of blanket statement, "You're all the same. You all tell lies. You all steal. You all do this, you all do that." I thought to myself as I'm canvassing door to door, in what I had viewed for 35 years of my life as a volunteer as one of the most honourable things you could be a part of, the political process—where you could make the biggest difference and a lot of things the minister himself said a few minutes ago—how could it be that we have got to the point where this is the way people feel? Indeed, when I was out canvassing during the course of the federal election just concluded, I heard a lot of the same things.

If you said, is it worse today or is it about the same as it has always been? I would argue, with conviction, that it is much worse, because I have been knocking on doors for 37 years, actually since I was a very young teenager, and I have never heard the level of cynicism, anger, mistrust and skepticism about us. It's not about Liberals and Conservatives. I'm honest enough to come here and say that when they say it, they say, "You're all the same." It's part of a class of people we are, which is politicians.

I'll be honest again. I had some trouble. Having come from the same kind of successful business career that the minister said he had, the same kind of involvement in the community that he said he had, raising money and doing good works, I hope, in the community and so on, there was a period of time after I became leader of this party when I was almost hesitant to say the word "politician" when people asked me what I did. I'm over that now because I'm very proud of it. I'm proud to be a member of this House with all the people who are here. I'm proud of what we try to do together. I'm proud of the role we all play in doing what we all have to do. The Liberals are in the government right now. We're in the opposition, as are the New Democrats. We all have our job to do, but in the end, I don't question for a second that we're all here trying to advance the public interest and do better for people, albeit we come at it from different perspectives.

The reason why this is important, why the standard of behaviour for ministers is important, why respect for the Members' Integrity Act is important, why respect for the

judgments of Mr. Justice Osborne is important—I have said today already that I think we can and must do better—is because it is those things that are the mechanisms we employ and that we then are judged by in terms of whether people have confidence in us.

People often ask me in interviews, and I'm sure many members of the House have been asked, about whether they think the way to resolve the issue of the declining participation in elections is to pass compulsory voting legislation, the way they have in Australia. I always say no, and I say no because I think that would be the easy way out.

I had occasion to talk about this at a speech I gave a couple of days ago. I said that the wounds we have suffered in the political process, in faith for politicians, for all of us and all the other people who are in politics with us, are, by and large, self-inflicted. I don't blame the public for what has gone on with respect to what has happened in various Parliaments and Legislatures. The public doesn't come in here and tell us how to behave every afternoon when we're here. The public doesn't tell us to do things that later are found to have been in bad judgment or contravention of the law or whatever. The public elects us here. They send us here. That's the only part they play in this. They send us here and then they have the expectation, which I think is legitimate, that we would behave in the way that I read about in the preamble to the Members' Integrity Act.

When we ask why it matters, I would refer to a couple of things that have been written. They said in a Hamilton Spectator editorial, January 7:

“What does it take to get fired from Dalton McGuinty's cabinet? Consider that a rhetorical question, since there's no apparent answer.

“Transportation Minister Harinder Takhar still enjoys the Premier's 'confidence'—and all the perks of a cabinet minister—despite a damning report from Ontario Integrity Commissioner Coulter Osborne....

“Osborne was clearly skeptical of some of what he was told, and said in his report he found part of the story of the April meeting 'somewhat bewildering.'

“You don't have to be a code-breaker to read there that the Integrity Commissioner isn't sure he was told the complete story.

“It's almost unbelievable that McGuinty could so wilfully ignore the importance of cabinet ministers' integrity, and particularly hypocritical after his years of self-righteous howling from the opposition benches.”

This is probably the most important sentence in the editorial that I'm going to quote from last: “Cabinet ministers have so much influence on policy and spending of public money that they must be above reproach.” That's probably the most important sentence, and it's about the standard that has to be set. The Hamilton Spectator is suggesting—correctly, in my view—that it has to be a very high standard indeed for cabinet ministers, because cabinet ministers have responsibilities that go above and beyond what all the rest of us have here, as important as our responsibilities as members of this House may be.

Let me turn to the Peterborough Examiner, January 7. I quote from these newspapers because these are thoughtful, objective people. Some might question from day to day their objectivity on various sides, because we all have our disagreements with newspapers, and that probably proves that most of the time, they're right. But they're right about these things, from where they see it.

The Peterborough Examiner said on January 7:

“Coulter Osborne, Ontario's Integrity Commissioner, obviously understands integrity. Premier Dalton McGuinty obviously doesn't....

“Premier McGuinty could have taken away Takhar's cabinet seat while letting him continue as an MPP.

“Cabinet members have to be held to the highest standard of conduct. Takhar broke one integrity law. He displayed outstanding recklessness in regard to another—a circumstance in which the Integrity Commissioner also saw some grey areas in the minister's defence. Leaving Takhar in cabinet further justifies public concern that in politics, integrity comes muffled in shades of grey.”

I think those newspapers probably answered the question of why this matters as well as I could have in trying to articulate it as awkwardly as I have.

I think this is an instance in which, even if you look at the words of Mr. Takhar, he seemed to hint, when asked about this back in June, at what the appropriate standard was. Here's what he said, speaking to the Toronto Sun on June 17:

“My understanding of the situation is that when the other ministers stepped aside, it was because they broke the rules and I firmly believe that I have followed all the rules.” That is what Mr. Takhar said at the time he was asked about whether he should resign in light of the complaint that was filed before the report was written.

I'm prepared to accept the fact that it was a fair thing for him to do; and the same for the Premier, because when the Premier was asked in the House about Mr. Takhar and whether he should resign then, he said something to the effect of, “I will place myself in the hands of the Integrity Commissioner. We will await his report.” In fact, if I can quote further from the Toronto Sun, Mr. Takhar said, “I feel I have followed the rules and have taken it to the Integrity Commissioner,” because concurrent with my complaint registered as Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Takhar also filed a request for some advice or some ruling from the Integrity Commissioner with respect to these facts.

It's interesting to me, because I've always felt in matters of this kind, while I stated earlier and I believe in my heart that at the end of the day, I understand—having been a CEO and president and head of many different organizations, as others in this House have—the one thing you come to realize, and it's consistent with being a minister as well, and we have many ministers sitting in this House right now—is that the buck stops with you.

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So while I did say earlier, and I believe it to be so, that the buck stops with the Premier when it comes to behaviour and standard-setting and so forth, I think there

is also the matter of the honour of individual ministers, because I think, as often as not, in cases of this kind, it should be the case that a minister would recognize, perhaps even consistent with his or her own words, that when they have broken the rules, they should have a standard they apply to their own behaviour, a personal set of standards of behaviour as to what's appropriate for a minister, so as to put forward their resignation before being asked for it.

So I would suggest in this case that, just looking at Mr. Takhar's own words that he spoke on June 17, 2005, with respect to the standard that he said applied to other ministers—namely that when they were found to have broken the rules, they would step aside—he might have been well advised on January 5 of this year to have reread those words and to have recognized the fact that the personal honour of a minister would suggest that, when things of this kind happen—as sorry as we all are.

I did not take any pleasure whatsoever, and I think anybody from the media who talked to me at the time, anybody from our caucus who listened to me in our confidential discussions at the time, and even in my private conversations with Mr. Sorbara, will know I took no pleasure, no joy whatsoever as a member of this House about the fact that he resigned from the cabinet. We could have an argument about whether the Premier should have asked him to step aside earlier, not because he had done anything wrong but because there was a circumstance in which the air needed to be cleared, but the one thing that I will say is this: When the search warrant came to light in which Mr. Sorbara's name was mentioned, he did the honourable thing. He offered, and his resignation was accepted.

I have said a number of times, and I'll repeat it here today, I hope he is cleared and I hope he, if the Premier and he choose to have it happen, comes back to the executive council, because that would not only be good for Greg Sorbara; that would be good for all of us and for this place and for the entire system and confidence in the system, to say, "He did the right thing. Somebody looked into what the allegations were. They were found to have no substance, and he came back." That is the way the system is meant to work, so that people can have confidence in what's going on on a day-to-day basis.

I want to spend a few minutes talking a little bit about the accompanying part of this process that has really disappointed me as well. The Premier pointed out yesterday in talking about freedom of information and about accountability and so on that our record was worse than his government's record when it came to how often the rules under freedom of information were complied with. I don't come to this House—never did for one minute, and I won't—to apologize for or explain or try to explain away numbers, whatever they might be, with respect to what happened in the past.

All I know is this, and I was an observer in my business and community career at the time when this went on: When Mr. McGuinty campaigned in 2003, he campaigned largely on the basis that—I think the slogan

was, "Choose change." It was "Choose change." So if he had a problem with the freedom-of-information compliance of the previous government—and I will say this: If the compliance rate was 36%, and I think that was the number he cited yesterday, I'll say that's not good enough. You have to be honest about these things from time to time. That's in the past.

Mr. McGuinty invited people to choose change, and while the numbers for year one were better, I can tell you, if this circumstance here is any indication of what this government is doing or how they comply with the rules when it suits them, it's a very shabby example indeed, because in this case, we made a simple request in order to make sure that the file was complete, the transparency was complete, the openness was there for people to see what went on, and we asked for the minister's phone bill and his schedules for the relatively brief period of time surrounding the events that are in question here.

Seven months later, we got a set of information that is either incomplete or has been so manipulated in terms of using the provisions of the act to sort of justify blacking things out that it's useless in terms of providing any kind of transparency. We didn't make up how many appointments are shown on the minister's schedule for 36 days, where he has one appointment or less for 36 days during the period of question. We didn't make that up. That's what the documents that he gave us showed, and by the way, on those days, it's not as if other appointments are blacked out, where they say, "You're not entitled to see this because it's under the law." That's all that was shown on those days for his calendar.

I've worked with ministers—lots of them—over the years. There are people in this room who have been ministers and are ministers on both sides. I've never in my life seen a minister schedule 36 days out of a period of 50 or 60 days that had one appointment or less. Even when he stood up in the House today to explain himself on that, he indicated that perhaps we hadn't seen the other schedule. I'm not even sure what he said—I haven't seen the Hansard yet—but he implied there was some other schedule we haven't seen. Why can't we count on the fact that when we ask for the schedule, we get the schedule? There should only be one, and if it's two parts, then fine, put it together and send it over.

Let's talk about the phone bill for a minute. The phone bill, I think, had six phone calls in a period of several months. The minister said to the press he doesn't like talking on the phone very much. Well, again, this carries that to a length that I've never seen before, not liking to talk on the phone. But, I also know the reality. I have been around this business, I have worked with ministers, I have worked in the Premier's office. The notion to me that a minister would have six or seven—it's one or the other number, I think it's six—outgoing and incoming calls in a weeks-long period? Again, we asked for the cell phone bill; we got something that had six calls on it.

It isn't about that. It isn't about how many calls he made. It isn't even about how many appointments he has. It isn't about that. What it's about, again, is confidence in

the process and confidence in the system. If we have a legislative regime in place that makes it possible for any member—or any member of the public or the press, by the way—to make a request to get this information, then surely, as part of this maintenance of confidence in politics and in the political system, in us, in the Legislature, in the cabinet and everything else, then we all have the right to expect, no matter who is in government, that that law is going to be respected, that the process is going to be followed, that they're not going to make a mockery of the timeline, and that when the information is produced, we're not using loopholes or other kinds of things to supply incomplete information to people. It's all part of what causes people to lose faith in government as well.

I would say the time has come. We're going to file the papers, we're going to appeal and do all the things we have to do, which will start some other cycle of six or seven months running to get the real information, the full and complete information on this. It's now not even a matter, to me, of what is on Mr. Takhar's schedule for those days or what phone calls he did make. It's a matter of principle that you can't make a mockery of these systems and safeguards that are in place to safeguard the public interest and guarantee a degree of accountability and transparency. It's not right when people from this party and the New Democratic Party have sat in government and tried to do it—because they have, you know, tried to use loopholes and tried to skirt around these mechanisms that are in place to promote accountability. The members of the Liberal Party condemned it and they were right to do that, just as I'm right to stand up to say now that you're doing it and it's wrong. It's wrong and it's precisely the kind of thing that engenders a lack of confidence in politicians and the political system, as opposed to trying to build up that confidence and build up that reputation for integrity that we all need and that we all need to have thought of as part of our system.

We're going to have lots to say. We're going to take full part in this debate, because I think it's an important debate. It's important precisely because, as I say, it isn't just about Mr. Takhar, it isn't just about Mr. McGuinty, it isn't just about me or anybody else. It's about the system that we're all a part of. If we achieve nothing else out of this debate, maybe it should be that we try to see if out of it can come some good. I personally believe, and I indicated yesterday—and I want to be honest and address it right up front, because I think it's important to be addressed up front. I could read Mr. McGuinty's words from 1997 and say that I would adopt many of them. I think Mr. McGuinty's words rang true when he was referring to a breach of what I think at the time was the Members' Integrity Act and saying that beyond whatever penalties were provided for a member of the House—and those are limited to, as you know, expulsion, suspension, reprimand or nothing—beyond those four options open to the Integrity Commissioner, there should have been a sanction applied in this case by the Premier.

You know, even if the Premier said he was going to put him out of the cabinet for a period of time and then

felt he had done his penance and brought him back, as long as it wasn't a day or an hour or a week, I would accept the fact that principle was followed here, that the man had to step out of cabinet for a period of time because he was found to have breached the rules.

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I think a lot of the time people will say, "Well, the only reason Tory's up asking these questions and the only reason others are asking these questions is that they're just trying to do whatever damage they can to the Liberal Party; that's all part of the game," and so on and so forth. I can tell you, in this case, that that is not what motivates me to get up and speak in this debate, and I hope the tone with which I've spoken indicates that. I have accepted responsibility for things we might have done when we were in government in the past. I've said that when politicians are given a bad name, it's not Conservatives or Liberals or New Democrats, it's all of us, various ones of us who do this from time to time. I try to be fair-minded about these things because I think there is more at stake than simply any one minister, any one Premier, any one government or any one party.

If you ask, "Do I think we are at the point of a crisis of confidence in what we do, what we are, where we are, what our role is and what standards we apply to ourselves"—no one else is going to do it for us, or if we let them do it for us, is that what we want? Do we want to say that only when our behaviour gets so bad that the public decides they're going to throw people out—is that what we leave it to? Do we want to do that and wait for what could be a whole four-year term of bad behaviour until the public gets the next chance to throw us out, and they're so mad and so disenchanted by that time that there's been terrible damage done to the system? Do we want it to be that way? I answer no, and I know every other member of this House would answer that question in exactly the same way.

To me, that is what this matter is about. That is why it was important for Mr. Osborne to review this matter. That is why it is important not just to take his report and file it in some dusty drawer somewhere and say, "It's all fine. He's had the last word on it." That is why this debate is important. That is why I believe there needed to be more done in this instance in respect of Mr. Takhar's position as a member of the executive council.

I think the highest honour you can have in politics is to be elected by the citizens, which we all have been. The reason it's the highest is that in the end it's the people who elect you to the Legislature. But the second-highest honour, surely, is to be appointed to the executive council; I'm sure it's the second-highest honour you can receive in the system. The highest honour is to be elected by your fellow citizens; the second-highest is to be selected by your Premier for the executive council. If that is the second-highest honour of all—maybe others could name ones that compete with it; I'm not really sure. To me it is certainly right up there on the list, only behind being elected by your fellow citizens.

If that's true, then the standard of behaviour we should apply to receiving and keeping that privilege and that

honour—Mr. Takhar himself today referred correctly to being in the executive council as a privilege, as it is a privilege to be here. The difference between the two is that we have that privilege here as long as our fellow citizens give it to us. In the case of membership on the executive council, you have the privilege as long as the Premier decides you should have it. I think that in order to make sure it remains the second-greatest honour or high up on the list of honours one can receive in the political process, certainly behind being elected by your fellow citizens, it requires that the Premier maintain and apply a very high standard of conduct indeed, that he articulate it and enforce it consistently.

Consistently—of course, that's the subject of a whole other speech, and I'm not going to use all the time I have today. These are things that I think are extremely important to say, not because I'm saying them, but because they're just important to say about the process of which we're a part. I think that's the other thing that often irritates people about all politicians: Either we are inconsistent in what we say, or what we say and what we do are inconsistent, or at a given point in time we will be inconsistent between what we said one time and what we say another time. That makes them cynical; we all know that. Why shouldn't they be cynical when you run for election on a given platform, whoever you are and whatever the election is about, and then proceed to get into government and do something quite different? That is when they say, "I'm not going to bother to vote anymore, because it doesn't matter. I go to the debates, ask questions, listen to what the candidates have to say and make my decision on the basis of all of that, and then whoever it is goes to Ottawa or to Queen's Park or to city hall and does exactly the opposite of what they said they would do." Wouldn't you be irritated if somebody did that to you in your private life, your public life or any other life? Of course we all would. So that is the standard that's applied to politicians on the part of the public, and it's a fair standard.

I don't go around blaming them or the press or anybody else. The wounds on our own system are wounds we collectively have inflicted on ourselves. There's only one group of people who are going to clean that up and fix it, and that's us. I think we can fix it in terms of perhaps having some discussions about the Members' Integrity Act and what may need to be done on that. I'm not sure when it was last updated, but if it's been five years, then it's probably in need of a review, just because things change, circumstances change, and stuff happens, as they say, to put the polite expression beside that. If you ask me whether I think, as I said earlier, that we need to have a standard of some kind developed by somebody and ultimately endorsed and bought into by the Premier of the day and then hopefully by his successor after that and his successor after that, I would say a resounding yes. To go on saying, "This is good enough" today, and, "That's not good enough" tomorrow, but it wasn't good enough yesterday, and that we're going to call it as we see it just in terms of no guidance at all as to what's acceptable and what's not, is no way to carry on.

I've tried to be constructive and reasonable in my comments today about this and why it's important. I hope the debate will encourage the participation of a number of members on the bigger issues. We will move amendments that maybe will suggest that some other things should be done. I heard and I understand the comments of the government House leader with respect to what can be done in this debate and what can't. I totally buy into the fact that the House does not have the authority or the mandate to put an amendment to this resolution saying, "Therefore, this man is not entitled to belong in the cabinet anymore." I guess we could say it if we wanted to, but the Premier gets to decide.

To me, that is worthy of discussion as to what should be put at the end of the motion by way of amendment, if anything, and there will be amendments moved. But the really important part here is whether we can maybe make a constructive contribution, not about Mr. Takhar, not about Mr. McGuinty, not about Tory or anybody else here, but about the system that we're a part of, and maybe produce a greater degree of confidence in us, produce a greater degree of consistency by us, produce a standard that we can be proud of and that the public can be proud of, and make sure that this kind of thing doesn't happen again.

I say, in conclusion, that I am proud to be part of a system where we do have an official opposition that has a job to do. I'm proud to be part of a system that does have an act where somebody can file a complaint. I'm proud to be part of a system where you can have someone as reputable and trustworthy as Justice Osborne to do the kind of thorough job that he did in writing up a report that I think tried very hard to look at things objectively, as he's charged with the responsibility of doing. I'm proud that we can get a report and then have an open debate, and I hope it will be open and that the government or the Speaker will not put any undue constraints on how long it goes on or who wants to participate in it. We should hear from everybody who wants to be heard from. I'm proud to be part of a system that can do all those things.

The next measure of pride that I think we'll all want to take a look at is, can we make some good of this? "Some good of this" isn't measured, in my books, by whether or not Mr. Takhar resigns. I think he should. I think he should do it on his own initiative; if not, the Premier should ask him. But to me, that's not the measurement of success. The measurement of success is, can we learn something from this and apply that learning such that this kind of thing won't happen again, or it won't happen for a long time, that we will know better what the standard is the next time, and that that in turn will give the public greater confidence in the system that we're all so proud to be a part of?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): I'm pleased to be able to take part in this debate because I think there are a number of things that need to be put on the record.

The first thing I want to put on the record is that, while we are debating the report by the Integrity Commissioner into the activities of the Honourable Harinder Takhar, Minister of Transportation and member for Mississauga Centre, the fact is that there is some history to the kinds of issues that are being talked about here today. I want to address some of that history.

I want to start with some things that were said in 1997, when a member, Al Leach, who was then Minister of Municipal Affairs, was found to be in violation of the Members' Integrity Act when he wrote to the Health Services Restructuring Commission. The Integrity Commissioner found that the Health Services Restructuring Commission's independence was potentially compromised by Mr. Leach's actions and found Mr. Leach therefore in conflict with the Members' Integrity Act. The Premier of the day did not reprimand Mr. Leach, but I think it's important to now reflect on some of the things that were said at that time.

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I want to quote Hansard of June 25, 1997, and the speaker in this Hansard is one Dalton McGuinty:

"The Integrity Commissioner found that the minister, Al Leach, is in breach of the legislation that governs our behaviour. He said that the minister has broken the law. It seems to me that in those circumstances what the Premier should have done today is he should have stood in his place and said that he has asked for the resignation of the minister, and to that he should have added that he accepted that resignation.

"Based on what he has just told this House, he should then have added that he asked for the resignation of Ms. Cunningham and the resignation of Mr. Runciman, because they too, in keeping with the finding laid out in this decision, are clearly in breach of the law. They have done something which is unacceptable, which is inappropriate and, most important of all, which is unlawful. That is very, very clear. What the Premier should have done is said that he senses that something fundamentally wrong has happened, that he is not going to allow it to stand and that he is going to take the necessary steps to ensure that the consequences are felt so that all members of his government understand the seriousness of this matter."

That was Dalton McGuinty in Hansard on June 25, 1997.

I want to quote further. Again, I'm quoting Dalton McGuinty:

"Premier, what you are effectively saying today in your statement is that you are not satisfied with the Integrity Commissioner's report. You are not satisfied with it. You are not prepared to accept it and its implications. You're trying to get around it now....

"The findings here are perfectly clear. The minister is in breach of the law; so are the other two whose names you identified for us in this House a few moments ago. You have no option. You've got to ask for their resignations. If they don't give them to you, then you've got to fire them. It's as simple as that."

Again, Dalton McGuinty in Hansard, June 25, 1997.

Further, "Let's come back to what this report is all about, what the conclusion is all about. It's about your minister being in breach of the act. It's about, now that we understand the full implications of this, two other ministers clearly being in breach of the act. You have no option, Premier. You cannot wriggle out from under this one. You have been hoisted on your own petard. This is an arm's-length, quasi-judicial body. You've got to ask for and demand the resignation of your three ministers."

Again, Dalton McGuinty in Hansard, June 25, 1997.

I want to quote further:

"What today is all about is your standards. It's lending focus on those more so than at any time in the history of your government. You, today, are under the microscope, and people in this province want to know what you are going to do in the face of a finding by the Integrity Commissioner that your minister broke the law, is in breach of the Members' Integrity Act, interfered with the workings of an independent, arm's-length, quasi-judicial body."

Again, Dalton McGuinty, Hansard, June 25, 1997.

And I quote further:

"What we're talking about here today, Premier, are your standards. Once again the ball is in your court. The Integrity Commissioner has considered this very, very carefully and taken a good deal of time to do so. His conclusion was that your minister broke the law—no ifs, ands or buts about that whatsoever. He broke the law that governs the behaviour of members of your cabinet, specifically dealing with an arm's-length, quasi-judicial body that you put in place.

"You have no choice but today in this Legislature to tell us that in addition to Minister Leach's resignation, you're going to ask for and you're going to accept the resignation of Minister Cunningham and Minister Runciman."

Again, Dalton McGuinty in Hansard, on June 25, 1997: "Premier, you understand full well that the Integrity Commissioner has no authority whatsoever in determining who sits in your cabinet and who does not. The ball is in your court. The judgment that's under close scrutiny here now is yours. We already understand about Mr Leach's judgment. That has been examined carefully and found to be wanting. Now your judgment is under scrutiny. We want to know what you are going to do in the face of this broken law under Ontario legislation."

This is the context. These are words that have been spoken, and were spoken, I might add, by Dalton McGuinty in judgment of another member of this Legislature who was found to be in breach of the Members' Integrity Act.

I next want to refer to some editorial opinion, because it represents the judgment of those who would observe this place, of those who, frankly, spend a lot of money sending reporters here and keeping facilities here to inform the public of what goes on here.

The Windsor Star, January 14, 2006, on the matter of Mr. Takhar:

“The facts speak for themselves. Coulter Osborne, Ontario’s Integrity Commissioner has ruled Transportation Minister Harinder Takhar broke rules outlined in the Members’ Integrity Act. Specifically, that Takhar failed to properly sever his ties with the individual the minister had entrusted to oversee his personal business assets....

“Osborne’s conclusion was that Premier Dalton McGuinty should reprimand Takhar. The inference seemed to be that Takhar should be removed from cabinet—and that would be a fitting punishment in this case.

“However, McGuinty says he won’t take any action against Takhar because his minister has already been punished enough as a result of Osborne’s report....

“But it is also quite clear that Takhar broke rules. Rules that are in place to instil confidence in the integrity of an MPP, and particularly a cabinet minister.”

I want to refer to the London Free Press of January 8, 2006, another important part of the Ontario media which tries to report on the activities that go on here in the Legislature:

“Given the gravity of Ontario Integrity Commissioner Coulter Osborne’s finding in the case of Harinder Takhar, the transportation minister should resign his cabinet position....

“For violating the Members’ Integrity Act, Osborne recommended a reprimand. But given the moral imperative of ethics in government, Takhar should instead resign.”

The Toronto Star of January 6, 2006:

“After a seven-month investigation, Ontario Integrity Commissioner Coulter Osborne has issued a damning report on transport minister Harinder Takhar that concludes he committed a ‘serious’ breach of the Members’ Integrity Act by failing to maintain a proper arm’s-length relationship between his business and political interests.

“While Osborne cannot call for Takhar to be dumped from cabinet, he did recommend the minister be reprimanded for his actions....

“McGuinty is wrong to argue that the reprimand by Osborne is ‘significant’ and enough punishment.

“The people of Ontario deserve to be served by cabinet ministers who act in accordance with that preamble. That’s why Takhar should resign.”

The Toronto Globe and Mail, also of January 6, 2006:

“Ontario’s Integrity Commissioner has found provincial transport minister Harinder Takhar in violation of the law—the Members’ Integrity Act of 1994. He has found Mr. Takhar in breach of parliamentary convention. He has found Mr. Takhar ‘egregiously reckless’ for participating in an April 29 meeting with a management trustee with whom the minister was required by law to maintain an arm’s-length relationship. In fact, he says that Mr. Takhar’s relationship with trustee Joseph Jeyanayagam—who Mr. Takhar didn’t bother telling the commissioner had been elected the treasurer of Mr. Takhar’s riding association in December 2004—doesn’t

come ‘within the ambit of any accepted definition of an arm’s-length relationship.’

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“And how does Mr. Takhar’s political boss, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, respond to all this? With a shrug. He says the minister may have ‘demonstrated a lapse in judgment,’ but ‘I continue to have confidence in [him]... as a valued member of my cabinet and caucus.’

“Mr. Takhar should not be in the cabinet.... Instead, the Premier has praised Mr. Takhar to the hilt and treated the commissioner’s report as a one-day wonder.... Mr. McGuinty should fire Mr. Takhar as his minister.”

The Toronto Sun puts a lot of resources into reporting on this place and making sure the people of Ontario know something about the issues that are debated here every day. This is what the Toronto Sun had to say on January 9, 2006:

“Only McGuinty has the power to fire his minister. Instead, the Premier argued there was no suggestion Takhar had tried to profit from his actions.

“Incredible. Is that the only standard McGuinty has for his cabinet? Before anyone is bounced, they have to be caught red-handed attempting to use their public office for private gain?”

I quote these things because I think we need to take account of the obvious, blatant, patent contradictions and because I think we need to note that the public is not blind; the public is not stupid. The public understands what Premier McGuinty had to say only a few years ago in condemning not one but three cabinet ministers and calling for their resignations, saying we have to have higher standards and those standards need to be observed, and that it is the overall responsibility of the Premier of the day to make absolutely sure that those standards are known and observed. That was the position of Premier McGuinty then, and I think the public knows that. They may not know every dot and dash, and they may not know every quotation, but I believe the public knows that only a few years ago Dalton McGuinty, as he was then, was only too willing to be holier than thou on these issues.

But now—and the public sees this as well—when it’s one of his own cabinet ministers, when the Integrity Commissioner is very clear in his finding, suddenly the standards change. Suddenly the standards are completely different. As I say, the public is not stupid. When the public sees this, the public becomes quite cynical. The public says, “Why should we trust? Why should we believe? Why should we have any confidence?”

I just say to all the members: This hurts each and every one of us. This affects the reputation of each and every one of us, and it affects the reputation of democracy. It affects the institution: this place and the regard people have for this place. It affects the regard that people have for democratic institutions. That’s what is at stake here. More serious than any of us as individuals, that’s what is at stake here.

I just want to deal with a few other things I really found upsetting about this. When Mr. Tory wrote to the

Integrity Commissioner to raise the issues, one would have thought that the Premier and members of his cabinet would have treated this issue with some seriousness. One would have thought that they would have thought about what is at stake here. But let me tell you that what I found really quite disturbing about this is the fact that not only did the Premier and members of the government not take this issue seriously, but in fact some MPPs said that Mr. Tory was sleazy for raising this issue, sleazy for asking that the Integrity Commissioner look into this issue. The Premier said, "Again, the circumstances relating to that particular meeting have been made very clear, notwithstanding the innuendo advanced by the other side." So instead of taking these issues seriously, right away there was almost an organized campaign under way by government members to call anyone who raises these issues sleazy and to say they're dealing with innuendo.

I want to tell you what the Integrity Commissioner said about that. The Integrity Commissioner said, "This complaint is manifestly not frivolous and vexatious or made in bad faith."

This is what I find even more troubling. When someone even writes to the Integrity Commissioner to say, "Is this right? Is this proper?" members of the government immediately try to label someone who does that as being sleazy. Well, if one looks at the comments that were made just a few years ago by one Dalton McGuinty, if one looks at the context of what has happened here, if one looks at the editorial comments, I think it should be clear to the people of Ontario who has been dealing with innuendo and who has been bordering on sleazy in this whole affair.

I say once again that what is really damaging here is that this affects all of us as members of the Legislature. It affects the reputation of the Legislature; it affects people's view of democratic institutions; it affects people's view of politics. That is what is so bad about this. That is what is so damaging about this. Let me tell you, whether it's opposition members or government members, when the next election rolls around, this kind of stuff will be thrown in our face.

I would just say to members opposite—those members who were so willing to sit in judgment of Minister Leach, those Liberal members who were so willing to condemn Bob Runciman, those Liberal members who were so quick to call for the resignation of other cabinet ministers who were not even subject to a complaint to the Integrity Commissioner—look at your own sorry situation here. Look at the precedent you have created. Look at what you are doing to the reputation of this institution, to the reputation of democratic institutions generally. You should hang your heads in shame.

If George Orwell were here, I'm sure he would say, without any doubt, without any hesitation, "double-speak": one of the worst examples of doublespeak, or, if you want to so call it, Newspeak.

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What needs to be done? I also want to remind the Premier of some comments that he made, not in the

context of Mr. Leach or Mr. Takhar, but some comments he made before the last election. He said that he wanted to restore honesty, transparency, accountability to government. He said that was in fact the number one priority, and would be the number one priority of a McGuinty government. I say to government members, here is the opportunity. Now is the time. Here is the challenge. Where are you?

There are a number of substantive things that I believe need to happen in the context of this. Perhaps we need to take a serious look at the Members' Integrity Act. I met with the Integrity Commissioner a few months ago. In his discussions with me, he said that he has some dissatisfaction with the Members' Integrity Act, that he has some complaints about it. He sees that there's a need to amend the act, to put in place some machinery, some mechanism that will make it more effective and might lead to greater trust on the part of the public. So the Integrity Commissioner himself is saying that some things need to be done here.

If the Premier of the day is not willing to live according to the standards, notwithstanding what he said just a few years ago, if he's not willing to meet his own standards, then perhaps we need to write into the legislation some things which clearly would disqualify an MPP for certain activities. Maybe that's what we'll need in order to restore public confidence. If the Premier of the day will not enforce standards that he has waxed eloquent on, that he's repeated over and over again, if he suddenly does an about-face on these issues, perhaps what we need to do is write into the legislation certain specific penalties for certain events. Maybe that's what's required here.

You simply cannot have, on the one hand, a Dalton McGuinty calling for the resignation of someone who has been found in contravention of the Members' Integrity Act, calling on the Premier of the day to insist upon a resignation, and then, when a similar situation, perhaps a more egregious situation, happens a couple of years later, simply saying, "No, there's nothing going to be done here." The public is not stupid. The public sees through this. The public becomes cynical, the public loses faith, the public loses confidence and the public loses trust when they see this happening.

I'm not, in this context, going to suggest all the substantive amendments that need to take place. I'm not going to suggest some of the changes in process that probably need to take place. I think that should be left to another time. But I do want to read into the record—because again, it goes to what I was saying earlier—some of the things that were said in the context of other members of this Legislature.

I want to refer to Cam Jackson. Mr. Jackson got into some trouble. By the way, I want to say to members of the public that politicians, members of the Legislature, are only human. None of us can claim to be perfect. If we do claim to be perfect, then woe are we, because, sorry to say, looking around here, I don't know any of you to be perfect, including myself. Mr. Levac, you want to be

careful before you raise your hand. You want to be very careful.

I want to refer to Mr. Jackson. Mr. Jackson got into some trouble. I want to quote what was said about him, again by Dalton McGuinty: "There's the matter of Cam Jackson running up expense tabs.... I wonder if you are taking notice that your ministers are apologizing ex post facto for behaviour that should never have arisen in the first place. The reason that is happening is because of your lack of standards, your lack of leadership, the lack of direction you are setting for your government." Once again, that was Dalton McGuinty. I wonder if the Premier is reflecting on those comments in view of his actions of late.

I want to refer to comments that were made about one Chris Stockwell. Let's be clear: Mr. Stockwell was the subject of an Integrity Commissioner's complaint and a finding. Mr. Stockwell in fact did step down, but I want to refer to Mr. Stockwell. Again, this is Premier McGuinty: "To my way of thinking ... it is wrong to run some \$25,000 in family expenses through the riding association. To my way of thinking, Premier, you should have fired Chris Stockwell, because what he did was wrong.... It's about ... your judgment and your standards. At what point in time are you, as Premier, going to exercise some leadership, at least some modicum of leadership, and tell your caucus and cabinet ministers that in your government, there are some things that are right and there are some things that are wrong, and what Chris Stockwell did was wrong? When are you going to have the courage, the intestinal fortitude, the conviction to stand up and condemn this minister for what he did as wrong?"

In the context, Chris Stockwell went. Not only did he go as a cabinet minister, but he went as an MPP. I ask again: Compare that with what we see going on here today with the McGuinty government. Dalton McGuinty was quite ready to sit in judgment of others, but when it comes to his own government it seems that the same standards don't apply. In fact, I think people across the province are entitled to ask now, "What are the standards of the McGuinty government? Are there any standards for cabinet ministers in the McGuinty government, or are they simply made up as the Premier goes along?"

I could say much more. I could quote from a few more newspapers. I could quote a few more holier-than-thou statements made by people who now sit as cabinet ministers in the McGuinty government, people who were oh so willing to sit in judgment of others in the past but now have become shrinking violets and have nothing to say. But I think I have illustrated the problem. I think I have illustrated the challenge. What I call for now is that the Premier and the McGuinty government show some of the moral fibre they were so proud of just a few years ago, the moral fibre they demanded of others, the moral fibre they exhibited oh so haughtily when they sat in judgment of others. Where is that moral fibre today? Where is that holier-than-thou, "we always know best" attitude?

We know what the challenge is. We know there is a serious challenge here. We know this must be addressed, both in the context of Mr. Takhar and in the longer-term context. I simply say, where is the Premier, where are his standards, where are the standards of the McGuinty government and where is your willingness to address not only the short-term issue but the longer-term issue, which is perhaps more serious for all of us?

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The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): I found out about 10 minutes ago that I was going to be given the opportunity to speak to this motion this afternoon, so I haven't had very much of an opportunity to prepare. I'm surprised that the government has not put up another speaker to continue to participate in this debate. We have heard this afternoon from the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey—our party's leader—and the leader from the New Democratic Party, both of whom have expressed, in the lead-off speeches for their parties, serious reservations about the situation we're faced with today.

I must say, I take absolutely no pleasure in being expected to render a judgment by way of this House on the situation that the Minister of Transportation finds himself in today. But as I understand it, the Integrity Commissioner has brought forward a report to the Legislature based on extensive investigation and study, talking to all the people involved, and has brought forward his criticism of the conduct of the Minister of Transportation.

What we are talking about here this afternoon is the integrity of the Ontario Legislature, the standards that the Premier of Ontario has for his cabinet ministers and at what point the Premier asks a minister to step aside. As we heard earlier this afternoon, there are a number of examples, and I would argue there have been precedents in this place in the last five, 10 years whereby cabinet ministers, in terms of their responsibilities, were seen to have broken standards of conduct that were deemed to be appropriate. In some cases they offered their resignations without being asked and in some cases I'm sure the Premier of the day was expected to request the resignation of those members of cabinet.

I'm not sure what has transpired behind closed doors—perhaps only the Premier and the Minister of Transportation know—in terms of whether or not the minister was willing to offer his resignation in this case to save the government further embarrassment, but clearly the Integrity Commissioner's report is harshly critical of the Minister of Transportation in terms of his understanding of conflict of interest. It is equally clear that the Premier now has a decision to make as to whether or not he asks the minister to step aside.

We heard the Minister of Transportation come into the House this afternoon and give a speech that was, I thought, contrite. I would characterize it as such. He expressed serious misgivings about what he had done, but, obviously, he didn't offer his resignation today. I have to say to you, based on what I understand of the

situation, based on what I have read, based on what I have heard, this Minister of Transportation really has no choice but to resign because of the response of the Integrity Commissioner.

We in the Ontario Legislature have appointed an Integrity Commissioner going back to the late 1980s when the office was established. It was an important reform at that time to have an independent Integrity Commissioner responsible to the entire Legislature, not to the government. When situations arose, like the one the Minister of Transportation found himself in, and when a complaint was made based on the situation he found himself in, the Integrity Commissioner, in this case a respected former judge, would render a decision, would come back with a response and a report as to what ought to happen next.

It's my understanding the Integrity Commissioner has said that it's not his responsibility to determine whether or not someone should be in the cabinet, but to offer an opinion as to whether or not the rules were broken. As I said earlier, clearly this Minister of Transportation has broken the rules and has been found by the Integrity Commissioner as having done so. As such, a consequence has to result.

I'm very surprised that the Premier, to this point, has been prepared to stonewall. Obviously it was brought to his attention that the Minister of Transportation wasn't conducting himself within the rules when he visited his company, Chalmers Suspensions International, given the fact that he should have known and should have understood that being present during business hours at that company would demonstrate he was not holding his business interests at arm's length. Clearly, the minister either didn't understand the conflict of interest rules or didn't think they applied to him. In either case, I would suggest the sanction has to be that he step aside from cabinet so as to ensure that the integrity of the Ontario Legislature is upheld.

If the government continues to stonewall on this issue, I think what we are going to have to see in this House are quite a number of speeches throughout the course of the next few days as this resolution is debated. I can't speak for all my colleagues, but I know there is very serious concern within our caucus about this issue, not just for Mr. Takhar, not just for the Premier, but in terms of the integrity of the whole House.

I was pleased that our party's leader, the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey, in the context of his speech talked about his experience when he was running in the by-election in Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey. I had the opportunity to canvass with him because part of his current riding is an area I represented for nine years in the Ontario Legislature, my old riding of Wellington before my riding was severed into three parts through redistribution.

He's quite right. We heard a great deal of concern at the door from people whose respect for politicians has declined as a result of actions that have been taken by, I would continue to argue, a minority of politicians over the years, but because of the high degree of publicity of these indiscretions that have taken place in recent years,

there is a public perception—and we all know it's out there. We hear it from time to time. I've found over the years that it seems to come and go in waves. There are times when the cynicism of the public is at a peak; at other times it seems to diminish. It's probably based on what the public observes in terms of their political institutions and what kind of leadership they see us providing.

Right now, it's my opinion that there is a great deal of cynicism in the public about political institutions and politicians. There are a lot of people who think we're all cut from the same cloth and that it's not an attractive one, that many of us are here to feather our own nests and not primarily to observe the public interest.

There are many who think we will say or do anything to get ourselves elected and to stay elected. I would suggest to you that the conduct of the Liberal Party during the last provincial election, to some degree, has further buttressed that perception and observation on the part of a lot of people, because it was clear that the Liberal Party and the leader of the Liberal Party at that time was prepared to say and do whatever he felt he needed to do in order to win that election.

Clearly, we have a challenge today as to how we are going to restore the public trust and ensure that the faith the public thinks they understand—

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. The conversation here has now become as loud as the person who has the floor, and there's a bit of one back there as well. Thank you. The member will please continue.

Mr. Arnott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your assistance in bringing the members' attention to what I am trying to say because this is an important debate, and I think that over the course of it, we're all going to be expected to express our opinion as to what should happen in this instance.

As I was saying earlier, we have a real challenge as legislators to restore trust. Of course we need to have the public trust if we're going to provide leadership in our society, which is the responsibility ultimately that we are charged to pursue as an elected Legislature, as members individually, and of course as the government of the day.

Our party has been raising this issue on a number of occasions over the last number of months. This goes back many months. It goes back to April 2005 when the Minister of Transportation was first observed at his former place of business, where he clearly should not have been. Our party had to resort to the process of freedom of information to obtain information as to what was going on with the minister's schedule. It took many months. I'm not in a position to suggest that the government stonewalled the request for information, but the fact is that if it takes months and months to receive information that should be public from a government that would want to be seen as an open government, I'm sure, clearly this is not the case in terms of their tardy responses to freedom-of-information requests on these kinds of issues.

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We've had to pay for the records we were asking to receive out of our party resources, I gather, or our admin-

istrative budgets. Again, this has been going on since April 2005, and clearly the government is appearing to want to make it go away by just dragging it out and delaying it. Given the fact that the Integrity Commissioner brought forward his report early in the new year—I understand it was received or distributed to the interested parties on January 4, right after the new year, when the interest of the media was on the federal election and most people's interest in politics was focused toward the federal election that was starting to heat up at that point, culminating in the election of the new government on January 23—it would appear the government is making its best effort to make sure this doesn't end up on the front page of the newspapers. But this is an issue that is important and has to be seen as such.

I have some paragraphs that were included in the Integrity Commissioner's report, and I think it's important to put those on the record because I don't want it to be thought that it is just the opposition parties or me individually who have drawn this conclusion that a serious breach of the integrity rules has been observed here. It is in fact the Integrity Commissioner's report that has given us the reason to have this debate this afternoon.

I'm told by the people who compiled information for me on this that regarding evidence from a lawsuit against Mr. Takhar prior to Mr. Takhar becoming a minister, this relates to evidence given that Mr. Takhar never worked at Chalmers: "... the evidence from the lawsuit started by the minister's uncle establishes that, at least in the capacity of a consultant, the minister worked for the Chalmers Companies and that he did attend directors' meetings" in the 1990s. "It does ... undercut the evidence of Mrs. Takhar and Mr. Jeyanayangam, both of whom stated that the minister 'never' worked at Chalmers."

Regarding the notes of the April 29, 2005, meeting taken by Mr. Jeyanayangam, "I am skeptical"—this is what the Integrity Commissioner says—"as to the legitimacy of these notes. Perhaps my skepticism is in part caused by my concern as to why this meeting at Chalmers was held in the first place and why Mr. Jeyanayangam was invited to participate. Mr. Jeyanayangam's notes are in some respects detailed and in other respects somewhat vague. After the meeting had concluded, for reasons that I find somewhat bewildering, Mr. Jeyanayangam concluded his notes by referring to Mrs. Takhar making lunch arrangements, the minister going out to make some mobile phone calls and to the fact that Mr. Jeyanayangam went out to the parking lot with the minister."

Again, regarding that important meeting on April 29, 2005, and I believe I'm quoting from the Integrity Commissioner: "There is ... no doubt that the minister was egregiously reckless in participating in the April 29th meeting at Chalmers. He virtually invited a complaint by his conduct." The Integrity Commissioner chooses his words very carefully. He characterizes the minister's behaviour as "egregiously reckless," and he says that Mr. Takhar, the Minister of Transportation, "virtually invited a complaint by his conduct."

Regarding the appointment as Mr. Jeyanayangam as Mr. Takhar's trustee, the Integrity Commissioner has said this: "'Arm's length' is ... defined as a relationship in which there are 'no bonds of dependence, control or influence, in the sense that there is no moral or psychological leverage sufficient to diminish or possibly influence the free decision-making of the other.'

"In practical terms, the statutory requirement that a minister's trustee be at arm's length with the minister means that the trustee will have no relationship beyond *de minimus*" which is, of course, a legal term.

"Provided that I was given all of the relevant facts," the Integrity Commissioner goes on, "that approval"—of Mr. Jeyanayangam nomination as a trustee—"gives the minister a complete defence.... I was not advised of the fact that Mr. Jeyanayangam was the minister's CFO for purposes of the Election Finances Act during the course of and after the October 2003 provincial election." This made Mr. Jeyanayangam the minister's agent at least for purposes of the CFO's duties as set out in the Election Finances Act. More importantly—I would point this out and encourage all members to think about this—"in December of 2004, Mr. Jeyanayangam was elected as treasurer of the minister's riding association. My office was not advised of that fact." Obviously, the Integrity Commissioner was very concerned about that aspect, that error of omission in terms of disclosure.

"As CFO, Mr. Jeyanayangam owed a duty to the minister to represent the state of his finances fully and accurately. He owed a duty of loyalty to the minister.... When Mr. Jeyanayangam was elected treasurer of the minister's riding association, the relationship between him and the minister could hardly be viewed as anything coming within the ambit of any accepted definition of an arm's length relationship....

"The relationship between the minister and Mr. Jeyanayangam failed the test set out above once Mr. Jeyanayangam became treasurer of the minister's riding association and before that when he assumed the position of CFO"—again, that's the chief financial officer—"for the minister under the Election Finances Act. Thus, I conclude that"—and this is important—"the minister has breached s. 11 of the act and parliamentary convention associated with the establishment of management trusts by allowing Mr. Jeyanayangam to continue as his trustee after he became treasurer of his riding association and by failing to disclose that Mr. Jeyanayangam was his CFO under the Election Finances Act."

I would like to bring into this discussion a letter from the Honourable Coulter Osborne, the Integrity Commissioner, which was addressed to our party's leader on February 9, 2006. He wrote:

"The Honourable Gregory Evans, a number of years ago,... stated:

"Whether a member of the executive council remains in cabinet is not a matter for my office. It would not be correct to draw any inference that my recommendation ... has any relationship to a member's status as a member of the executive council."

Justice Osborne said, "I agree with his conclusion. I do not have the jurisdiction to advise the Premier or make recommendations as to who should be on the executive council."

Therefore, again, I think it's clear that the Premier has to make a decision as to whether or not he is going to allow a minister who has broken the integrity act, who has been found to be in breach of the integrity act—clearly, in black and white—to continue to serve in his executive council, and whether or not it is in the interests of the public and in the interests of attempting to restore public faith in our political institutions, in the Ontario Legislature, in the government of Ontario and in the members of the Legislature individually—whether or not the Premier feels it is appropriate to keep someone in his cabinet who has been found by the Integrity Commissioner to have broken the Members' Integrity Act.

I would submit to you that the course of action for the Premier, in my opinion, is clear: He has no choice but to ask Mr. Takhar to resign from cabinet so as to ensure that the integrity of the cabinet is demonstrated to the public as we go forward. I would hope that at some future date, if the Premier wishes to consider that there's another assignment that's appropriate for Mr. Takhar, there would be one forthcoming. But the fact is, this finding has been brought to our attention, and we have no choice but to deal with it. I would submit to you that the Premier has no choice but to ask for the minister's resignation as a result of the Integrity Commissioner's finding.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): It's an honour for me to stand and join in this evening's debate about the Minister of Transportation. I had the privilege several minutes ago of joining with other members in the Legislature in hearing the Minister of Transportation's comments in regard to the Integrity Commissioner's report. Like all members of the House, I was moved by the emotion with which he spoke about himself.

I've come to know him over the past two years as a man of great integrity, as someone who has contributed so much to this Legislature and as a minister. As I say, I think all of us were moved by the emotion with which he spoke about having come to Canada as a new Canadian, about the success that he had in terms of his business, in terms of his family and, of course, in terms of public life: starting off being involved in the United Way, starting off being involved in the local hospital and in the general community, and going from there to be a member of provincial Parliament and serving there. So I think we have to begin there because we're talking about a human being here; we're talking about someone who has put aside his personal interests to serve the community and to serve the Legislature.

1740

The issue at hand is the Integrity Commissioner's report, and for those who are watching this debate, it's helpful to clarify exactly what was in question here in terms of the Integrity Commissioner's report.

There were three matters. The first matter is whether Minister Takhar had at any time used his position or knowledge gained as a minister to further the interests of his family-owned business. In other words, had he personally profited from this? I think we would all agree that that is a very serious accusation, and all of us should be relieved to know that the Integrity Commissioner found absolutely no merit in such an accusation. So on the first point, a very serious point, the minister was totally exonerated.

The second matter was whether Minister Takhar participated in the management of those companies after he was appointed minister—once again, a very serious accusation, and once again, the Integrity Commissioner found no basis for such accusations. Again, a man of integrity, a member of this Legislature, two serious accusations: exonerated.

The third point: again, a serious matter, but it had to do with whether Minister Takhar had put his assets into a blind trust and whether the commissioner of that trust had been appointed and had administered in a way which was proper. There, the Integrity Commissioner found that there was an error being made and advised the minister on how to correct the error. The minister apologized to this Legislature and moved forward.

The most important thing to realize is that this is about failing to inform the Integrity Commissioner about aspects of a trustee. This is not about putting taxpayers' dollars at risk; this is not about a minister using his position for personal gain; this is not about a minister funnelling money through crown corporations or any of the other deeds that had happened in the past that have been talked about.

I'd just like to again go on the record with my support for the Minister of Transportation and, in closing, quote the Integrity Commissioner's report, where, in his concluding remarks, he wrote, "Although I regard this as a serious matter"—and members on this side of the House certainly do—"I have to recognize"—this is the Integrity Commissioner—"that the minister did not go about intentionally trying to short-circuit the system. I accept his statement that had he realized that his arm's-length relationship ... was compromised, he would have taken steps through this office to straighten things up."

An error was made by the Minister of Transportation. He has accepted that error; he has apologized to the Legislature. On the very serious matters, the accusations about his personal gain etc. that were brought forward, he has been totally exonerated. All of us should recognize the Minister of Transportation as a man of honour, a man of integrity, accept his apology and move on with the important challenges that are facing this province.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): This is an important debate. It talks about integrity; it talks about the way in which we, as members of this House, are viewed by the public; and it talks to the matter of how people in this House—ministers, members of opposition, members of government—make decisions and how those decisions affect the people of Ontario. We always hope that those

decisions that people make in this House are made with careful forethought, careful research, and that they're made with the best interests of the people of Ontario in mind.

The Minister of Transportation made a bad decision. That is the crux of the matter here, but it is not really the issue. The issue is that he was found to be in error in his decision. The Premier knew he was in error in his decision and the Premier took no action. The Premier took a lot of action when those kinds of things happened when he was sitting over here and we were sitting over there. That amounts to a double standard, and that double standard has been exhibited by this Premier several times since he's become Premier. It's kind of a "that was then and this is now" philosophy.

I remember Chris Stockwell, who sat in this House. I was here, and I watched as day after day he was attacked by the now Minister of Finance and the now Attorney General, and he was eventually hounded from this House. Yet the Minister of Economic Development and Trade conducted himself in exactly the same fashion that Mr. Stockwell had. The minister knew this and the Premier knew this, and yet the Premier didn't ask for his resignation, nor was it offered. Now, that's a double standard. It wasn't okay then, but it's okay now because "I know how this thing worked and I know this minister, and I know that one cheap suit shouldn't stand in the way of a career." That minister made a bad decision, as did the Minister of Transportation. They made a bad decision. If you don't take action on that, on those double standards that this Premier seems to accept as a way of doing business, I guess you have to ask yourself, when should a minister step aside? Should a minister step aside—

Interjection: Never.

Mr. Chudleigh: "Never," one of the members opposite said. But when should a minister step aside? I believe a minister should step aside at the first legitimate complaint that is made against him, so that there is no question in the minds of the public that the integrity of this House sits at the very highest level; that integrity can't be negotiated.

I will point to the occasion when Bob Runciman, the member from down east, stepped aside. The issue he stepped aside on—it was an evening sitting, a Wednesday evening, I believe, maybe a Tuesday evening, and Doug Galt, the member for Northumberland at that time, was making a speech in the House. He had visited a young person's reformatory in his riding where a number of students had graduated with their grade 12 diplomas. This was a momentous occasion in their lives. These young people were very proud of this. They had been incarcerated in this home. They were young offenders. Without proper forethought, the parliamentary assistant to Bob Runciman at that time read out the names of those young offenders. Of course, identifying a young offender breaks the law.

The next day there were headlines in the newspapers about it. When the House reconvened at 1:30 in the

afternoon, Bob Runciman stepped aside. He didn't wait for an investigation by the OPP; he didn't wait for an investigation by the integrity officer. At his earliest opportunity, he stepped aside to let that investigation take place, and when that investigation had taken place and the Integrity Commissioner had ruled and the OPP had done their investigation over a period, as I recall, of three or four months, after all the facts were in and he was found blameless by all the people involved in the investigation, he retook his seat and retook his place in cabinet.

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In my opinion, that's exactly the way those things should be handled at the first sign to maintain the integrity of our government at that time, but also the integrity of this House, and that is not negotiable. The integrity of this House is of paramount importance to all of us.

I started in this business in 1995. I was elected on June 8, 1995, and all of sudden on June 9, my word wasn't worth as much as it had been on June 7 because I was now a politician. When I started working, after I got out of university, the first job I had was down at the Ontario Food Terminal. I worked for Ontario Produce down there. It was a great job; a wonderful place to work and wonderful people. That was in 1965, and in those days it was a very fast-paced business.

You didn't have computers in those days; you had little notepads, little forms that you wrote up your orders on. Someone walked by and wanted five cases of tomatoes. They would wave at you and say, "Save me five cases of tomatoes." You knew this guy a little bit—he was a customer—and so you'd write down "five cases of tomatoes for 135 Queen Street East" and that would be there. Tomatoes might have been short that day and there weren't too many around, but when that guy came back to fill up his truck at 10 o'clock—this was at 6:30 in the morning; things started down there at about 6. When that guy came back to fill up his truck, his five cases of tomatoes had better be there, and your word to keep those tomatoes for him had to be good or you weren't in business anymore at the Ontario Food Terminal. You were useless as a salesman if your word wasn't any good. That kind of integrity was throughout the food terminal and throughout the fruit and vegetable business. That was my first job. I grew up with that kind of integrity. Your word was your bond; if it wasn't, you were out of business.

The day after you're elected, I don't think that really changes. I don't think your word really changes, and yet the perception of the public is that it does. I think that's because of events like this, where at one time it was bad to do this and people had to step down, but now—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Chudleigh: These are members of my own party who aren't listening, Mr. Speaker. It is rather embarrassing. These people over here are paying rapt attention.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: The member is attempting to speak to the House. We have been very good all afternoon. We have listened intently to everyone who spoke. You could have heard a pin drop through most of it. I know it's getting late, but he only has a few minutes left. I hope we can pay attention to him.

Please continue.

Mr. Chudleigh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll give you another example of someone stepping aside. The member from Simcoe, Jim Wilson, also stepped aside. It was an evening when his assistant, his staffer, made a comment about medical information that was confidential. That was released in the newspaper and was blown up the next morning, and again—again—the same scenario held true. At the first opportunity when this House reconvened at 1:30 in the afternoon, Mr. Wilson stood up and took leave of his seat while that was under investigation. Again, the investigation took place over some months, and at the end, all those involved in the investigation—the OPP, the Integrity Commissioner—found that Mr. Wilson was harmless in the situation. I believe it was some time in December that he was welcomed back into caucus. I believe it was about the time of our caucus Christmas party, which he did attend, which made the whole thing kind of nice, that at that time of year he was welcomed back into the caucus, which he had absolved himself from because of something that took place through no fault of his own. In both these cases, it was a staffer who had made these egregious errors, and in both cases the minister stood down. I was very proud of them, and that is what I think the standard should be. That is what I think integrity around these kinds of things really means and really leads to.

The question, I suppose, is also what people perceive to be the right standards for ministers to conduct themselves at. There are all kinds of quotes—that's one of the things about being a politician. Every time you make a quote, it's recorded somewhere; Hansard records it. Sometimes it comes back and we'd just as soon maybe not hear that quote again, but there it is—another excellent reason, by the way, for never saying anything that you don't truly believe in, never straying over the line,

always conducting yourself with the utmost integrity, which is nothing less than the people who sent you to this place expect from you. So you always conduct yourself in that fashion.

Here's a quote: "The pillars of good government are leadership, responsibility, accountability and integrity, and clearly in this particular matter all four have been lacking. What we've had instead is indifference, recklessness and incompetence." Of course, that was a quote by Dalton McGuinty on June 28, 2001.

While he was making that quote, there was some talk that the minister—and this is the Premier speaking; this is a direct quote from the Premier, recorded in the Toronto Star on June 26, 1997: "The Premier had a last-minute huddle and, rather than making a decision on what was the right thing to do, they said"—and he's now suggesting this is what the Premier said—"Look, we've got one more question period," in Queen's Park this spring, "it's hot, people's minds will drift away from this issue. Let's ride this out." That's what he thought then—Premier Mike Harris said.

"We don't intend to give them that free ride," Dalton McGuinty later told reporters.

He's thinking that this is what Mike Harris said. But at the same time, that's a great insight into the thinking of the Premier. He's thinking, "This issue isn't that big. Let's ride it out. Let's see if we can ride this one out and get over it." That's what he thought we were thinking at the time and I think that's what he's thinking about this issue, and that's too bad. That's a sad thing for Ontario, because Ontarians are not getting the most integrity that they deserve out of a government. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Could I ask for the record: Was that the conclusion of your speech, or do you intend to do the next five minutes when we return?

Mr. Chudleigh: I would love to do another five minutes.

The Acting Speaker: All right, then. Fine.

Let the time be shown that it is now 6 of the clock, and this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown

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

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Bramalea–Gore–Malton– Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
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Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton–Ouest–Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
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Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga–Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
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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	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
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Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L) Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (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
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	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
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	Nepean–Carleton	Vacant
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	Toronto–Danforth	Vacant
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse	Whitby–Ajax	Vacant
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough–Agincourt	Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Scarborough–Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
St. Paul's	Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Attorney General / procureur général		
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

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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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