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of Ontario  
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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 10 October 2006**

**Mardi 10 octobre 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

Tuesday 10 October 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 10 octobre 2006

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### GERMAN PIONEERS DAY

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** Ontario is the first province to officially recognize the historic and ongoing contributions to our society of Canadians of German ancestry by proclaiming the day following Thanksgiving Day in each year as German Pioneers Day.

I was privileged today to attend a flag-raising ceremony in front of the Legislature in honour of this occasion. Among the honoured guests in attendance were Dr. Klaus Rupprecht, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Toronto; Karl Ruppert, the president of the German World Congress; and Mr. Gerry Meinzer, the founding president of the German Canadian Congress.

The emigration of settlers of German origin to Canada began with the coming of the first Loyalists at the end of the 18th century. In the 1820s, people of German origin in Ontario made up a full 70% of the entire population of Ontario.

Famous German Canadians included Fathers of Confederation William Steeves and Sir Charles Tupper, Canada's sixth Prime Minister; Prime Minister John Diefenbaker; and Governor General Ed Schreyer.

As a proud German Canadian, and on behalf of John Tory and the official opposition, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our German community for its pivotal role in the historic and continuing development of Ontario—socially, culturally, economically and politically—on this German Pioneers Day 2006.

#### ONTARIO LEGISLATIVE QUILT

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** This spring, my colleagues Andrea Horwath, Julia Munro and I asked all MPPs to donate a piece of fabric and their signature to create the Ontario legislative quilt. It will be auctioned off October 24 for The Quilt: A Breast Cancer Support Project's annual Toronto auction.

Today we were honoured to unveil the quilt, created by Rosemary Schaefer of Kirkton, here at the Legislature. I am pleased to report that the generous contributions of all members have made this quilt truly representative of Ontario.

Of course, today's unveiling would not be possible without the inspiration of my friend, breast cancer survivor and founder of The Quilt, Carol Miller. Founded in 1997 by Carol, The Quilt project is now in its eighth season. This year, 412 donated quilts from all across Canada will be auctioned off to support women and their families affected by breast cancer. Events are held in Calgary, at the Stratford Festival and in Toronto's Distillery District. To date, 2,200 quilts have been donated, and the project has surpassed \$1.1 million in proceeds. One hundred per cent of the money raised through the sale of these quilts is directed to breast cancer support.

In view of today's momentous unveiling, I'd like to thank Carol, her Circle of Friends support group and all of members of this Legislature for their support and generous contributions to the Ontario legislative Quilt.

I would also seek unanimous consent to display The Quilt until Thursday here in the legislative precinct, for all members to see this unique, beautiful and historic piece of art.

#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** This coming Sunday, October 15, there is a proposed rally in my riding of Caledonia, and the McGuinty government has declared it will keep the event safe. For me, safety is a top priority.

The Toronto Star reports, "The provincial government doesn't have any plans to either sanction or stop the rally."

Minister Ramsay's spokesperson Anne-Marie Flanagan was also quoted in the Toronto Star as saying, "We'll monitor and take appropriate action to make sure people are safe." Further to this, the Toronto Sun reports that "Attorney General Michael Bryant said his ministry wasn't seeking an injunction."

The question remains, what action is being taken by this government to ensure the safety of the people attending? Whether I speak or don't speak is predicated on a precondition that I have set with organizers in September. My precondition is that the OPP and the McGuinty government ensure the safety of the people. I've made it clear that marching to the occupied site is a non-starter. All parties must respect the rule of law.

Where is the government's plan? To date, I have not heard of any action to ensure safety—just promises. Simply put, it is incumbent on the McGuinty government

and the Ontario Provincial Police to ensure the safety of those people attending.

#### HEATHER CROWE AWARD

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce):** This past August, my riding had the privilege of a visit from the Minister of Health Promotion, the Honourable Jim Watson. Amongst other things, Minister Watson was in Huron–Bruce to present the Heather Crowe Award to the Huron county health unit for its excellence in the prevention of public smoking by way of Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

The Huron county health unit was judged to have shown demonstrable leadership in tobacco control in the areas of youth prevention, protection from second-hand smoke and smoking cessation.

As you know, Heather Crowe was an Ottawa-area waitress and non-smoker who developed lung cancer after being exposed to second-hand smoke in the workplace. Heather courageously told her story in powerful public service announcements produced by Health Canada and aired by the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Tragically, Heather passed away this year from her illness, but that hasn't stopped this government from keeping her crusade alive by implementing the most stringent anti-smoking legislation in North America. This is just another example of the good things the McGuinty government is doing for the people of Ontario.

Congratulations to the Huron county health unit for all the work they have done in smoking prevention and cessation. Keep up the good work.

1340

#### MINISTER'S RECORD

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** There is an article in today's Liberal house organ suggesting Attorney General Michael Bryant is one tough guy. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Mr. Bryant's tenure as Attorney General has been a textbook case of public relations over substance, headline hunting over meaningful improvements in our justice system, political point-scoring over productive co-operation. The Attorney General's posturing on the Karla Homolka appeal is a case in point: tough-guy rhetoric while failing to back it up with real involvement at the Quebec hearing that allowed her to gain her freedom.

This so-called tough-on-crime Attorney General has failed to appoint justices of the peace during his three years. We now have 18 fewer JPs than in 2003 and as a result we have thousands of people walking away from Provincial Offences Act charges. We're also experiencing an epidemic of plea bargains on gun crime and impaired driving: expediency in the name of efficiency at the expense of victims, neighbourhoods and communities.

In Caledonia, we're witnessing a complete abandonment of the rule of law. We're now approaching the

eight-month anniversary of this illegal occupation with no end in sight, and we've had the unprecedented spectacle of an Attorney General fighting the enforcement of a court-ordered injunction requiring the occupiers' removal.

Michael Bryant as tough on crime is like suggesting Dalton McGuinty keeps his promises. It just doesn't compute.

#### GERMAN PIONEERS DAY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Today we celebrate a special day, German Pioneers Day. In 1788, King George established four counties, that is, four districts, for German settlement: Lunenburg, Mecklenberg, Hesse and Nassau. We're here in Nassau today, for that matter. Since then, German Canadians have made a great contribution to this country, but specifically, I'm looking at the city of Toronto.

The co-founder of Toronto is none other than William Moll-Berczy, who came here with 64 German families from Pennsylvania. He was the co-founder with John Graves Simcoe. Together they laid out Toronto, they made the grid, and Mr. Simcoe asked Mr. Moll-Berczy to establish and in fact to dig up what is called Yonge Street today, right from down where the lake is to near Keswick. As Yonge Street was being developed, a lot of these Germans—there were 64 families, as I said earlier—lost their lives.

Today, of course, we see also in the city of Toronto some other items that are of German background, namely, the Toronto-Dominion Centre, which bears the famous international Bauhaus style, Ontario Place, the Eaton Centre, the Queen's Quay Terminal. There are a lot of contributions that German Canadians have made.

Today, in the gallery are a number of German Canadians to help us to celebrate this special event: Gerry Meinzer, the founding president of the German Canadian Congress; Rolf and Sybille Rentmeister from Echo Germanica; Karl Ruppert, president of the Deutscher Welt Kongress; and Henry Betsch, Association of Danube Swabians of Toronto. Thank you for coming.

*Remarks in German.*

#### MISSISSAUGA SOUTH MIDGET BASEBALL TEAM

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** I rise today to recognize the Mississauga South midget baseball team. This team is a great band of fearless warriors in the game of baseball. Not only did they take on Toronto and win the all-Ontario championship, they went on to PEI for the Canadian championships and won that as well.

Today in the gallery we have Stephan Kulchyk, Joe Jimenez, Max Christiansen, Mike Mathieson, Ian Campbell, Chris Piccini, Matt Piccini, Marc Spagnuolo, Curtis Kinden, Brandon Neuman, Andrew Dos Santos, Eric Ventura, Billy Martin, James Macklem, Sean Lemon, Anthony Fantauzzi and Eric Wakeman.

When they were down in PEI, not only did they distinguish themselves with their unbelievable athletic prowess, when they were leading substantially, they backed off and worked with the other teams so that all the players could participate. They won the hearts of all Canada, and especially the people watching down in Prince Edward Island.

With that note, let me acknowledge the coaches who are also here with them: David Huctwith, Wayne Brocklebank, Bob Kulchyk, Edd Bobot and Richard Newman.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Canadian champions from Mississauga South.

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** If only we had champions for First Nations in either our federal or provincial governments. Yet again, here we are a year after Kashechewan and we have yet to learn the lessons that we should have learned from that particular episode. Here we are a year later, the community of Marten Falls, almost exactly the same situation: a lift station that fails, a lift station that allows effluent to run down the creek into the water supply where the water is taken into the plant. Again, children that I see appear to be infected with scabies; again, people who are not feeling well in that community.

What have we got? We have a federal government that, at the end of the day, has not been responding to the calls of Chief Elijah Moonias when it comes to getting INAC to go in there to secure the water plant and to fix the lift station problem so that the water supply could be uncontaminated.

We have, yet again, the same response from the federal government. They say there's basically not a problem and that, in fact, regarding the First Nations people of Marten Falls, if they're getting scabies, if they're getting sick, it's not because of anything that's happening that's under the federal government's responsibility.

I say to this Legislature: We've got to stop this. The province of Ontario knows how to manage a water system. The province of Ontario has the expertise. The province of Ontario should enter into negotiations with First Nations and the federal government to take over the responsibility for water testing and running water plants so that they can fall under the system that the rest of us as Ontario citizens take for granted. How many more children have to get sick before we fix this awful problem?

### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** Through ReNew Ontario, this government, led by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and in co-operation with private sector partners, is investing more than \$30 billion by fiscal year 2009-10 to ensure a safe and reliable infrastructure foundation for Ontario's families. GO

Transit will shortly start building the Lisgar GO train station, the first time in 25 years that a new GO train station has been built in Mississauga. Next year, work will begin on phase 2 at Credit Valley Hospital to expand the hospital's maternity suite, expand its complex continuing care ward and alleviate overcrowding in the emergency ward.

To the previous sorry Tory Conservative government, Mississauga was just another cow to be milked. They neglected our provincial infrastructure, they dumped expenses onto cities through downloading. Just like their leader, the Tories said anything, any time, anywhere, to anybody and did nothing.

The city of Mississauga and its Liberal MPPs have worked together with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal. We started projects to get our city moving, to address traffic gridlock and fix a crumbling health care system in all three hospitals that serve our city of some 700,000 people. We're building the foundations for future growth and ensuring safety and reliability for generations to come in the city of Mississauga and throughout Ontario.

### VISITORS

#### VISITEURS

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to welcome the family members of one of our pages, Dominic, le père et la mère, the father and mother, Guy and Sylvie Brisson, les grands-mères, the grandmothers, Lise Brisson et Louise Brunet, et sa soeur, his sister, Katia Brisson. Bienvenue. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to welcome to the chamber a visitor from Jalandhar, Punjab, Mr. Ajit Randhawa, who is here with his nephew, Hargurnar Randhawa from Brampton. Please welcome them.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### STREET SAFETY

#### AWARENESS MONTH ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006

#### SUR LE MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION À LA SÉCURITÉ DANS LES RUES

Mr. Kular moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 145, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Street Safety Awareness Month / Projet de loi 145, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois de la sensibilisation à la sécurité dans les rues.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may wish to make a brief statement.

1350

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale):** In our province of Ontario, crime on our streets has become an everyday occurrence. Residents no longer feel safe walking in their own communities. For this reason, there exist many programs and community initiatives within Ontario that attempt to foster safe streets, such as Block Parents and Neighbourhood Watch. These programs try to encourage people to safeguard their communities, so it's appropriate to recognize the month of May as Street Safety Awareness Month in Ontario.

## ELECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006

## MODIFIANT LA LOI ÉLECTORALE

Mr. Patten moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 146, An Act to amend the Election Act / Projet de loi 146, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may wish to make a brief statement.

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** This particular bill is a very simple bill. It's also the second time I've introduced it. If the bill is passed, in future Ontario provincial general elections the ballot would contain beside each candidate's name the name of the registered party that has endorsed the candidate or the word "Independent" if the candidate—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Introduction of bills.

**Mr. Patten:** I haven't finished, Mr. Speaker. I was waiting because I was being interrupted.

**The Speaker:** The member for Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Patten:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the candidate has not been properly endorsed by a registered party, then obviously "Independent" would be beside it.

Many Ontarians have advocated for these changes for many years, including past and present members of the Ontario Legislature. As far back as 1989, the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly recommended and approved placing political affiliation on the ballot. Our federal cousins made amendments to the Canada Elections Act in 1970, over 36 years ago, to include the placement of political affiliations on the ballot for all subsequent elections, and the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada has indicated to us that those amendments have worked well. As well, of course, a former colleague, Sean Conway, introduced this bill on two separate occasions. In addition, a college student at Algonquin College did research and proposed party affiliation identification. His name is Rossano Bernardi.

I have to make the point that Ontario and PEI are the only provinces in Canada—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. That's an adequate explanation.

## MOTIONS

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the membership of certain committees.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that the following substitutions be made to the membership of certain committees:

On the standing committee on government agencies, Mrs. Munro replaces Mr. Hudak; on the standing committee on public accounts, Mr. Hardeman replaces Mrs. Munro; and that on the standing committee on estimates, Mr. Hudak be added.

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

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I think they thought I said "beheaded." It was "be added."

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I have another motion that's awaited with anticipation. I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 10, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will 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 1356 to 1401.*

**The Speaker:** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 193. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

## Ayes

|                      |                     |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Arnott, Ted          | Hardeman, Ernie     | Phillips, Gerry     |
| Balkissoon, Bas      | Hoy, Pat            | Racco, Mario G.     |
| Barrett, Toby        | Hudak, Tim          | Ramal, Khalil       |
| Bartolucci, Rick     | Jeffrey, Linda      | Runciman, Robert W. |
| Bentley, Christopher | Klees, Frank        | Ruprecht, Tony      |
| Bradley, James J.    | Kular, Kuldip       | Sandals, Liz        |
| Brownell, Jim        | Lalonde, Jean-Marc  | Smith, Monique      |
| Cansfield, Donna H.  | Levac, Dave         | Sorbara, Gregory S. |
| Caplan, David        | Marsales, Judy      | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Colle, Mike          | Martiniuk, Gerry    | Tascona, Joseph N.  |
| Craitor, Kim         | Matthews, Deborah   | Tory, John          |
| Crozier, Bruce       | McMeekin, Ted       | Watson, Jim         |
| Delaney, Bob         | Meilleur, Madeleine | Wilkinson, John     |
| Dhillon, Vic         | Mitchell, Carol     | Wilson, Jim         |
| Di Cocco, Caroline   | Munro, Julia        | Witmer, Elizabeth   |
| Dombrowsky, Leona    | O'Toole, John       | Wynne, Kathleen O.  |
| Duguid, Brad         | Ouellette, Jerry J. | Yakabuski, John     |
| Duncan, Dwight       | Patten, Richard     | Zimmer, David       |
| Elliott, Christine   | Peters, Steve       |                     |
| Gerretsen, John      | Peterson, Tim       |                     |

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

|                 |                   |               |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Bisson, Gilles  | Kormos, Peter     | Prue, Michael |
| DiNovo, Cheri   | Marchese, Rosario | Tabuns, Peter |
| Horwath, Andrea | Murdoch, Bill     |               |

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 58; the nays are 8.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES**

**INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL**

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):**

Today I have the distinct pleasure to rise and inform the House of the progress we have made with one of Ontario's most critical initiatives; namely, to rebuild, revitalize and modernize the very foundation of this great province.

In May 2005 we launched, with the very good support of our colleagues in finance, ReNew Ontario, our government's five-year plan to rebuild and repair the public infrastructure that was crumbling from decades of neglect. In just a year and a half, after the release of ReNew Ontario, I can proudly say that this foundation is getting stronger every day right across this province, for Ontarians today and for the almost four million more residents who will call Ontario home over the course of the next 25 years.

With our partners, we have committed more than \$30 billion to infrastructure investment. The province's own investment in the first two years of the ReNew Ontario plan will total over \$11 billion. We're well on the way to achieving the total planned investment. The return on the investment is already evident as we continue to make progress.

More than 100 projects are moving forward, including new, state-of-the-art hospitals in St. Catharines, as my colleague the House leader would like us all to know, and in Sault Ste. Marie. We're ensuring that our hospitals are modernized, with upgraded diagnostic equipment. We're creating more spaces for medical students. We're working to build and expand new regional cancer centres. We've completed 36 long-term-care projects since last May, adding 771 new long-term-care beds and re-developing over 3,500 more. With new and improved hospitals, Ontario families will get the health care they need where they need it and deserve it: close to home.

Now let me turn to another major priority that Ontarians have told us about, and that's education. Ontario students are getting the education they need and deserve in classrooms that are conducive to learning because we're finally repairing crumbling schools. We're funding

urgent repairs and construction at more than 3,000 school projects. Last year, we invested \$60 million in universities and colleges to maintain and improve classrooms and laboratories and to modernize equipment.

In transportation, we are working to unlock the gridlock that threatens to choke our economy and make commuting a nightmare. We provided \$192 million in 2005-06 for improvements to 83 public transit systems through our provincial gas tax program, we announced an additional \$838 million in the 2006 budget to expand transit service in Toronto, York region, Brampton and Mississauga, and we're making substantial investments in public transit like the GO rail system. The high-occupancy vehicle lanes, HOV lanes, that we opened on Highways 404 and 403 in the greater Toronto area are already surpassing expectations. In the north, my colleague the Minister of Northern Development and Mines reminds me that we are moving forward, finally, with the \$1.8-billion northern Ontario highways strategy. To keep our goods and our economy in as strong a shape as possible and flowing across the border to the United States, our biggest trading partner, we're making improvements at Ontario's border crossings.

These are just a few signposts of our achievements, and there are many others.

We celebrated the groundbreaking of the west Don lands project, a new Toronto waterfront community that will include 6,000 new residences, including 1,500 units of affordable housing.

Together with the federal government, we have funded more than 60 water and waste water projects and 279 road and bridge projects.

We've committed to upgrade and expand court facilities in communities from St. Thomas to Thunder Bay, and we are finally moving ahead with a new Durham consolidated courthouse in Oshawa.

We're contributing to major cultural institutions that draw millions of visitors to our province.

Behind all of this formidable progress that I've been outlining in the few short minutes that I've had is the long-term thinking and strategies of ReNew Ontario. We'll be taking this thinking one stage further on Friday, when I host an event called Building the Future: Leaders' Forum on Infrastructure. Here in Toronto, we are gathering pre-eminent thinkers and decision-makers from as far away as New Zealand and Spain. While I know there will be much to learn, I will be as proud talking about our achievements through ReNew Ontario on Friday as I am here today, because as we rebuild the foundations of our province, we are renewing our commitment, literally and figuratively, to Ontarians, not just today but for generations to come.

1410

**CORPORATE TAX**

**IMPÔT DES SOCIÉTÉS**

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I rise today to

inform this Legislature about an historic agreement between our government and the federal government.

Last Friday, on October 6, the Honourable Jim Flaherty and I signed a memorandum of agreement that will lead to federal administration of Ontario's corporate taxes. Mr. Flaherty's career in Ontario politics is well known and well respected, and his commitment to this agreement is part of that strong tradition.

The federal administration of Ontario corporate taxes will significantly reduce compliance costs for businesses. There will be a single tax form. There will be a single tax collector. And importantly there will be one set of income tax rules.

À compter de 2009, les entreprises pourront produire une déclaration unique fédérale-ontarienne. En plus d'alléger le fardeau administratif des entreprises, cet accord permettra à ces dernières de se concentrer sur ce qu'elles font de mieux, c'est-à-dire créer des emplois et de nouveaux marchés.

That, in turn, helps to create a stronger, more productive Ontario economy.

To be clear, the corporate tax collection system of the future will look very much like the personal tax collection system with which Canadians are already very familiar. Ontario businesses strongly support this initiative, the real beneficiaries of which are the men and women across Ontario who work for and run our businesses. They represent the real lifeblood of our economy.

We were honoured at last week's announcement to see so many leaders of Ontario's businesses in attendance. Among them was Len Crispino, president and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. He welcomed the initiative and noted that it would result in increased savings and efficiencies for both business and government, improving the competitive position of our province.

Provincial and federal officials have been working for many months to iron out the details of the agreement announced last week. I want to say to them, I am proud of your contribution to this process.

Au cours des 50 dernières années, divers gouvernements ontariens et leurs employés ont déployé de nombreux efforts pour s'assurer que le régime d'imposition du revenu des sociétés répondait aux besoins du jour. L'accord que nous avons conclu constitue une autre étape de cette évolution.

I want to point out that this is just one step towards our goal of signing a comprehensive corporate tax collection agreement with the federal government. We still have a lot of work to do. We continue in our efforts to develop the best possible human resources agreement and a business transaction agreement which speaks to how these services will ultimately be delivered. But we've already made real progress, and we are committed to working with the federal government and our bargaining agents to ensure a smooth transition.

The agreement that Minister Flaherty and I have signed is, I think, solid evidence that Canada works best when there is a high level of co-operation between gov-

ernments. This corporate tax collection agreement was referenced in the 2005 Canada-Ontario agreement. I know that the Premier and many others, in this Legislature and elsewhere, would join me in urging the federal government to honour its commitment to uphold the rest of the Canada-Ontario agreement. It is the right thing to do to ensure that Ontarians are treated fairly.

In the coming weeks, I will bring forward legislation to implement the changes required to move to a single corporate tax collection system. The legislation will focus, as does our existing agreement, on creating a more streamlined, efficient and effective tax system. That's what businesses have told us they want. Clearly, it is what they need.

Nous sommes heureux et fiers d'avoir franchi cette étape importante en vue de réduire les chevauchements administratifs et le double emploi.

I look forward to discussing our legislation, once it has been introduced, with all members of this House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Response?

#### INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I'm pleased to respond to both of my colleagues' remarks this afternoon, first with respect to the public infrastructure renewal minister's announcement. I'd say to the minister, like many Ontarians today, I spend over two-plus hours in my vehicle commuting to the city of Toronto. I know that people who work and live in the GTA in southern Ontario have seen gridlock actually become much worse under the Dalton McGuinty government. All kinds of nice, pretty red signs on the side of the road with more Dalton McGuinty promises, but for additions to the highway system to relieve gridlock, no progress from the Dalton McGuinty government, and people are stranded for longer periods of time in their automobiles.

In his ReNew Ontario progress report, the minister lists a number of hospital projects that in fact have not even seen a spade put into the soil. He lists Grimsby as progress. Well, there's been a press release or two, but not even a blade of grass has been removed, and the same for the St. Catharines project. And in North Bay, they're already a year behind what was promised by the Dalton McGuinty government. In fact, not only have they not broken ground, the Home Hardware has not even bought the shovel yet for that project because he doesn't believe that you are actually going to move that project forward in due course.

Similarly, the McGuinty government is claiming credit for new medical schools in Ontario, projects that we all know had begun under the previous Progressive Conservative government.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Hudak:** I know: A lot of time spent buying that red ribbon from the Giant Tiger in Thunder Bay and Sudbury, but you're taking credit for projects that you played a very small role in, except for slicing the ribbon.



Similarly with respect to new long-term-care beds, I was proud to be part of a government that invested in making 20,000 new long-term-care beds and redeveloping 16,000 long-term-care beds as part of a \$2.1-billion investment. I suggest, with all due respect, that the government's claims in their progress report today of 4,200 new or redeveloped beds are largely from the previous government. Sure, you might have changed the sheets to red or put new red curtains on the wall, but I suspect not much real progress has been made in that respect. And the border infrastructure projects are similarly projects that had begun under the previous government. I'm pleased to see the work continuing. I'm glad that you didn't stop those projects, but just painting those yellow lines red is not exactly improving infrastructure in Ontario.

Similarly, for the Big Six cultural renaissance projects in the province, I'm pleased that the Liberal government is continuing on the good work by the previous Progressive Conservative government in that respect to help cultural tourism in Ontario, but, please, some credit to the previous work that was done, instead of putting up red signs.

1420

Speaking of those red signs across the province, this has to be the hardest-working person in the province of Ontario, putting up all these propaganda signs, conveniently the same red colour as the Liberal Party logo. I wonder when that new \$220,000 ugly trillium is going to be transplanted onto those signs as well.

In reality, this should not be called Renew Ontario; it should simply be called Rebrand Ontario. It's an effort by the Dalton McGuinty government to take credit for work they have not done and obscure the lack of projects that will see any money flow conveniently after the next provincial election. Dalton McGuinty is asking voters to trust him. I say that Ontario voters won't be fooled again.

#### CORPORATE TAX

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I would say to my colleague the Minister of Finance that I'm pleased to see work has progressed in the area of a single route of tax collection for corporate income taxes. I know this work had also started under the previous government, and I'm pleased to see the work has continued. I congratulate the civil servants in the Ministry of Finance for their hard work. In fact, Minister Flaherty probably had quite a role, both at the provincial and federal levels, in advancing these projects.

I want to say that I hope the minister will stand up soon and talk about lowering the tax burden for hard-working families and businesses in the province of Ontario, controlling runaway spending like the trillium I mentioned or dropping the OLCG for \$6 million and addressing the 90,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs that have fled the province under Dalton McGuinty's leadership since the beginning of 2005.

The only caveat I have about an initiative that's a positive step forward, albeit in 2009—the only worry I

have is that giving Dalton McGuinty more access to taxpayers' money is like giving the keys to the liquor cabinet to teenagers and going away for the weekend.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** The announcement made today by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal masks some very disturbing trends. Of the investments announced today, about \$2.5 billion will be for the private financing of hospitals and courthouses. Now, most of that will go to hospitals and increasing the size of some hospitals.

The minister is using a method—private financing—that will ensure higher health care costs for this province and lower spending on patient care in this province. This is a method that his leader, in the past, has said was wrong, a method that was denounced when it was put forward by those on the opposition benches, but one that seems to be embraced by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Now, the Brampton hospital is going to cost about \$535 million, and the extra cost because of private financing is \$175 million. That's \$175 million not available for patients. It's \$175 million not available to hire nurses, pay for doctors, make sure that the emergency room is staffed. That \$175 million will be a burden on the backs of the public and on the backs of the people who will use these facilities. Privatized finance is going to open the door to privatized food services, privatized maintenance, privatized administration, all of this opened by the Minister for Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Overall, in the \$2.5 billion dollars worth of infrastructure that is going to be privately financed instead of publicly financed, the extra cost to this province will be about \$750 million. That's a big burden to be carried by the public for expenses that do not produce results—costs but not results. The minister, through utilization of this method, pioneered by a party that he disagrees with profoundly but a method that he seems to have embraced, is undermining our future. He's providing for galloping privatization of our health care system.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal is quite certainly, quite definitely on the wrong track with this policy direction.

#### CORPORATE TAX

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** In response to the Minister of Finance, this weekend when I turned on the television, I saw the Tweedledum and Tweedledee of Canadian politics, the Minister of Finance and his counterpart in Ottawa, both speaking from the same songbook. But what wasn't said, and what needs to be said and what needs to be understood, is that the business service agreement that you have so proudly talked about has not yet been negotiated. We need to know what is being uploaded. You haven't said what's going to be uploaded to the federal government. You haven't told us

what business taxes are going to be uploaded. You haven't talked about the human resources agreement with the federal government, because that has not been negotiated either. You haven't talked about the 800 public employees in Ontario who have done legendary service to the people of this province.

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** It's right there.

**Mr. Prue:** I know it's there, and I'm telling you your mistake. If you don't want to listen to your mistake, then don't listen. Tune out like you always do. Okay.

You haven't talked about the number who are going to end up in the federal government. You haven't talked about the 800 who are going to be reabsorbed or where they're going to be reabsorbed within the fabric of Ontario service. You haven't talked about the number who are going to be, in the end, laid off.

We know what this is: This is a loss of expertise to the province of Ontario. It is a loss of expertise to all the taxpayers of this province. Yes, I can see the corporations singing the glory that they're going to save some money. Yes, I can see the government saying they're no longer going to be involved. But I want to know is, are our tax revenues going to go down? Because I fear they are. With the loss of the revenue, they're going to go down.

We have to look at our long-term finances. Would that all this had been explained, would that all this had been said in the same way that you had your little spat, with Tweedledum and Tweedledee having the little spat about the fiscal gap and the uploading, because that's what really made all the newspapers. You can fight about that, but you're on the same side and the same songbook when it comes to the corporate taxation. We think there are answers that need to be given.

IAN SCOTT

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I regret to inform the House that former MPP and Attorney General Ian Scott has passed away. We will most certainly speak to his life at the appropriate time, but let me simply express, on behalf of all members present, our sympathies for his family and friends, and say that we are grateful for his public service and we have been inspired by his courage.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Oral questions. The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I hope we will have a chance at some point, because I'll look forward to joining in those discussions. I first met the former Attorney General when I was a young lawyer, and I'd very much would like to speak to what a very special person he was.

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** That was a long time ago.

**Mr. Tory:** It was a long time ago; you're quite right.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Once again this weekend, the newspapers contained disturbing news about job losses in Ontario. For only the second time in 30 years, Ontario's jobless rate is above the national average. Last month, Ontario lost 34,000 full-time jobs. Almost 90,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost since the beginning of last year, in no small part due to the McGuinty government policies on taxation, regulation and energy pricing, just to name a few. Warren Lovely of CIBC World Markets says we could lose 10,000 to 15,000 jobs each and every month for the foreseeable future.

Your party voted last December in favour of a resolution that called for a comprehensive strategy to address job losses. Will you bring forward that strategy, or is this yet another one of your broken promises?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I just don't share the leader of the official opposition's profound pessimism when it comes to the economic outlook in the province of Ontario. While it is true that we have had our businesses challenged by a high dollar, which grew at a skyrocketing rate, while we are being challenged by global competition of an unprecedented depth and strength, and while we have had to cope with growing world energy prices, what I think is truly remarkable is how well the Ontario economy has performed, notwithstanding all of those things.

1430

This year alone, over 103,000 net new jobs were created in Ontario. Since October 2003, some 254,000 net new jobs have been created. I would say that speaks to the confidence that Ontario entrepreneurs and businesses continue to have in their economy.

**Mr. Tory:** It is not pessimism to talk about the facts that are affecting families, 90,000 families, for example, who have lost a paycheque, a good paycheque, from the manufacturing industries. This is not pessimism; these are facts, cold hard facts being faced by these families. For you to get up and say it's pessimism, or to say it's anything other than what I asked you, which is, "Where is the strategy you promised?"—I don't think people are going to take any comfort from that at all.

The fact is that Ontario is the only province in all of Canada to experience a net growth in the number of unemployed people over the course of the past year. There is 5.5% more unemployed people in Ontario today on your watch than there were at this time last year: 600 in St. Thomas at Sterling Truck; 250 at Wallaceburg Preferred Partners; 380 in Sarnia at Dow Chemical; 280 in Stratford at Dura Automotive.

Where is the plan? That's all I asked you. Where is the plan that you people voted for in this Legislature to help these families who have lost these jobs? Where is it?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Let me speak to some parts of the plan which the member continues adamantly to oppose. We put in place a strategic auto sector partnership fund: \$500 million. The Conservative Party says that that was a bad investment on the part of taxpayers. We disagree strongly.

I think we can conclude that the leader of the official opposition, if given the opportunity, would quietly preside over the continuing evolution of the economy. We take a different approach. We put together this auto sector fund and we have used it to leverage \$7 billion worth of new investment in the province of Ontario. For the first time since the invention of the car, we are now number one in North America when it comes to auto production, and that's two years running.

As a result of that fund, in a partnership we did with Linamar, an auto parts company, we are landing 3,000 new jobs in that one business alone. Again, that establishes a contrast between their approach and our approach. We're prepared to partner; they are not.

**Mr. Tory:** I challenge the Premier to bring into this House one quote I have ever made, ever, that said anything other than that I would continue with the investment in the auto sector. Find one quote and bring it in here. Bring in one quote, just one quote.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. The Minister of Economic Development and Trade—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** You just said—

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Energy will come to order.

Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** So bring in one quote.

Now, the plan we're talking about here is to help the 90,000 families who have lost manufacturing jobs on your watch. On December 8, 2005, some 31 members of the McGuinty Liberal caucus stood in this House and called for "a detailed government initiative ... to deal with these communities, families and working men and women who are suffering from these rapid economic changes, and that this plan should come forward immediately." Not one member of any party voted against it.

It's now more than 10 months since that resolution and we haven't seen a detailed initiative. In fact, we've seen no initiative at all. Will you commit to bringing forward that initiative by the end of this month so the people of Ontario can see what you're going to do for these people in these communities who are hurting? Can we see it by the end of the month?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** In addition to our strategic auto sector partnership fund, which I am surprised to learn that the leader of the official opposition now supports, because he voted against that originally as part of our budget, I can also say that we have been partnering with the manufacturing sector. We've established a \$500-million advanced manufacturing investment strategy there. For example, Diamond Aircraft in London, On-

tario, as a result of the partnership we have entered into with it, is creating 550 new jobs.

To be more specific about those who have lost their jobs—and we will not lose sight of their concerns and the challenges in those families—we are proud that we have been able to put together a labour market development agreement with the federal government. We are the first Ontario government to sign such an agreement. That's \$1.4 billion. But there's one issue that is outstanding: It forms part of the McGuinty-Martin labour market partnership agreement. I would ask the leader of the official opposition to pick up the phone, phone Prime Minister Harper—

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Premier.

## HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is again for the Premier. Another weekend has passed and another emergency room closure has been narrowly averted as you continue the pop-up strategy of dealing with these situations only as they become four-alarm fires rather than providing any kind of comprehensive province-wide plan for the dozens of emergency rooms that are in crisis across the province.

Your current handling of the strategy has meant that you've ignored nurses, the very people who are, most of all, on the front lines and have to deal most directly and most frequently with the patients who are waiting hours and hours in your emergency rooms to see a doctor. I've spoken to nurses in many emergency rooms and they too are at the breaking point in many cases. We've heard a lot of what's supposedly being done to address the doctors' challenges. What are you doing for the nurses in Ontario's emergency rooms?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Well, it takes a lot of nerve for the leader of the official opposition to ask that question, and I'll give him credit for working up that nerve. But there's something that we won't forget—and certainly, more importantly, Ontario nurses won't forget—and that is, during the course of the former Conservative government, they fired nurses by the thousands. They compared Ontario nurses to hula hoop workers. I am pleased that we have turned 180 degrees in a different direction. We are training more nurses. So far, we have funded the hiring of over 4,300 new nurses. The Minister of Health has made a commitment to ensure that we hire all graduating nurses this year. So we have turned this ship around completely. It's proceeding in a 180-degree opposite direction. They fired nurses; we are hiring nurses.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** Temporary positions. Tell the truth.

**Mr. Tory:** Well, I know how well that claim worked out when you went out on the "give yourself a pat on the back" tour last week and were told by the very hospital you were at that they hadn't seen any of these nurses materialize that you claim you've hired. They haven't

seen any of what you talk about in your endless photo opportunities. Donna Simpson, a nurse at Rouge Valley, said on Global Television that compared to three years ago, nurses have “a lot more challenges; a lot more demands are put on them.” And it’s not just the nurses at Rouge Valley but across the system at the ONA. They want to know what’s happening on this so-called progress you’re announcing if their workloads continue to increase and none of them has seen any of this good news that you talk about all over the place. Can you tell us, if your so-called plan is working so well for the nurses in this province and everybody else, is it just you who’s right and all the doctors, all the nurses and all the patients are wrong? Is it just you who’s right and they’re all wrong? Is that what it is?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** At the hospital in question, I had an opportunity to speak with—I remember that nurse specifically. Her name was Cathy and I was delighted to have the opportunity to have a conversation with her. One of the things Cathy made reference to was not the fact that we haven’t hired nurses, because in fact we’ve hired 46 new nurses at that very hospital. I’m sure the Leader of the Opposition knows that—46 new nurses. What Cathy specifically said to me—and I’m sorry I don’t have her last name—was that she was concerned that too many of those nurses were going into administrative positions and not enough on to the floor. I said that’s something we’ll gladly take up with her hospital and other hospitals as well.

Again, we’re very pleased to have these ongoing conversations with our nurses. We’re proud of the fact that we’ve funded some 4,300 and, specifically, 46 new nurses at that hospital.

**Mr. Tory:** I’m sure everybody’s wrong except you. Global Television is wrong; the nurse I quoted is wrong; the nurse you ran into who said she hasn’t seen any of the progress is wrong. They’re all wrong except you.

You claim as part of the “three cheers for me” tour that you’ve hired 4,000-plus nurses, but 1,000 of them, as the member next to me points out, are temporary positions. Your health minister has admitted that the promise you made to hire 8,000 nurses during your term in office will not be kept. That’s yet another broken promise. Next year, nearly a third—30,000—of Ontario’s nurses are eligible to leave the system. If nurses continue to be overworked and underappreciated, and you’re not going to keep your promise, then what’s going to happen in the hospitals and the long-term-care facilities?

1440

You, Dalton McGuinty, the Premier, then opposition leader, made the promise to hire 8,000 nurses. Unless you made it solely to win votes, you must have thought you could keep it. My question is this: Why are you now telling us you’re not going to keep the promise to hire the 8,000 nurses? You’ve got a year left. Do it.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, I say it takes a remarkable metamorphosis for the leader of the Conservative Party, a party which gladly wielded an axe and let go thousands of nurses in the province of Ontario, to now

portray himself as a champion of nurses in the province of Ontario. It is truly a remarkable metamorphosis.

We have been proud to fund the hiring of some 4,300 new nurses. I can say that in addition to that, we’ve done much to improve working conditions for our nurses, whether you’re talking about lifts that save nurses who were complaining about the burden that was being imposed on them physically or whether you’re talking about the new programs we have put in place to ensure that we can retain our more experienced nurses so they can spend at least some part of every day training younger nurses, as opposed to working with patients all along.

I’m confident that we will continue to work with nurses—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** To the Premier: Students in classrooms all over this province are facing more cuts in their schools. In northern Ontario, 11 school boards have seen their budgets slashed by the McGuinty government this year. Outdoor education centres are being shut down. And at the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, you’ve ordered trustees to cut the reading recovery program.

Premier, you admit your school funding formula is flawed and inadequate. You promised to fix it, but you haven’t. So the question is, are you now going to axe the Dufferin-Peel school trustees so you can force your cuts in the classroom?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** We will continue to work with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic school board, as we have in the past, and as we work with all 72 Ontario public school boards.

We’ve been very pleased on behalf of Ontario taxpayers to invest a further \$2.7 billion into public education. In return for that massive infusion of new dollars, of course, we impose a modicum of responsibility on our trustees and school board administrators to ensure that that money is invested wisely. If there are boards that are experiencing challenges, then of course we will want to work with them in the best way possible to ensure that they, like we, live up to our expectations and our responsibilities when it comes to improving the quality of the learning environment for all of our students.

**Mr. Hampton:** The trustees at the Dufferin-Peel Catholic school board don’t feel you’re working with them; they feel they’re being worked over by your government. But it’s not just the Dufferin-Peel Catholic school board. Students in the Algoma school board lost classroom supplies and special education assistants. Students in the Near North school board are losing full-day senior kindergarten. Students in Hamilton have lost education assistants to help kids with special needs.

Democratically elected school board trustees from across the province are telling you to fix the school funding formula. You admit it’s flawed and inadequate.

The question is, are you finally going to keep your promise and fix the school funding formula, or are you going to axe the trustees and force your funding cuts in the classroom?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** To the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education):** In answer to the question about the northern boards, I think we have to acknowledge first off that we have a societal issue around school enrolment: We have declining enrolment across the province.

Having said that, since we've been in office, we have increased funding for northern students by \$2,500 per pupil. That's a 30% increase. We're investing an additional \$95 million into the school foundation grant for northern boards, and I just want to flag that. That's a change in the funding formula. I think the member opposite needs to understand that the funding formula is an allocation model. When you put more money into the model or you change the categories, then you are changing the funding formula. That's what we've done, and we'll continue to do that.

**Mr. Hampton:** We admit this government is changing the funding formula. The issue is fixing the funding formula, and that's what school board trustees want to see. But it's not just northern boards. Students in Grand Erie lost their vice-principals, students at the Lakehead board lost computer technology and technology supports, students in Toronto are losing teachers, textbooks, and some will lose their schools. Virtually everywhere boards are being forced to exhaust their reserve funds, which means next year, when the reserve funds aren't there, the cuts will be worse.

We know you're fooling around with the funding formula on the fringes. But you haven't fixed the school funding formula, which is why kids are still experiencing cuts. The question is again: You admit the funding formula is flawed; you promised to fix it. When are we going to see the funding formula fixed, instead of kids facing more cuts?

**Hon. Ms. Wynne:** I know that people in Ontario are very happy that there are 7,000 more teachers in our schools across the province since we were elected. So there's funding for 7,000 more teachers. Students are doing better in our schools in terms of the tests. We've gone up from a 54% pass rate to a 64% pass rate on our provincial tests.

But I just want to speak to one particular issue. When we talk about fixing the funding formula, if we talk about a Liberal funding formula, which is what we're working on, one of the things we've done is put in a new category, the school foundation grant, which allows for small schools to receive funding for principals. There's new money in that school foundation grant, and that allows small schools in rural and northern areas to have a principal and a secretary and to stay open.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Premier: For three years you have failed to keep your

promise to seniors living in Ontario's long-term-care homes. The latest example is the McGuinty government's no minimum standards for seniors act, which fails to set basic standards of hands-on care for our parents and grandparents who are living in long-term-care homes, care that includes everything from bathing to feeding. The absence of minimum standards from your bill is a glaring omission that will mean a lower quality of life for our seniors in long-term-care homes.

You promised minimum standards of care. Why aren't they in your bill? Why haven't you kept, yet again, another promise?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Obviously, I'm not going to agree with the leader of the NDP's characterization of our new legislation. I hope he will see his way clear to supporting this bill, which is something that has been long awaited in the province of Ontario, not just by those people who operate our long-term-care facilities, but more importantly, by our seniors, our parents, our grandparents and their families. We think this is very good news for people who are resident in our long-term-care homes.

We've taken the approach that says each individual resident is unique. They are not, as the leader of the NDP would assert, somehow widgets to be treated all the same. We believe that legislated standards would be unresponsive to residents' changing needs. We believe that front-line staff are the ones who are best positioned to make that determination. I am proud to say that we are enshrining 24/7 nursing in legislation, which is the single greatest demand we've had from our long-term-care residents.

**Mr. Hampton:** It is passing strange to hear the Premier's comments today, because before the election, the McGuinty Liberals introduced a resolution in this House calling for minimum standards of care for seniors. I want to quote one of those Liberals: It's "a shame that we need to make this resolution, that we've come to this in Ontario in 2002...."

"We are hurting those who have built this province.... Now, in the last years of their lives, we have abandoned them."

1450

Who said that? Oh, Hamilton Mountain MPP Marie Bountrogianni, who now sits in your cabinet, saying one thing before the election and now something totally different after the election.

Premier, if it was a shame before the election that seniors living in long-term-care homes did not have minimum care standards, why isn't it a shame today under the McGuinty Liberals?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I can only conclude that the leader of the NDP has, in fact, not thoroughly familiarized himself with the bill, nor does he understand how well received it is by seniors in long-term-care homes.

If I can move on to the issue of staffing, we've hired 3,140 more front-line staff and 682 nurses. We've put in

place new, extensive training requirements for all front-line staff and volunteers.

This bill will also mandate whistle-blower protection. It will require the promotion of zero tolerance of abuse and neglect of residents, including fines of up to \$200,000 for convictions. It strengthens the residents' bill of rights and enshrines those rights in legislation. It puts in place a policy to minimize the physical restraint of residents.

This is about dignity and respect for our residents, for our parents and our grandparents. This bill, this legislation, has been a long time coming.

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, you know that minimum standards of personal care are at the heart of looking after our seniors.

I want to quote another of your cabinet ministers: "I find that, in this day and age, to actually have to be in this House to ask for a resolution to establish minimum standards, is almost as if we're returning to the Dark Ages...."

Who was that? The MPP for Sarnia-Lambton, Caroline Di Cocco, before the election. But after the election, under the McGuinty government, seniors still will not have minimum standards of personal care that they need and deserve in our long-term-care homes.

Premier, will you take the advice of your own cabinet ministers, who said it was a shame not to have these standards? Send your bill back to the drawing board, keep your promise and introduce minimum standards of care for our seniors who need them and deserve them.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** What I think Ontario seniors want to know is whether or not the NDP are going to support this legislation that's going to improve the quality of care that our parents and grandparents can receive. I think that's the real question that weighs heavily on the minds of residents of long-term-care homes and their families.

Again, this is a bill that will bring about zero tolerance of abuse and neglect of residents. It includes fines of up to \$200,000 for convictions. It puts in place whistle-blower protection. It strengthens our residents' bills of rights and enshrines those rights in legislation. It puts in place a policy to minimize the physical restraint of residents.

Again, I say this is about dignity and respect for Ontario seniors. I think the single most important question here today, now, at this time, is whether or not the NDP are going to support a bill that's going to improve quality of care for our parents and grandparents in the long-term-care residences in Ontario.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** A question for the Premier: Premier, the news of two people being stricken with botulism as a result of tainted carrot juice has raised some serious questions about your government's handling of the public health system. We know that fully one third of public health units in Ontario

don't have the legally required medical officer of health. In the last year, we've seen two legionnaires' disease outbreaks, a rubella outbreak, one of the largest salmonella outbreaks in the province's history and now two cases of botulism.

You've had the capacity review committee's report for five months and your government has done nothing about it. Meanwhile, people are getting very, very sick. Would you agree to bring in a detailed response to the capacity review committee's report by the end of this month, and if not, why not?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Let's recall that the Conservative government downloaded responsibilities for public health onto our municipal partners. Again, this is another case where we're moving in a 180-degree direction opposite to that taken by the Conservative government. We are uploading costs connected with that.

The leader of the official opposition would also know that responsibility for food recalls lies with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The CFIA issued a recall for this carrot juice on September 30. Our chief medical officer was informed. Our chief medical officer promptly notified the public health offices across the province to ensure that word was directed to the retailers as much as possible so that they could take the appropriate steps.

**Mr. Tory:** It's almost comical. That had absolutely nothing to do with the question that I asked you.

Now, let's go back to the fact that under your government, which has been in office more than three years now, one third of the medical officer of health positions in Ontario are vacant, contrary to the law. The law requires that these positions be filled. The number of vacancies is up 50% since your government took office. The OMA, the medical association, told you this was urgent one year ago; one year ago they told you that. Nothing has happened on the capacity review report since you got it in May—absolutely nothing. You've broken another campaign promise, to make the chief medical officer of health an independent officer of this Legislature.

So the question is simply this: Why do you bother to receive these reports or to pass these laws that make requirements like this and then ignore them until a four-alarm fire breaks out? Why don't you follow the law, fill these vacancies and pay attention to these reports and respond to them? Will you respond to the capacity review report by the end of the month? Yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, we have more downloading denial taking place here inside the Ontario Legislature.

Here's what Greg Flynn, the former president of the OMA, said late last year: "The Liberal government has been working very hard to revitalize public health in this province. We thank you for your continued commitment to public health and the government's many initiatives that aim to protect the health of Ontarians."

We know that one of the issues connected with ensuring that we have an adequate supply of doctors working

in the appropriate areas where we need them is pay. Again, we're proud to have negotiated with the Ontario Medical Association an agreement that makes our family doctors the best-paid in Canada and our specialists the second-best-paid in Canada. I remind the leader of the official opposition that his health critic said at the time, "What you're doing is you're taking all the health care money and throwing it into the physician pool." There was a complaint we were spending too much on doctors. Again, we see things differently. We will continue to work with our health community and our human resources to ensure Ontarians have access—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you, Premier. New question.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** Premier, I too want to ask you about the issue of tainted carrot juice. It was ordered recalled on September 30, but a week later, at least 10 stores in Toronto are still offering it for sale. Now, that could only happen if public health inspectors aren't out there ensuring that the recall is enforced. So my question is this: How is it, under the McGuinty government, that tainted carrot juice is still on the shelves in Toronto, available to be purchased, after it was ordered off the shelves over a week ago? How could that happen, Premier?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I believe the leader of the NDP understands that it is the responsibility of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for food recalls. They made a call. They decided to recall certain foods, carrot juice in particular. They issued that recall. They provided notice to the chief medical officer of health for Ontario. The suppliers of the juice as well were required to contact those who were running retail operations—stores—and in fact selling this carrot juice. But I think it is unreasonable to expect, and I'm not sure the leader of the NDP is saying this, that if there is a food recall issued in Ontario, whether that affects 500 or 10,000 stores, public health officers are to visit each and every one of those stores individually, and that we're not allowed to count on information going by way of TV, radio—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, it is your government's responsibility to protect public health. It seems that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency did their job. They ordered a recall. But what we hear from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies in Ontario is this: They say that underfunding by the McGuinty government makes it difficult for local health units to do their jobs, that it's difficult for them to be out there doing everything that falls within their responsibility.

1500

Premier, we noticed this weekend that your government has lots of money to spend on television ads patting yourself on the back. Why don't the public health units have enough money under the McGuinty government to ensure that tainted carrot juice isn't being sold to the public and making people sick?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The CFIA has the overall responsibility of making sure that retailers pull products

off their shelves. Local public health units can and do assist them in carrying out inspections. But just for example, in the city of Toronto alone, over 180 stores were visited this weekend. There can be thousands of stores involved in these kinds of things. But there is a responsibility—and I'm sure the leader of the NDP does not intend to lift it entirely off the shoulders of the retailer—on the part of retailers to pay attention to information that is being disseminated by the CFIA or by local public health officers, and as well to ensure that they take the necessary steps, when they hear from their suppliers, to take anything off the shelf that might be dangerous to the health of a buyer. That is the system we have in place.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate PublicHealthOntario for the work they did and the efforts they continue to make to ensure that the food we buy every day is safe.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. In the last few weeks, students in Ontario, particularly in Willowdale, have returned to colleges and universities, and many students have entered colleges and universities for the first time. Seeing these students in my constituency go to college or university for the first time in very high numbers has made me think about our government's commitment to increase college and university enrolment by 50,000 students. Minister, could you give me and the members of this House an update on how close we are to that target?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** I'd like to thank the member from Willowdale. We were at Seneca College, in his riding, not too long ago speaking about opportunities. When Premier McGuinty made that commitment, it was 50,000 more opportunities for Ontario students to attend college or university in the province of Ontario. Well, the numbers are in. We were at the Rogers Centre just a few weeks ago, but in fact we'd need more than the Rogers Centre to hold all the new students. We'd need the Rogers Centre, the Air Canada Centre and Maple Leaf Gardens to hold the 86,000 new opportunities for Ontario students. That's at Seneca College, York University and throughout Ontario at every institution. It speaks to more opportunities for students to succeed.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** I know the NDP doesn't want to hear that, but every single new space is funded. That's a great, great achievement for the McGuinty government.

**Mr. Zimmer:** I know there was concern when the previous government ended grade 13. I well remember how worried my constituents were, because the previous government had not properly funded colleges and universities to adequately receive those students. Now these very same students are graduating from college and university, and many want to continue with graduate

studies. The previous government preferred to leave colleges and universities guessing, unfunded and worrying about how they were going to accommodate these students. Could you tell us what we're doing as a government to ensure that colleges and universities are ready for these new postgraduate students?

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** As part of the Reaching Higher budget, the McGuinty government recognized that increasing the number of postgraduate opportunities at both the Ph.D. and master's level was essential if we were to achieve the economic potential of the future of this province and if we were to help students achieve their own potential.

As well as increasing undergraduate enrolment, the Premier and I were at sanofi in the north part of Toronto not too long ago. We made an announcement where we're increasing by 12,000 new spaces, by 2007-08, the number of master's and Ph.D. opportunities for Ontario students. That will increase to 14,000 by 2009-10. That represents a 55% increase in postgraduate opportunities for Ontario students over what it was when we started, over 2002-03. Those represent new opportunities for the students of Ontario and new opportunities for businesses to collaborate with those postgraduate students in the future.

#### CLASS SIZE

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** My question is to the Premier. Premier, the Ministry of Education website, under "Class-Size Tracker," has the following question: "Will smaller classes in primary grades mean more students in other grades?" The answer is very clear: "As part of the commitment to reduce class sizes, boards must show that class sizes in grades 4 to 8 do not increase when class sizes are reduced in the early grades."

Minister, either this statement is intentionally misleading or —

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** You need to withdraw that word.

**Mr. Klees:** I withdraw. Either this response or this statement regarding your policy is incorrect or your Ministers of Education have not adequately managed the implementation of your classroom policy. Which is it? Have your ministers mismanaged this or is this not your policy?

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education):** Before we came to office in 2003, it was extremely clear, from a very loud voice of parents around this province, that they were very tired of averages across boards. They were tired of class size averages, which is what had been the case under the previous government, where you could have in one part of a board a class of 18 and, in another part of a board, 35. They knew that kids did better in the early years if they were sitting in small classes.

The way to implement a class size cap is to put resources into the targeted grades and lower the class sizes in those grades, and that allows the other class sizes to remain even. That's what we've done. We've put millions of dollars into the early years, kindergarten to grade 3, so that those teachers can lower those class sizes, and we're very close. Over 50% of our classes across the province in K to 3 are at 20 or fewer, and that's a great success.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton):** My riding would beg to differ. During the 2003 "say anything to get elected" election, your so-called education Premier promised a hard cap of 20 students per class in "the all-important early years." Let me read this from an extremely concerned parent in my riding:

"Upon finding out in the first week of school that my oldest daughter's class size was sitting at 37 and that it was a grade 4-5 split French immersion, I decided to wait out my concerns. Thursday, I attended the school's open house and visited the portable where my daughter spends the first part of her day.... Another parent raised her hand and asked the teacher what the exact number of children was. The teacher answered that it was down to 35. It is not only the number of children in the class," it's also that "it is a split one. Out of a two-and-a-half-hour time slot, minus prayers, the anthem and recess, these children are only actually being taught for one hour."

Thirty-five students in a split grade 4-5, in a portable, being taught one hour each morning—this is a sad commentary on this government.

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked. Minister.

**Hon. Ms. Wynne:** From having been in dozens of schools around the province, I know that teachers and parents are very happy that there are 3,600 more teachers in our schools since we were in office. What we said was that, over the period of our term, we were going to reduce those class sizes. Up to 90% of classes across the province were going to be at 20. We're in the process of doing that. We have moved so that more than 50% of those classes, K to 3, are going to be at 20 or fewer this year. We will continue to make those investments and, by next year, 90% of classes K to 3 will be at 20 or fewer.

#### NUCLEAR WASTE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, Ontario Power Generation is proposing to construct a dump for radioactive waste at the Bruce nuclear site on the shores of Lake Huron. This proposal marks the first time in Canada that a permanent radioactive waste dump will be constructed deep underground. Yet despite the dangers, your government is failing to require OPG's radioactive waste dump to undergo a full provincial environmental assessment. It's opting instead for the weaker federal process.

**1510**

Premier, will you commit today to subjecting Ontario Power Generation's proposed radioactive waste dump to



an individual environmental assessment under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act?

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

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** Our government remains committed to the most thorough environmental assessment processes around. We have been storing, on a temporary basis, nuclear waste at the Bruce site for many years. The member will be aware that there have been numerous public consultations in the areas around it. It's been endorsed by most of the surrounding communities.

In terms of the permanent storage of nuclear waste, the federal government, through its Nuclear Waste Management Organization, is currently looking at options for the long-term storage of nuclear waste. That, of course, is a federal jurisdiction, and we look forward to that process being resolved and moving forward over time.

Again, I wish to stress that this government remains very committed to doing what is appropriate in the circumstances to ensure that all of this material is managed and stored in the safest and best way possible.

**Mr. Tabuns:** It's interesting that it is Ontario Power Generation that is actually doing this and not the federal government. It's your low and intermediate waste that's being dealt with, not your fuel rods.

Nonetheless, Ontarians know of the love that the McGuinty government has for all things nuclear. A project that poses this kind of threat to human health, to the Great Lakes, is one that must be subjected to the most stringent environmental assessment, but it's not; contrary to what you said, it's not. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is proposing that this project not undergo the most rigorous level of environmental assessment at the federal level.

Minister, Ontarians want OPG's deep underground dump for low and intermediate radioactive waste to be exposed to the clear light of day. Will you, as minister, act in cabinet to see that it undergoes a full individual environmental assessment under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I will remind the member opposite that in his own question, he referenced the fact that this is a federal jurisdiction.

Just so the member knows what we mean by low-level nuclear waste, we are including mops, plastic sheeting, protective clothing, floor sweepings, paper towels and rags. These can be compacted or incinerated to reduce volume and then stored at the nuclear stations. If the member is proposing that they be shipped somewhere, we could talk about that. That would presumably involve moving them across provincial highways and roads.

Mid-level or intermediate waste comprises such items as replaced valves and filters used to decontaminate heavy water, as well as any other piece of equipment—for example, pressure tubes—used in the production of power.

Low- and intermediate-level waste is stored in concrete dry-storage containers or in underground containers

at the nuclear stations. They are monitored and regulated by an authority other than the owner of the asset. I think that's appropriate—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. I understand that the \$500-million auto fund was created to assist automakers. The Leader of the Opposition says that he's always been in favour of the government's \$500-million auto fund. Can you set the record straight?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues):** I think it's important to note that the Leader of the Opposition, frankly, is all over the map. We wish he might have voted in favour of a budget that included our auto investment strategy, but he was opposed. Moreover, his own critic for economic development and trade is on the record as opposing government involvement in attracting business here to Ontario.

Let me just read an interesting quote, since it seems to be the day for quotes in this House:

"Ontario's opposition Tories say Canadian governments should not be giving taxpayers' money to companies to attract mega-projects like a new automotive plant.

"I don't think it does anything to strengthen the province across the board, so I think it's a wrong-headed way to go," said Conservative economic development critic Ted Chudleigh."

I say he's wrong. I say we have great proof that the work of this government in partnering with our business community is working.

**Mrs. Jeffrey:** Last week, the Premier was able to visit the Brampton Chrysler facility, and I know the three Brampton members were very proud, because about \$786 million has gone into Chrysler. Our community would be the poorer had that investment not been made, so we're very grateful.

Minister, can you tell us the benefits to other parts of the province? This auto fund has also helped other communities. What other communities have benefited from this fund?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I appreciate that this member in particular from Brampton understands the value of a significant development by DaimlerChrysler, as should members of the opposition. Unfortunately, they do not.

Likewise, people who work at Ford Motor Co. understand the value of our government bringing a significant investment to Ford Motor Co., affecting both Windsor and Oakville; in addition, General Motors, with the massive Beacon project, as well as Linamar, as well as Navistar, and the list goes on and on. In total, being part of a government that leverages \$7 billion in auto sector investment does work for Ontario.

While all of automotive around the world is shifting, and we acknowledge that, this province is getting ready for the next generation of auto. I can tell you that our investments mean that this government will be ready for the next generation of auto.

### CURRICULUM

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** My question is to the Premier. Last week, the Environmental Commissioner stated that your record on the environment is right there in the title: *Neglecting Our Obligations*. In the report, he stated that the McGuinty government lacks action in nearly every area of environmental management, including outdoor education.

An article in today's Toronto Star states that some young children are expecting to see whales in Lake Simcoe. This is from a government where the Premier calls himself the education Premier. It's clear that the McGuinty Liberal government has failed to provide the children of Ontario with adequate environmental education.

Minister, other than the sudden closure of the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre two years ago, what are you doing to educate our children to be good environmental stewards?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Education, Speaker.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education):** There's always a debate with some of these subjects around whether you have a set module or whether you weave the issue throughout the curriculum. Let me tell you what we've done.

The revised grades 1 to 8 social studies, history and geography curriculum that was released in August 2004 and the revised grades 9 to 12 Canadian and world studies curriculum all have the environment and environmental studies as part of what they do. I think that's the philosophy, that we need to weave environmental studies throughout all of our curriculum areas.

The other issue is that we are in the process of setting up a curriculum council, and these are the kinds of issues—whether it's gender studies or whether it's environmental studies, those need to come to the curriculum council and be assessed at that point.

**Ms. Scott:** Minister, there's nothing that can replace going to an outdoor education centre and children seeing first-hand the effects of nature and how we have to work in conjunction with nature to be good environmental stewards. The Environmental Commissioner says that under your government, outdoor education is increasingly under threat. If you're so committed to education and the environment as you say you are, will you tell us today when you're going to reopen the Frost Centre? Or is this just another broken promise by the self-proclaimed education Premier?

1520

**Hon. Ms. Wynne:** I know that the member opposite wasn't in the caucus in 1998, when the previous gov-

ernment cut environmental studies from the curriculum altogether, but she does have to take some responsibility for the philosophy of the previous government.

What we've actually done in our review of the curriculum is build environmental studies back into the curriculum. There is a school of thought in pedagogy, in elementary particularly, that suggests that you really shouldn't be segmenting these subjects; you actually should be weaving environmental studies and science and geography together. It's called an integrated curriculum. What we are doing is providing those pillars of learning throughout the curriculum. That's sound pedagogical practice.

### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, the north corridor assessment resources services program provides counselling services to employees in the forestry sector. Unfortunately, as you know, there have been a large number of layoffs in communities like Opatatika, Smooth Rock Falls, Kirkland Lake, Chapleau—and the list goes on. However, at the very time the demand for their counselling services is up, the north corridor assessment resources services budget has been cut by 25% due to their per capita funding formula.

Minister, we've been asking you since last spring to provide emergency funding for this organization so they can do the important work that they've got to do with those workers who are being laid off. Are you prepared, today, in this House, to commit to emergency funding for the north corridor assessment resources services?

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I think the member would obviously know, because he represents the town of Smooth Rock Falls, about the efforts that the government of Ontario is making with the community there. They've now hired a new economic development officer. The mayor has now got a team in place that's helping the workers. There's a community that has been very hard hit. Obviously, this indefinite layoff that has happened there very much saddens us. We are putting the resources in there to work with the community, to make sure the workers have the proper adjustment program. We think this is the right and proper role of government—and that's what we're doing.

**Mr. Bisson:** The worst part is, this minister knows what I'm asking him, and he can't even answer the question. The question is about the north corridor assessment resources services budget, not the town of Smooth Rock Falls or Opatatika. These people are charged to do employee assistance. We have many people who, because of layoffs, are having problems within their families when it comes to family violence. We have the issue of alcoholism and others that have to be dealt with. These employees need the assistance of this organization. There are many people in your riding, as in mine, who are being affected because they've lost their jobs, and they're

asking for help. They're asking for that help from this particular organization, and they're not going to be able to get it because the organization doesn't have the funding necessary to provide the services.

So I'm asking you again, are you prepared to provide emergency funding for this organization so they can support your constituents, my constituents, and the constituents of northern Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** I'd say to the member that I'm prepared to work with him on this. I understand how important he feels this is, and of course it is, when we see displaced workers right across northern Ontario. We need to do all we can to help them with the adjustment that the industry is going into.

As the member knows, we're investing over \$900 million in our forest adjustment program. We have seen many investments as of late, including one just down the road, where some of his constituents work, in Kenogami, outside of Kirkland Lake. I met with union officials there, and they really understood the benefit now of this conversion from a very small sawmill that wasn't very viable to a new value-added facility that's making finger-joint lumber that's of high value.

I'm committed to working with the member and making sure that we regain these jobs in northern Ontario. In the interim, we have to work on some of these adjustment programs.

#### CITY OF CORNWALL

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, for many people coming to Cornwall, Brookdale Avenue is the key point of entry. The first impressions they have of the city—the only city in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh—come from that stretch of roadway. Also, it is the main thoroughfare for traffic heading toward the Seaway International Bridge and on to the United States—and I can remember that thoroughfare as a country road, a rural road, unpaved, back in the 1950s. For that reason, it is important that Brookdale Avenue be upgraded to handle an extensive traffic load and provide an enticement to passersby to perhaps explore the rest of the city as well.

Minister, can you share with us what work is being done in the Cornwall area that will benefit my constituents, visitors to my riding and those crossing the international border?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Transportation):** I thank the member. The member has been a strong force within his community. I recall him so eloquently saying that Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh is back on the map because of the McGuinty government, and there's just no question. I'm proud to say that we've made record investments not only in transportation in terms of the roads but in transit as well. Since October 2003, this government has committed over \$1.7 million to the city of Cornwall to support public transit including, by October 2007, an additional \$1 million for the total

gas tax funding. We've also provided Cornwall with \$700,000 in terms of what they're going to do with their public vehicles and a loan. We've put \$1.9 million into Move Ontario funding for the city. We've also put \$8 million to assist Cornwall in the construction and reconstruction of Brookdale Avenue linking provincial traffic to the international bridge. Finally, we are investing \$17.7 million—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you, Minister.

You may have a supplementary.

**Mr. Brownell:** Minister, I can tell you that Cornwall and all of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh are thrilled to finally have a government that acknowledges their needs and is certainly doing something about them. Having faced some economic difficulties recently, my riding is in a state of transition. The Minister of Finance saw that this summer. The Minister of Labour was down and he saw it this summer. You were down this summer. I was thrilled that you came into the riding and were able to see some of the concerns and some of the issues that I have been talking about here in the Legislature.

Minister, can you please tell us what this government is doing to ensure continued growth and prosperity for the people of Cornwall and all of those from my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** I'm delighted to be able to say that in addition to the Brookdale project, as an example, there's new infrastructure for three new capital hospital projects, water and waste facilities, cultural funding, discretionary funding and general support with this government. The difference between the previous government and this government is inaction to action. Not only that, we've put a little bit of money behind our action to ensure that the people of Cornwall are being listened to not only through their member who does this so regularly by contacting us and involving us in the issues that are necessary, but also by ensuring that your community is being listened to, as we just did when you brought somebody in as we were talking about the noise barriers along the highway, as we're putting that investment of \$17.7 million into the 401 from Cornwall to the Quebec border. So we recognize that the challenges are there, and we've addressed those challenges by actually putting the dollars—as I said, action—into the community.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound):** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. As you'll recall, some time ago we had some discussions in this House about whose responsibility it is to look after the rivers in this province. I would just like to ask the minister when he will live up to his responsibility and look after the Saugeen River and fix the Saugeen River so it won't take out the lagoons in Neustadt.

As he knows, there was another study done. The people of Neustadt cannot afford to fix this river. It is his responsibility, and I would like to know when the

minister will announce in this House that he's going to look after his responsibilities and look after the rivers in this province.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I think we'll do a little River 101 for the member there and talk about the evolution of rivers. I have to say to the member, they get bigger. That's just what rivers do, because they erode and they get larger. That's the course of a river, if you will.

We have talked about this. If people put some sort of structure by a river, then they have the responsibility to protect that value. Whether it be your house, a commercial property or, in this case, a municipal infrastructure, then it's up to the owner to protect that asset from the erosion of the river. But we tell people, you shouldn't be building assets close to rivers and beaches, because these things erode. That's the nature of the evolution of watercourses. I'm saying that to the member, and it's up to the municipality to fix it.

1530

**Mr. Murdoch:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to remind the minister that it was the province that put the lagoon there in the first place.

## PETITIONS

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** I have a petition here for the Legislative Assembly, asking this government to amend the Clean Water Act.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas every Ontarian wants the best water quality possible; and

"Whereas the goal of clean water can be achieved effectively through amendments to existing legislation; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals are determined to hammer through the flawed legislation known as the Clean Water Act; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have failed to put in place adequate, stable, long-term funding into the bill; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have failed to effectively address the numerous problems in the bill; and

"Whereas rural Ontario stands to suffer significantly under this poorly-thought-out policy;

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

"To not pass Bill 43 (the Clean Water Act) until proper funding and amendments are in place."

I support this petition and affix my signature to it.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I'd just ask members if they would take their private conversations outside.

## IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario enjoys the continuing benefit of the contributions of men and women who choose to leave their country of origin in order to settle in Canada, raise their families, educate their children and pursue their livelihoods and careers; and

"Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent, arbitrary and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, managerial and professional talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their country of origin; and

"Whereas action by Ontario's trades and professions could remove many such barriers, but Ontario's trades and professions have failed to recognize that such structural barriers exist, much less to take action to remove them, and to provide fair, timely, transparent and cost-effective access to trades and professions for new Canadians trained outside Canada;

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

"That the Ontario Legislative Assembly urge the members of all parties to swiftly pass Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, and to require Ontario's regulated professions and trades to review and modify their procedures and qualification requirements to swiftly meet the needs of Ontario's employers, Ontario's newcomers and their own membership, all of whom desperately need the very skills new Canadians bring working for their organizations, for their trades and professions, and for their families."

I agree with this petition and I will sign my name to it.

## MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario's health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular degeneration (wet), and there are other forms of macular degeneration (dry) that are not covered,

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario as follows:

"There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration, resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most individuals and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program."

I affix my name in full support.

## FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale):** The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to establishing measures that will break down the barriers for Ontario newcomers; and

“Whereas these measures will ensure that the 34 regulatory professions in Ontario have admissions and application practices that are fair, clear and open; and

“Whereas these measures will include the establishment of a fairness commissioner and an access centre for internationally trained individuals; and

“Whereas, through providing a fair and equitable system, newcomers will be able to apply their global experience, which will not only be beneficial to their long-term career goals but also to the Ontario economy as a whole;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“That all members of the House support the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, Bill 124, and work to ensure its prompt passage in the Ontario Legislature.”

I agree with the petitioners and affix my signature on the petition as well.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. John O’Toole (Durham):** I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

“Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

“Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

“We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents’ councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007).”

I’m pleased to support this on behalf of my constituents and to present it to Dominic.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have petitions that have been sent to me by members of SEIU Local 1.0n, that read as follows:

“Whereas, in June 2003, Dalton McGuinty said, ‘Ontario Liberals are committed to ensuring that nursing home residents receive more personal care each day and will reinstate minimum standards, and inspectors will be required to audit the staff-to-resident ratios’; and

“Whereas Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman, in October 2004, said that the Ontario government will not set a specified number of care hours nursing home residents are to receive each day; and

“Whereas Ontario nursing home residents still receive the lowest number of care hours in the Western world; and

“Whereas studies have indicated nursing home residents should receive at least 4.1 hours of nursing care per day; and

“Whereas a coroner’s jury in April 2005 recommended the Ontario government establish a minimum number of care hours nursing home residents must receive each day;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately enact a minimum standard of 3.5 hours of nursing care for each nursing home resident per day.”

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

## FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North):** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“In Support of Skilled Immigrants—Bill 124:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to establishing measures that will break down barriers for Ontario newcomers; and

“Whereas these measures will ensure that the 34 regulatory professions in Ontario have admissions and application practices that are fair, clear and open; and

“Whereas these measures will include the establishment of a fairness commissioner and an access centre for internationally trained individuals; and

“Whereas, through providing a fair and equitable system, newcomers will be able to apply their global experience, which will not only be beneficial to their long-term career goals but also to the Ontario economy as a whole;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“That all members of the House support the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, Bill 124, and work to ensure its prompt passage in the Ontario Legislature.”

I wholeheartedly support this and send it to you via page Julia.

## CHILD CUSTODY

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax):** I have a petition from Cangrands to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the people of the province of Ontario deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents; and

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

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

**1540**

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

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

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

As I’m in agreement with this petition, I’m pleased to affix my signature to it.

## IMMIGRANTS’ SKILLS

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly that has been signed primarily by executive directors of different multicultural groups, and I especially thank Haroon Khan of Mississauga for the work that he did in collecting the signatures. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontario enjoys the continuing benefit of the contributions of men and women who choose to leave their country of origin in order to settle in Canada, raise their families, educate their children and pursue their livelihoods and careers; and

“Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent, arbitrary and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, managerial and professional talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their country of origin; and

“Whereas action by Ontario’s trades and professions could remove many such barriers, but Ontario’s trades

and professions have failed to recognize that such structural barriers exist, much less to take action to remove them, and to provide fair, timely, transparent and cost-effective access to trades and professions for new Canadians trained outside Canada;

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

“That the Ontario Legislative Assembly urge the members of all parties to swiftly pass Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, and to require Ontario’s regulated professions and trades to review and modify their procedures and qualification requirements to swiftly meet the needs of Ontario’s employers, Ontario’s newcomers and their own membership, all of whom desperately need the very skills new Canadians bring working for their organizations, for their trades and professions, and for their families.”

I absolutely support this petition. I’m pleased to affix my signature and to ask page Annaliese to carry it for me.

## WATER QUALITY

**Mr. John O’Toole (Durham):** I’m pleased to present another petition from the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas every Ontarian wants the best water quality possible; and

“Whereas the goal of clean water can be achieved effectively through amendments to existing legislation; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals are determined to hammer through the flawed legislation known as the Clean Water Act; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have failed to put in place adequate, stable, long-term funding into the bill; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have failed to effectively address the numerous problems in the bill; and

“Whereas rural Ontario stands to suffer significantly under this poorly thought-out policy;

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

“To not pass Bill 43 (the Clean Water Act) until proper funding and amendments are in place.”

I’m pleased, as a member of the committee that dealt with this, to sign and support this and present it to Sarah.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** These petitions are sent to me by members of SEIU Local 1.0n. They read as follows:

“Whereas, in June 2003, Dalton McGuinty said, ‘Ontario Liberals are committed to ensuring that nursing home residents receive more personal care each day and

will reinstate minimum standards, and inspectors will be required to audit the staff-to-resident ratios'; and

"Whereas Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman, in October 2004, said that the Ontario government will not set a specified number of care hours nursing home residents are to receive each day; and

"Whereas Ontario nursing home residents still receive the lowest number of care hours in the Western world; and

"Whereas studies have indicated nursing home residents should receive at least 4.1 hours of nursing care per day; and

"Whereas a coroner's jury in April 2005 recommended the Ontario government establish a minimum number of care hours nursing home residents must receive each day;

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

"That the government of Ontario immediately enact a minimum standard of 3.5 hours of nursing care for each nursing home resident per day."

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### FAIR ACCESS TO REGULATED PROFESSIONS ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 SUR L'ACCÈS ÉQUITABLE AUX PROFESSIONS RÉGLEMENTÉES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 3, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 124, An Act to provide for fair registration practices in Ontario's regulated professions / Projet de loi 124, Loi prévoyant des pratiques d'inscription équitables dans les professions réglementées de l'Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** When we last debated this bill, the member for Toronto–Danforth had the floor. I recognize the member for Toronto–Danforth to resume his presentation.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** Where I'd left off when we were discussing this bill previously was going through the amendments that the NDP feels are necessary to give this bill some teeth, to make sure that it has the impact on new Canadians and on our job market that it has to have, because so many people's lives are being wasted, so much economic potential is being wasted, so much has to change to make this province live up to its promise.

Where I had left off was the need, frankly, to include in this bill the list of professions to be regulated. I had said before that Judge Thomson had actually listed them in his report, and he has. There's a list in the appendices that one can go through. No big mystery there. It would be very easy for the people responsible for writing the

legislation to take that list, simply put it into the act, and provide in the act power for the government of the day to add other professions as they become regulated.

Many in the McGuinty government are reluctant to include in the act the actual list of professions to be regulated. I've found in my short time here in this Legislature that this government has tremendous fondness for leaving items out of the legislation, making sure that the real substance will be decided at a later point in the regulations themselves, and that has tremendous problems.

A week ago, the Environmental Commissioner for Ontario, in his report *Neglecting Our Obligations*, talked about a change in regulation to the Nutrient Management Act. He was very clear that that change in regulations resulted in an act and regulations that were virtually unenforceable. What that says to me is that giving this government a blank cheque with regulations means that we've given them far too much power, that we have undermined our authority as legislators to put in place protections for those internationally educated professionals to know that the professions they are interested in are covered by the legislation.

It eliminates the wiggle room that this government wants to put in place in this legislation. Put the list in the legislation from the beginning so we know what's being regulated, so we know which professions are going to be covered by the act. Give the government of the day the powers necessary to add more regulated professions as time goes by.

A fourth amendment that I believe needs to be made is to fully establish a fair registration practices code in the legislation. Judge Thomson, in his report, called for the establishment of a fair registration practices code. If you look in the legislation, there's reference to "fair registration practices," but I would say that if you look at the Thomson report and you look at what's being legislated, not all that Judge Thomson called for actually made it to the legislation.

He called for the code to include a requirement that regulators periodically review and make improvements to registration practices on the basis of the code and on the basis of recommendations of the Thomson report and published reports of innovative registration practices developed in other jurisdictions. Frankly, I think we're going to need that piece that's not included in the legislation. We need constant assessment and review of our registration practices to ensure that ossified, old, rigid systems don't set the future for us; that we set the future for ourselves; that we look at what's being done in other jurisdictions that allows those jurisdictions to fully realize the talents of the people who live in those jurisdictions. We should, on the basis of the professions themselves, protect them and protect new Canadians, to make sure that the fair practices code includes this requirement for review, for improvement on a constant basis.

#### 1550

I know that in the course of going through this bill, in the course of committee hearings, we will hear from many people; many people who will say to us, "Here are

elements of a fair practices code that will make this bill better, stronger, more able to actually deliver on what has to be in its substance.” I think that element, making sure that all of Judge Thomson’s requirements are included in the fair registration practices, are incorporated in the bill—and we, as legislators, should be ready, as we listen to the public, the people, when they come to speak to us, to incorporate their changes to that fair practices code so it’s complete and thorough.

We need to establish a department within the access centre that will be established in this bill, that the act creates, which will evaluate the equivalence of standards between regulatory bodies and educational institutions in other countries, and compare their standards to those set here in Ontario. This data will be provided to regulatory bodies to assist them in determining equivalence of credentials.

This is a very big issue, and it comes up time after time when I talk with internationally educated professionals. They know that in different jurisdictions around the world, the requirements they have—the requirements for practice, the educational standards—are already equivalent to those existing in Ontario. But there is not a government body there assessing those things and making that information generally available.

We’re often reminded that we live in a global economy. We do. And in this global economy, capital, talent flow between borders. In 1989, Canada signed a UNESCO convention, and it committed itself to the international mobility of teachers, researchers and professional workers by recognizing foreign-earned credentials. We need to take that commitment by Canada, that commitment made at the UNESCO convention, and make sure that it can be actualized, realized, by assigning a responsibility in this act to a body that will on a regular basis be assessing the equivalence of credentials.

We know that the mobility Canada committed itself to doesn’t exist right now. When people come to this country, the value of their credentials is not recognized. Their expertise and their knowledge are devalued. That’s why people express intense frustration, intense anger at times, about the fact that licensing bodies and employers don’t give them adequate credit for the work, the prior learning, the accreditation they’ve accrued overseas. The very experience that allowed them to come to Canada, the points they were given when they were assessed by immigration officers, mean nothing when they come here—nothing. Too often, all of the work they’ve done, all the experience they’ve acquired, all of the skill they’ve demonstrated, means nothing. They need to have a backup. We need to have a system in place, an office in place, that will evaluate those skills, those experiences, the standards of regulatory bodies in other jurisdictions, so that people can in fact get the recognition they deserve.

We need to make the process of registration as simple, as straightforward and as seamless as we possibly can. To the extent that we can assess the value of overseas credentials and experience, to the extent that we can

assess the standards by which regulatory bodies in other jurisdictions confer registration, we increase the chances that we will very easily and simply confer recognition on people. We set the floor for reciprocal agreements between professional bodies here and professional bodies overseas—and frankly not just overseas: in other countries; in North America; across Canada. To the extent that we develop that base of information that allows us to quickly establish equivalency—to that extent, we reduce our own expenses, our own burden, and open the door for those professionals who come here.

Many bodies lack the capacity to conduct just such cross-jurisdictional assessment. Many multi-party cross-comparisons are quite resource-intensive, and this has been echoed in policy research. The Caledon Institute on Social Policy reported on its strategy paper, *Fulfilling the Promise: Integrating Immigrant Skills into the Canadian Economy*, and they say, “Many regulators are small and do not have the resources to conduct regulatory reviews on their own. Though many are willing, they require assistance, tools and support.” Research that establishes the equivalency of experience and education between jurisdictions will help any regulatory tribunal in assessing the basis and fact for accepting or rejecting credentials. To the extent that we’re able to set this up and have it rolling, we will help all of the regulatory bodies that are finding their way to for once making sure that people do have the open door they deserve.

My sixth amendment is: Give the minister, upon recommendation from the fairness commissioner, power to eliminate registration practices that are contrary to the fair registration practices code. The act, as written, gives the fairness commissioner authority to recommend to the relevant minister that he or she effect changes to the degree that they currently have power. The change that I am proposing is to expand the powers of the minister to deal with practices that are contrary to the fair practices code embodied in this bill. This would not allow for a weakening of standards on the part of regulatory bodies, but it would give the minister power to deal with unfair or discriminatory practices that may have been left uncorrected by the regulatory body. And it’s entirely reasonable that, in situations where an unfair or discriminatory practice is in place, the minister must have the power to step in and eliminate that discriminatory practice.

When I talk to internationally educated professionals, many of them talk about requirements for registration that don’t reflect truly the need for them to prove that they’re skilled, capable, experienced. What they do reflect, in their eyes, are actions on the part of regulatory bodies that they see as simply screening them out. The fairness commissioner must have the authority and the task of looking for those standards that are simply there to screen people out, those that don’t bear on the actual capability of applicants, and in turn the minister has to have the power to act on recommendations from the fairness commissioner to sweep away discriminatory or unreasonable standards for access to practice. It has to be there.



I believe there needs to be a seventh amendment as well, and that's that the fairness commissioner is to report annually to the Legislature on the impact of this legislation on the employment of internationally educated professionals and to report on the success of internationally educated professionals applying for certification. We need to know whether this legislation actually has the impact it's purported to have. The population needs to be able to measure the activities of the regulatory bodies, needs to be able to measure the effectiveness of this legislation so that if the problem is not corrected, the lack of correction will be readily apparent and we here, the legislators, will be able to hold the government to account.

**1600**

This has real implications for people's lives. As we know now, many people see their skills and talents wasted, shut in and locked in to low-skill jobs, when what they really need is to be working at their full level of professionalism. We need to take a wide range of anecdotes, a wide range of stories, and boil them down into statistics so that we can hold the government of the day accountable, so that we can hold accountable the machinery that we put in place with this legislation.

Lastly, as an amendment, I believe that a fairness commissioner has to be appointed by this Legislature. Newcomers need an advocate. They need someone who will not be simply a voice piece for the government of the day. They need someone who will be speaking up for them, who, like the Environmental Commissioner, will be coming forward on a regular basis and speaking here, talking about the problems they're encountering, so that they won't simply be in a position where they're answerable to cabinet and to a government that can dismiss them at any given point, and will be answerable instead to the Legislature as a whole so that the information we get is as full, corroborated and objective as possible.

I've spoken at some length about Judge Thomson's findings. I found that his report was insightful, judicious and quite practical. Earlier, I mentioned that this legislation itself will not resolve the lack of access that internationally educated professionals encounter when they come to this country, when they come to this province. Thomson understood that as well, and he underscored it in his commentary. He mentioned several times that an open, objective registration and accreditation process is only one piece of the puzzle—and there are many pieces that have to be put in place—to improve access to professions by qualified, internationally educated professionals. He wrote:

“Participants cited many other issues as fundamentally important, such as the appropriateness of entry-to-practice requirements and the need for additional courses and bridging programs to help internationally educated applicants acquire ... missing qualifications.”

Bill 124 does not break down the many other barriers that keep international professionals from working in their fields, such as scarcity of opportunities to get the requisite Canadian experience. Canadian experience is a

requisite for many internationally educated professionals. However, the programs, the opportunities to obtain this experience, are not in adequate supply. The bridging programs that are needed to get work placements for people are not there in the way they need to be there to actually break through this problem. In his report, Thomson mentions that bridging programs are not universally available for all regulated professions. In this year's provincial budget, there was no increased funding for bridging programs. This is a government that has talked at length about the need to deal with this problem, that has talked about it as a priority, and in my estimation, a budget is as good a document as any for judging whether or not something is a priority in the eyes of a government. There isn't the money there.

Newcomers and advocates repeatedly report that the availability of spaces for real work experience does not match the demand. Last spring, Minister Colle announced the creation of new spaces and bridging programs, but the number he created is actually less than were in place two years ago. He announced bridging programs that will help 3,000 newcomers over the next three years. On average, that's about 1,000 newcomers per year. That's 1,000 per year less than one finds in comparison to previous years. According to the reports, between 2003 and 2006, there have been 6,000 enrollees in bridging programs for foreign skilled workers. That averages 2,000 a year. Now we're down to 1,000 per year. There has actually been a reduction in something that's said to be a significant priority. Even if they were given the full amount that had been previously assigned by this McGuinty government, look at the overall numbers: There are approximately 12,500 internationally educated professionals arriving in Ontario every year—12,500. So it's readily apparent that at 1,000 a year or 2,000 a year, we're falling far short of what's actually needed to deal with the issue at hand.

The majority of newcomers are not getting the support they need, even though they've been encouraged to come here because they have the skills this country needs and because they have skills that we in this province say we have to have. They come here, they find out they're not eligible to work in their respective fields; their lives and talents are wasted and our province suffers as well.

The minister on several occasions has announced 70 internships with the Ontario public service. I'd say that these spots are welcome, but I note again: 12,500 internationally educated professionals arriving here every year, and 70 internships. The relationship between the need, the scope of the problem, and the level of attention, the level of commitment, is huge, and this government is not working to bridge that gap, that abyss. It continues on with part measures.

Bridging programs themselves, even when they do exist, often do not provide what's needed. Often the programs do not actually designate a parallel bridge between a particular level of skill and a comparable level of skill. They are connected to a downward slope, a reduction in skill utilization. Often the level of expertise

that applicants have is far above the level of expertise required in the bridging spots they are offered, so people, very frustrated with not being able to get a spot doing the work that they have experience doing, will take a lower level. For instance, a physician applies for a bridging program for a medical lab technologist.

What we're developing in Ontario, when we don't put in adequate resources, is a very overqualified supplementary workforce. That has to end. We need to take people, their full skills, their full training, and make sure that the work they do is fitted properly to that full skill, full training.

Many bridging programs don't actually give people employment experience. They're adjustment programs that don't actually put people in jobs where they can acquire the Canadian experience that so many are told is the absolute prerequisite of getting any work.

This last summer, the Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades released research, the first of its kind in Ontario, that found there's a big discrepancy between what many bridging program promote as the outcome of their services and what they actually deliver. The most alarming part of this report was that several didn't include any work component at all.

By name alone, these bridging programs propose to be bridges to the labour market, and what employers and regulatory bodies demand is Canadian work experience regardless of the wealth of experience that newcomers bring. But the newcomer doesn't get that work. The work component has to be a mandatory part of bridging programs. In part, in order to meet this need, we have to ensure that employers are offered incentives, making sure that employers are introduced to this highly skilled, highly capable, very committed, energetic workforce, a group that currently is set aside. When employers do have that opportunity, when you break through that initial resistance, they see the value of, the quality of, the people and their commitment to work, and then that reluctance is replaced with recruitment.

**1610**

Last year, I had an opportunity to be at Seneca College talking with their senior administration about their programs. They told me about some of their courses that included co-op placements. They said, "Our statistics are really bad here because large numbers of people never finish the course. The reality is, once they've got a co-op placement, often they're hired, they quit the course and they just get on with life." We need to ensure that what we have in place is that opportunity for people to get into those job placements so they can show their skill and talent and carry on from there.

Governments can encourage that scenario. They can put the money in so that we aren't losing hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue because people aren't earning at the level they could be earning if, indeed, their skills were properly employed.

Manitoba is moving on this front. A key component of its credentials recognition program, which is designed to help professional and technically trained immigrants, is a

wage assistance program. The Manitoba government provides employers a wage subsidy that covers 40% of gross wages per employee. That is tremendously helpful. This government should be doing that.

This government has opportunities to do that. Just this past summer it was noted that the province had collected a windfall from funds given by immigrants that are supposed to be used for the purposes of creating employment. The province is sitting on \$328 million collected through the immigrant investor program. By law, these funds are being lent to the province "to create or continue employment." This money is to create positions for newcomers that will give them the experience they require to get reaccredited. It fits what this province needs, but we're not deploying those funds. We're not using them the way they need to be used so that people actually get into the workplace, establish a track record and then are able to use their skills, their talents, their energy to build their lives and build this province.

It's interesting—I'll just read a brief note. "Ontario Government Failing to Create Jobs with Immigration Fund," Canadian Press NewsWire, June 1, 2006: "The Ontario government is sitting on a \$328-million fund 'borrowed' from wealthy immigrants that was meant to create jobs and economic development in the province but is doing no such thing, the Toronto Sun reported Thursday.

"Instead, Ontario has put the cash into 'zero-coupon' or discounted bonds, reaping a very small windfall from an ultra-safe investment that hasn't created a single job in the six-plus years the program has been running.

"The fund has accrued just under \$10 million in interest, which has yet to be spent."

It's October now, and we're not seeing the action that we need to see.

I'll summarize, in the few minutes left to me. New Canadians are falling behind. Life has always been difficult for people coming to this country, but it is becoming increasingly more difficult. The bill that's before us doesn't have the teeth that it needs to actually deliver what has to be delivered.

I've recommended eight amendments that build on the Thomson report. It's my concern that if we don't actually amend the bill, we will not see the changes that new Canadians expect; we will not see the changes that this society and this economy need. We have to move forward. We have to amend the bill to give it the teeth, the muscle to actually deliver on what people want to see. If we don't go beyond the bill, if we don't provide financial support, if we don't have a more active approach to promoting newcomers in the workplace, even a strengthened bill won't give us what this society needs, what new Canadians need.

We have to go beyond the bill to help not only new Canadians who are professionals but new Canadians who are not professionals, because right now, people's lives are being wasted. People are achieving far below their earning potential, are living in a way that is far more

difficult than they should have to live, and we in this province are far poorer because of that.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to address the bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe):** First I want to thank the member from Toronto–Danforth for his speech about the importance of this bill and that by passing this bill we can create some kind of mechanism to help many newcomers to fit and get accredited in this province of Ontario. It's very important, not just for one party but for all of us as elected officials in this place, to help the newcomers to use their skills and their talents, especially the people who came from different parts of the globe to be with us, to give us their talent and education, their skills. They want to be full Canadians, fully skilled Canadians. They want to use and utilize their ability to help us in this province to continue building this province and also be great assets for the province of Ontario, and also good taxpayers.

As you know, this bill is probably the only bill in the province of Ontario—it's new of its kind, not just in the province of Ontario, but probably in the whole nation. It's important to pass this bill because this bill will help a lot of people in this province of Ontario. It's new. It will create a mechanism and create a clear vision for the people who want to immigrate to Canada, who want to come to Ontario, to know beforehand what's required to get accredited. They know exactly what they're going to face when they arrive in this land.

I would agree with the member from Toronto–Danforth about the difficulties many newcomers face when they come to this province. They don't know the regulations, they don't know what they are up to and how they can fit and get credit. This bill will help them a great deal to know clearly what is required from them and how they can fit and how they get accredited.

I'm looking forward to hearing from more members, and hopefully all the people in this House will support this bill.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm very impressed by the NDP critic being able to stand up for an hour and give us some very informed comments with respect to a bill that for the most part is dealing with the fair and open regulation—I'll just read the purpose of the bill. The purpose here is “to help ensure that regulated professions and individuals applying for registration by regulated professions are governed by registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.” In that vein, if that's the intent, in light of the need for skilled people within the economy of Ontario, indeed Canada, who would be opposed to that process? That is quite honestly my impression of the bill, and I'm anxious to hear our critic, the member for Oak Ridges, Frank Klees, who is more eminently qualified—he's also our education critic—to comment as insightfully as the member has commented.

But I often wonder sometimes that the colleges themselves—not to be critical; I'm just offering some observations here—are by any other name a professional organization that could be compared to unions. It's all good; it's to protect the conditions of work and the knowledge of the profession that they're—for instance, lawyers. The Law Society of Upper Canada has a role there, sort of acting as—now the problem there becomes the enforcement provisions under the college's mandate. This becomes a bit of a conflict; you know, a “who checks the checker?” kind of argument in terms of philosophical disagreements. If someone is qualified or not qualified, you have to make sure the process for appeals or those reviews is independent. I'm all for the independence of that review process really, quite frankly. I'm anxious to hear the debate on this, because what we need here, in fairness, is independence of those who are judging the qualifications of professionals.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I want to congratulate my colleague from Toronto–Danforth for his remarks this afternoon and, frankly, for the remarks that he made earlier, last week, which I did have a chance to read before I came here this afternoon. What was important about the speech that he delivered was to point out the shortcomings in the bill that is before us in reference to the recommendations that were made by Judge Thomson and how regrettable it is that the government couldn't find its way or see fit to incorporate the recommendations of the very individual whom they asked to do the work on this important subject.

1620

Secondly, I think the amendments that he has put on the floor today are important if we're going to give this bill any teeth, if we have any hope at all of saving the bill and having it do what the government purports it will do; that is, to make sure that newcomers to this country have a place and that that place is secure and they are active members and active participants in our economy.

A couple of months ago, I was at the St. Lawrence Centre listening to part of a lecture series that was going on last fall. That particular lecture that evening focused on newcomers, particularly women, and their experience in this country. There was a broad range of women who were both speaking and then speaking from the floor when they had the opportunity, and a broad range in terms of their professional skills, their qualifications, etc. What was regrettably true amongst all of them is that their experience in Canada was certainly less than positive. It was less than what they had been led to believe could be available here for them. It was less because they were not allowed to practise their professional skills; it was less because they were earning income that was less than that where they came from; it was less because they did not feel like they fit.

This bill had better be doing something about these women, and in its current state, it certainly is not.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon (Scarborough–Rouge River):** The government introduced Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, last June. This bill was

introduced strictly to help newcomers find work in their appropriate fields.

If this legislation is passed, it would make the process for applying for admission to regulated professional bodies fairer and more transparent. It would provide consistency and accountability and eventually provide us with a higher standard to our workforce.

As we face the challenges of the global economy, we have limitless possibilities if we would use that one resource of the newcomer to Canada: the human resource, the technical skills, the professional skills of these people. To tell you the truth, if you want to open up the global market to Ontario, you need to use the cultural background of these people, the language background of these people, to access the international market and give us that edge when we're competing with other countries in this global economy.

I think we should congratulate the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration for bringing forward this bill, for his vision, for listening to the people in Ontario, for listening to the newcomers of Ontario and taking action.

This bill will break down the barriers that newcomers have faced for many, many years in the past. This government is doing what's right for the people of Ontario. It's taking action. It's the smart thing to do, it's the right thing to do, because newcomers will help Ontario succeed. They will give us that advantage in the global market, and Ontario will prosper.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll return now to the member for Toronto–Danforth, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Thanks to the members from London–Fanshawe, Durham, Nickel Belt and Scarborough–Rouge River, who responded to my commentary.

We have to see this bill not simply as helping newcomers to this country, although a bill with teeth, a bill with muscle, a bill backed up by the financial resources of this province could actually do that. We have to see it, as well, as a tremendous aid to the future of this province itself. To the extent that we in this province have to be on the global stage, to the extent that we in this province have to be able to speak hundreds of languages, to negotiate and navigate through a wide variety of societies, to the extent that we take advantage of these internationally educated professionals who come to our shores, who bring their language, their knowledge of custom and culture, their knowledge of the issues at hand, we benefit profoundly. To the extent that we lock them out, we ourselves are impoverished. This is a crucial issue not just for them but for all of us in this province.

I say to the government, in the Thomson report there was a clear recommendation for an appeals process for every regulated profession outside of their internal reviews. That's not in the legislation. There's no reason it should not be there. It should be there. Thomson talked about the need to provide support to those who were appealing. I think we should go a bit further than he recommended, but at the very least the government should have included in their bill the full recommend-

ation from Thomson: support for those who are appealing when their registration has been denied.

This bill is only an opener. It must be much bigger, much broader, much stronger.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North):** Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege and honour to rise to address this particular bill, Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act. I might, with your permission, just address some of the commentary that has been made.

My honourable colleague opposite has repeatedly requested the actual professions that are going to be governed and addressed with this particular regulation, and I think those of us on the governing side are somewhat puzzled, because from our particular discussions, those have actually been set. For example, the 13 non-health professions include architecture, chartered accounting, geoscience, law, very particularly, and teaching as well. The regulated health professions include audiology, chiropractic, medicine—meaning physicians—midwifery, nursing, pharmacy and so on. So the actual list is defined and of course is meant to be, as well, further enshrined in regulation.

Our other honourable colleague from the NDP also referenced Judge Thomson. I have here a quotation from the Honourable Judge Thomson: "I am very pleased that the government is taking important steps both to remove hurdles facing many foreign trained professionals and to ensure that the procedures for admission to the professions are transparent and fair, while also respecting the independence of regulatory bodies. This legislation represents a thoughtful and balanced approach to resolving long-standing issues."

That, of course, is Judge George Thomson, the author of the Thomson report that is being referenced so frequently today.

The other thing I would like to say with respect to this House and with the respect that I can muster for the opposition side is that it was not that long ago that inside PC, Conservative, Tory election brochures, their references to new Canadians, to immigrants—and this is a matter of public record—were found in their references to criminals, were found under their references to law enforcement. I remember former members in this House—for example, the MPP from Brampton, Raminder Gill, was at a loss to actually explain that away. When we actually confronted him with that particular, let's say, mislocation of immigrant policy, he was at a loss to explain why it was that the Conservative references to new Canadians and immigration were actually found in the criminal section of their particular—in any case, Ontario has remedied that.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** That's shameful.

**Mr. Qaadri:** I agree with my colleague who is heckling me now that that was shameful. That's precisely what I'm referring to.

**Mr. Klees:** You are shameful.

**Mr. Qaadri:** It has also been referenced in this particular House that this bill has been a long time coming,

and I would agree with that, because as you can very well appreciate, embedded within the logic and the parameters and the initiatives and some of the terminology of this particular bill are the aspirations and ambitions and hopes and dreams of thousands and thousands of families.

I can tell you that, as a physician myself, I have met no end of individuals who have come from many, many parts of this world who have spoken about how they have come to this land with great ambition and great hopes, not only for themselves but also of course for their future generations, for their children, and how frustrated they have been, whether it is in engineering, law, medicine, nursing, pharmacy or any of the professions which you would care to name.

**1630**

That's why I would like to salute, honour and welcome the Honourable Mike Colle, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, who is responding to the call from the Premier and to a groundswell of support within our caucus for this particular bill.

Yes, it is a first step; yes, it is a door opener; yes, it is an enabling, framework piece of legislation; yes, it is with the full knowledge and understanding that more work is to be done, but I can tell you that you do not have to leave the jurisdiction or the borders of Ontario or Canada very long or travel very far until you come across jurisdictions which are in no way, shape or form actually entertaining legislation of this kind.

With that, I would say this is extraordinary legislation—again, enabling steps—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Qaadri:** —framework legislation. With due respect to the yak attack opposite, I support Bill 124.

**Mr. Klees:** I'm pleased to rise to join in the debate on Bill 124.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the member from Oak Ridges take a seat for a minute? I'm sorry. I'm asked to request whether or not you are doing the leadoff speech for your party.

**Mr. Klees:** I am indeed doing the leadoff speech.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry to interrupt you. I recognize the member from Oak Ridges.

**Mr. Klees:** At the outset, I want to say that I and our caucus, without question, support the intent of this legislation. I don't believe that anyone in this province would deny that we should be doing whatever we can to remove barriers for newcomers to this province and to this country to become gainfully employed, certainly in their trained vocation, and that if there are barriers in place within the province, whether it be through the regulated professions or in any other way, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that those barriers are removed and that individuals who have chosen this great province as their home can become fully engaged and full participants in this province, its economy and, of course, our society.

Before I get to the specifics of this legislation, however, I want to address what I believe is an overarching problem that has contributed significantly to the circumstances that many newcomers find themselves in

this province, and that is our immigration system, which I believe sets expectations for individuals considering Canada, and specifically Ontario, as their home. I'm not going to excuse the province of Ontario or any other provincial jurisdiction, because all levels of government have a responsibility in immigration policy, although of course the overriding responsibility is with the federal government. That problem—our immigration system is a points system whereby individuals, when they make application to immigrate to this country, are assessed a certain number of points for various qualifications they may have. At the top of that list, the greatest number of points ascribed is their professional designation or the education that they have, the professional degrees that they may have and the work experience that they may have in their country of origin. For someone who is a trained physician, a practising surgeon, someone who has a degree and has been practising pharmacy, someone who has been practising optometry, someone who has been practising a particular profession, if they see an immigration system that ascribes to them and gives them the highest number of qualification points to become an immigrant, if the country to which they want to immigrate gives them a certain number of points and credits for their profession, it's not unreasonable to expect that, when they come to this country, they would in fact, then, be able to practise.

It's not unreasonable that there should also be some qualification procedures to ensure that that practice is consistent with the standards of this country and of this province, but certainly not ascribe to a position where, having been a practising surgeon for many years, and particularly in a country where the standards of training are at par with this province, those individuals would then be relegated to a system where for years they are kept from their profession, kept from practising and have to make a living for themselves and their families, in many cases, driving taxi cabs or delivering pizzas or doing maintenance work. It's not that there is anything wrong with those functions and with that kind of labour, but when you have someone who has the qualifications, the education, the training, the experience, for those individuals then to be underemployed in our society is fundamentally wrong. There is something fundamentally wrong with our immigration system to allow that to perpetuate.

I have had this discussion with the Honourable Monte Solberg, the federal minister now responsible for immigration. We had a very good discussion about that, and I pointed out to him that we need a fundamental change in how we treat potential immigrants, how we inform them of what is a reasonable expectation. I believe that is only fair, that is only reasonable, to treat people with that kind of respect, that we don't set unnecessary or illogical, unreasonable expectations for people.

Having said that, I believe it's time that the province of Ontario take very seriously their role in immigration as, for example, the province of Quebec has done for

many years. As a provincial jurisdiction, I believe that we should be much more fully engaged in determining the number of immigrants to this province, in creating opportunities, ensuring that qualifications coincide with employment opportunities that are here, helping individuals find the kind of work that they are trained for and helping direct individuals to communities where the qualifications they bring to this province are needed. That is fundamental. I would encourage us, as a Legislature, to work towards that end.

**1640**

I'd like to turn to the substance of Bill 124 and read into the record the purpose of the bill: "The purpose of this act is to help ensure that regulated professions and individuals applying for registration by regulated professions are governed by registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair." Surely, no one can take issue with the intent.

As is quite often the case with legislation that is brought forward by this government, however, the actual legislation that's tabled and the implementation is very different than the stated intent. I searched throughout this legislation to find where the impartiality comes in, where the fairness comes in and where the objectiveness comes in. I must admit that I believe there's quite a gap between the stated intent and what this legislation ultimately will do for us.

The proposed legislation is, in fact, the government's response to Justice George Thomson's review of the appeal process from registration decisions in Ontario's regulated professions. That, as we know, was released in October of 2005. That report reviewed the internal and external appeals processes for registration decisions of some 36 professional regulatory bodies in Ontario and presented proposals for a standard, independent appeals mechanism.

Bill 124, however, goes beyond what Mr. Justice Thomson proposed in his report. I want to speak specifically with respect to the creation of yet another level of bureaucracy in the form of a fairness commissioner who, according to the government, would act as a so-called fairness watchdog over the professional regulatory bodies of this province.

Say at the outset that I and my colleagues in the Ontario PC caucus recognize that foreign-trained professionals and skilled workers must have unnecessary regulatory barriers removed from their pathway to ensure their full professional integration into the Ontario economy. Coming from the riding of Oak Ridges, which includes all of Richmond Hill, the northern part of Markham and all of Whitchurch-Stouffville, I have what is probably one of the most highly ethnically diverse ridings in the province of Ontario. There isn't a week that goes by that I don't have constituents sitting across from me who tell me their varied stories of how they were trained, in the United Kingdom, in India, in Pakistan, in the Ukraine, in some foreign country which, in many, many cases, has some of the best training facilities, universities and medical schools anywhere in the world.

These are individuals who have come to this country and to Ontario with the full expectation, for reasons I stated before, that when they come here, not only would they be welcomed as residents, but they would be welcomed as professionals as well. There isn't a week that goes by that I don't sit with individuals with that kind of training who tell me stories of their inability to enter their chosen profession. They tell me about the hurdles. They accept the fact that there must be a qualification process, that there must be a recognition and a respect for the standards that are put in place by Ontario's regulatory bodies, by the various colleges. But what they didn't expect, once they entered into that qualification process, is that there would be so many hurdles put in place that make it virtually impossible for someone to go down that path.

Often it starts with simply the cost of entering into that qualification process, and then the number of examinations that are put in place, each one of them with a significant cost and timeline attached. So the circumstances that these individuals in our communities face is that while they're holding down a full-time job—and in many cases, two and three jobs—to make ends meet, at the same time, in order to be able to transition into their chosen profession and hopefully become productive there, they have to do the study, they have to pay the fees for these additional examinations, and they're willing to do that. But then one of the other hurdles that is constantly brought to my attention is the number of times when, notwithstanding receiving a passing grade on the examination, they are still kept from entering into the profession. Notwithstanding how well they may have performed on a written test, there is often another hurdle that keeps them from getting the call, and here's the real frustration: without explanation. I'm constantly told, "If I was only told what it was about my interview, what it is that I may not be doing well, so that I could work on that. I'm willing to commit myself to study and do whatever needs to be done to get some remedial support and training." But often all they get is a simple letter that says, "Sorry, you're not qualified," or "You don't qualify. Try again."

Because of that experience with very practical circumstances in people's lives, I say to the government that I welcome the initiative and the intent of this legislation. But what I want to do is point out to the government where I believe there are shortfalls and where in the implementation of this legislation we have to go beyond what we see here.

The first question I have for the government is why it's taken them three years to bring this legislation forward. I want to quote from page 13 of the Liberal campaign platform from three years ago: "We will lower barriers that prevent foreign-trained professionals and skilled workers from reaching their potential. We will work"—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Klees:** —"with professional and trade associations to accelerate the entry of skilled new Ontarians

into the workforce. Our goal is to eliminate major barriers within one year.”

It's interesting; the Liberal backbenchers applauded when I read from the beginning of this quote, and when I finished the quote by saying “within one year,” which was their campaign promise, they all hung their heads in shame, and rightfully so. They hung their heads in shame because one more time, it's another broken promise by this band of Liberals who will say anything at all to get elected, but when it comes to actually implementing a promise, they are found wanting. Three years later—three years of being the government, three years of having a Minister of Health, a Minister of Economic Development, and a Premier who made the promise—nothing has been done by this government.

I want to draw attention to that fact, because I believe it simply underscores the cynicism of this Liberal government. Now that we're again into an election year, oh, why not bring out the rhetoric again? Let's have the photo op, let's have the announcements, let's tell new Canadians, newcomers to this country, what we as the Liberal Party are going to do for them.

**1650**

And then in shame the member from Etobicoke North, who had the gall to stand in his place earlier today and make disparaging comments about the Progressive Conservative caucus and their views towards newcomers and immigrants—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton):** It's shameful.

**Mr. Klees:** It's a shameful, shameful act on the part of a desperate politician, and that is the very thing that, I believe, in the final analysis will result in this government's being a one-term government. The people of Ontario understand when they hear that kind of rhetoric, when they hear that kind of shameful mudslinging, because it's a desperate attempt on their part to shift the focus from what they are not doing as a government—from their broken promises, from their lack of integrity—and disparage and call into question motive on the part of honourable members in this place.

First of all it is unparliamentary, and the member from Etobicoke North should stand in his place and apologize, not only to the PC caucus but to every member of this House and to every Ontarian. I ask him to go back and review the Hansard record of his statement. I ask him if in full honesty he has not impugned motive to members of this caucus. If he cannot at least do the honourable thing and apologize for his remarks, because he knows they're not true, then I would ask you as Speaker to bring him to order for doing so.

It's no secret that in Ontario we will not be able to meet the future demands of our labour market within our own borders. The Conference Board of Canada has warned us that our national economy loses up to \$5 billion yearly, and that is due to the fact that the skills and credentials of internationally trained professional new Canadians are not recognized. We would not have to be facing that kind of labour shortage, we would not have to

be facing the kind of shortage of doctors and nurses and other trained professionals in this province, if it were not for many of the barriers we have in place today.

Far too many skilled newcomers here are frustrated with the complexities of the current system for licensing and admission to our regulated professions. These facts were reiterated by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on June 8 of this year, when this legislation was tabled. But where was the minister's government for the past three years, as I said earlier, when all of us knew how critically important that issue was? By the minister's own admission, those barriers have had a significant negative impact on this province.

**Mr. Ramal:** Where were you?

**Mr. Klees:** The member opposite carps; another Liberal backbencher, carping, “Where were you?” Let me remind the member where we were. I'm going to read you something. I don't know the name of your riding. I think it's London–Fanshawe. Is that correct?

I am going to take this opportunity and read to the member for London–Fanshawe from a policy declaration, a news release, that goes something like this: “There are too many qualified, foreign-trained doctors already living in Ontario who have been forced to sit on the sidelines of our health care system. By removing barriers and providing more training opportunities, we will more than double the number of foreign-trained doctors practising in Ontario and significantly improve access to front-line health care.”

It goes on to say that “increasing the number of medical ... students by 30%, from 532 to 692” will be one major step. And, by the way, that was done.

“Developing a two-site northern medical school with full campuses in Sudbury and Thunder Bay”—that was done.

“Implementing two new rural and regional training networks in southwestern Ontario (with a focus on the Windsor area) and central south Ontario (with a focus on Niagara region and Simcoe county)” —that was done.

“Accelerating the addition of more than 50 rural, regional and northern postgraduate training positions in enhanced family medicine and core specialties”—that was done.

“Supporting the Professional Association of Interns and Residents ... to implement the resident placement program to match new physician graduates to underserved communities”—that was done.

“Offering a free tuition program to encourage new physicians to practise in undersupplied communities in return for up to \$40,000 in tuition and a location incentive grant”—that was done.

I would remind the member opposite that that was a release and a policy implementation announcement dated November 21, 2002. That was the previous Progressive Conservative government that took those initiatives. It took this government three years after coming to office before they were even prepared to introduce legislation, let alone begin to implement it. I'm suggesting that this government has no sense of how to implement policy.

They have no sense of how to manage this province. They know only about photo ops and announcements. That's why we continue to have the circumstances that we have in the province today.

It doesn't matter whether it is this circumstance relating to foreign-trained professionals or whether it's education or the economy, this government simply is not up to the job. They simply don't know what happens after you make the announcement. They don't know what it means to administer government, what it means to actually implement public policy.

I should focus on the bill. As I've said before, the major weakness of this bill is that it's largely rhetoric, which is so typical of our good friends. If passed in its present form unamended, this bill will simply provide the province of Ontario regulated professions, foreign-trained professions, internationally trained professionals with more rhetoric, more reviews and more studies. If anyone who looks at the bill wants to take the trouble of counting up the number of times that this legislation refers to reviews and studies and monitoring and assessing, it will boggle your mind, member from London-Fanshawe. I urge you to read the bill, not just the speaking notes that your minister gives you to review here. Read the bill.

Ontario's economy doesn't need more studies and reviews. What our economy needs is foreign-trained doctors, pharmacists, dentists, lawyers and many others doing what they know how to do best, and that's to be doctors, lawyers and nurses. Allow them to get to work. That is what we need; not more reviews, not more studies, not more bureaucracy. That's what the Liberals know how to do well: study it, study it more and then overlay it with bureaucracy and say, "We've done our job." Then, by the way, to pay for the bureaucracy, "We're going to tax you real good." Shame on you.

**1700**

The member from Brant knows better. I feel sorry for that member because I know, in his heart, every day when this man comes to work here, he would rather not have to defend broken promises and inaction; he would much rather be able to go back to his constituents and tell them what they've done for a change, but he hasn't had that opportunity since the day he got elected.

Our health care system does not need foreign-trained doctors driving taxicabs. It doesn't need foreign-trained nurses not being able to break into nursing when there is a shortage of nurses in this province. How can anybody understand the logic of that?

Some have said that Bill 124 at least recognizes that there's a problem and that the solution that it proposes to solve it unfortunately is worse than the problem itself. I don't want to be quite that critical, but I'm going to go partially there because I do believe that this bill actually does threaten many of our regulatory colleges rather than encourage them to become part of the solution.

The fairness commissioner, as proposed in this legislation, would have the power to override the authority of the regulatory bodies of our professions, among other things. Such power would corrode further the autonomy

of the professions and their regulatory bodies in the very first instance. In pursuing the goal of expediting the integration of foreign-trained professionals into the Ontario economy, the government must first have the responsibility of ensuring the objectivity, the independence and the autonomy of those regulatory bodies. They have both the right and the responsibility to govern and regulate themselves on behalf of the professions they serve and the wider public that relies on their service. The government needs to open the lines of communication with the professional bodies, to work with them rather than over and above them. That's my fundamental concern with the way this legislation is structured and the message that's being sent to the various colleges. Rather than respect the democratic process and the democratic system that underlies our regulatory bodies and our professional colleges, this government is now sending a signal that, "If you don't do what we tell you to do, notwithstanding what your profession may deem to be appropriate in terms of standards, we will overrule you." But this government prefers to make an act of faith in bureaucracy and state regulation rather than collaborative co-operation and self-regulation.

The former road is one that is well-travelled by the McGuinty Liberals. They've demonstrated it in many other areas where we've seen them introduce legislation. But it's also well-travelled by the previous Peterson government. It's a shame that the current Liberal government refuses to learn from the mistakes of its predecessor and realize that if one wants to make something move faster and more expeditiously, if one would remove barriers that people face, then the last thing that should be thrown in their faces and in their paths is more bureaucracy and more regulation. So on the one hand, this government is saying, "We want to remove barriers," but on the other, they're saying, "We're going to load you up with more bureaucracy. We're going to put in place yet another level of bureaucrats," and all of us in this place know that by adding additional layers of bureaucracy, the last thing you will do is expedite results.

As Dr. Rocco Gerace, the registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, said, "Bill 124 does nothing to address the root cause of the physician shortage in this province and simply adds a new layer of bureaucracy that may in fact cause delays to college processes. The proposed legislation introduces new reporting requirements, costly audit processes and reduces the flexibility of the current registration process to consider the competence of individual applicants rather than whether ... they have specific credentials." That's a quote from June 8 from the CPSO.

How different an approach to increasing access to foreign-trained physicians in Ontario was the former PC government's initiative in 2002. I read you some specific commitments that that PC government made that were practical in terms of its intent to remove barriers, to actually put more people into residency positions, to create opportunities for foreign-trained professionals. That government doubled the training spaces available to foreign-



trained doctors and introduced a new program that would quickly assess foreign credentials.

What I would now ask as an undertaking from this government is to table with us in the House the following information: How many foreign-trained applications are there now in the system? I would like to know that. That information is available. I would ask the minister to tell us how many applicants are in the system today. How many applicants are being processed? I'd also like to know, of all of the thousands of applications that are there, why are they not being processed? Why are people continuing to be frustrated by the existing bureaucracy that can't cope with that application process? And then I ask very specifically, if your current bureaucracy can't process the information, why are you overloading it with yet even more?

Creating a centralized resource office and assessment centre for all foreign-trained doctors and establishing a fast-track process to assess and license physicians currently practising outside the province so they can practise immediately in underserved areas in Ontario is what the government should be doing. They can do that. We have the resources available to do that but, rather than that, we have yet more legislation. The McGuinty government has sat on its hands for the last three years and now, in true Liberal fashion, 363 or 362 days away from the next election, we have yet another announcement.

Liberal feet-dragging on this issue has adversely affected the lives of literally thousands and thousands of residents in this province. I bring to the attention of the House one of my constituents who has been trying for more than six years to get accredited as a doctor in Ontario—six years. He completed medical school with honours in the Ukraine in 1977. He then went on to do graduate studies as a family physician and later took a postgraduate residency in obstetrics and gynecology, in which he completed his clinical Ph.D. He has passed all of his examinations, except for his last oral test, where he received a mark of 69.5% when the passing grade was 70%.

I bring this situation to the attention of the House, as did I to the Minister of Health in a letter, because I find this circumstance to perhaps be indicative that it's more of an attitude and a cultural shift that we need in dealing with this issue than simply putting forward technical legislation. Those examinations that this doctor passed, he passed them with flying colours in every case. These were clinical examinations.

**1710**

The oral examination that he took had nothing to do, in the course of conversation, with any clinical issues relating to the practice of medicine. It was simply a function of testing communication skills and being able to determine whether this individual had the ability to effectively communicate as a medical doctor—bedside manner, whatever else is involved in that battery of tests.

I have spent considerable time with this individual in my office. I can tell you that this individual has a command of the English language that is second to none of

any member in this House. There was not a problem that I could possibly detect as to why this individual would be given a 69.5%, when the examiners knew that the passing grade for this was 70%. Somehow there was a 0.5% that was shaved from this assessment, and it is that 0.5% that is keeping this individual from practising medicine in this province. I find that absolutely unconscionable.

Is that something that a fairness commissioner would be able to deal with? No, it isn't, according to my reading of this legislation. Quite frankly, that's something that you don't need legislation to deal with. That is something that could be dealt with today, without this Liberal government's legislation at all. It's simply a matter of ensuring that the right thing is done. It's a matter of opening lines of communication with the colleges and being willing to open up and disclose information about the process itself.

I fail to see how an almost perfect score on all of this individual's examinations and various tests disqualify this doctor from treating the many Ontario patients who need a doctor but can't get one. Something is fundamentally wrong with the process, but surely a new law is not necessary to address this.

This Liberal government's attitude and response to everything is more legislation, more bureaucracy. In the final analysis, we have now seen three years of repeated announcements and photo ops and new legislation, new regulation, but on the issues that really count to people in terms of our quality of life in this province, not very much has changed. In fact, we are stepping backwards.

We have waiting lists now that are growing longer by the day for services in our public hospitals. Emergency wards are threatening to close. This government justifies its inaction by pointing very slyly to a selected number of medical procedures that this Minister of Health and this Premier have chosen to highlight. Through their photo ops and their smoke-and-mirrors presentations and the notes that their backbenchers are given by the minister to read into the record, they lay claim to shorter wait times for half a dozen procedures. What they're not telling the people of Ontario but what the people of Ontario are experiencing is, in fact, that the wait times for other medical procedures are getting longer by the day and health care is not improving. In fact, for many people in this province it's nonexistent, because they still can't get a family doctor, they still can't get treated in a medical emergency room unless they wait 16 and 18 hours for treatment—absolutely unconscionable.

Members opposite, members of this government, have the gall to continue to recount the rhetoric, the lines that their ministers give them as they cross this province. It's catching up with them, though.

I want to talk about another specific case. Again, I speak from personal experience about my own constituents. This is relating to pharmaceuticals. My constituent—and, by the way, any member of this House: I'm happy to share the name with you and the specific file so that you might want to personally respond and provide an answer as to why you're prepared to justify the current

circumstances. This individual was denied licensing as a pharmacist due to his difficulties with only one specific case, a very practical area of the examination. This individual has been asking simply for one thing, and that is, "Having completed the examination, please give me some feedback on where my answers were wrong. I would like to have an opportunity to address that area, to review it, to study. I'm happy to take the examination again. But give me feedback, give me a response, give me information." It's not forthcoming.

Another area of concern that I want to express and share with the House relating to this issue is the issue of transparency in the selection of foreign-trained doctors. Although foreign-trained candidates can score beneath the standardized scores on various quantitative objective clinical tests, they can be and are accepted on the basis of their overall score. What I'm concerned about is that there is nothing in this legislation that is going to improve that transparency when, in fact, there is one specific area of the testing that may hold them back. That transparency is critical if we're going to open the door for individuals who are caught by this government's inaction.

Most international medical graduates want to practise medicine, the profession that they were trained in. When I look at this legislation, I have to ask the question of this government: What is it that you're going to achieve by passing this legislation if you don't have the co-operation of the regulatory bodies and of the colleges?

**Mr. Ramal:** We do.

**Mr. Klees:** I hear the member from London-Fanshawe say, "But we do." Well, then you're not listening to them. They are saying that there are a number of concerns that they have, that they're asking us to propose amendments to this legislation that will ensure that their professional role is respected by this government. I wonder how many members opposite have actually read this legislation as opposed to the speaking notes that they were given. By the way, often there is quite a difference between what your speaking notes will tell you is in the legislation and what it actually is all about.

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** You're kidding. Come on.

**Mr. Klees:** The member opposite and other good—you're from Ottawa.

**Mr. Patten:** Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Klees:** Ottawa Centre. The member from Ottawa Centre finds this so shocking and yet, as a member of the Liberal government, he should know more than anyone else. I can tell by his acknowledgment that he knows precisely of what I speak. My challenge is to members of this Liberal caucus: Please, in the interests of your constituents, don't simply rubber-stamp this legislation. We are calling on the government to move this legislation into public hearings, and what we want to take place in the public hearings is for individuals to come forward to tell their own stories. We look forward to the colleges to come forward and propose their amendments. What will be interesting is how many of those amendments this

government will accept, how many of the amendments the official opposition or the third party proposes they will actually accept.

**1720**

If we look at the record of this government for the last three years and count the number of amendments that were presented by opposition parties that were accepted by the government and actually incorporated into legislation, do you have any idea how many there might have been? We should actually conduct a lottery. I would venture to say that if there was a handful out of literally thousands, that would be a lot. And that goes to the heart of how this government conducts its business. They have a majority. They ignore the opposition. They ignore the public. They know it all. And regardless of their announcement about their intention to reform the democratic process, what we've seen is nothing from this government by way of co-operating with the opposition, accepting well-intentioned amendments that would in fact improve legislation. They have developed an arrogance. They have developed an attitude that McGuinty knows best. I'm surprised, actually, that the Liberal backbenchers didn't stand and applaud that, because they're trained to do that.

We believe that there is an opportunity to improve conditions in this province for foreign-trained professionals and we will support that. As I said at the outset, we as a caucus support the intention of this bill. We have serious concerns about specifics relating to this bill. We have specific concerns about what we believe is an affront to the role of colleges, to the role of regulatory bodies in this province, and we as the official opposition want to work together with the colleges to improve this bill, to ensure that at the end of the day what we don't do is to in any way lower the standards for any of our professions, but rather that we bring those individuals who are foreign-trained up to the standards, but that we do so in the most efficient way possible.

I'll recount, as I said at the outset of my remarks, that what we have to do is address our immigration system and how people qualify to become landed immigrants in this province. A proposal that I would ask the government to consider to incorporate into what they have already stated they would do is to create an Internet portal that would be available to individuals who are considering immigration to this country, and not only does that portal give individuals information about the standards that are required here and give information about programs that will be available to them here, but my advice and my strong suggestion is that, given the power we have to communicate through the Internet, many of those qualification tests and reviews and training programs can already take place in the country of origin. Once someone has made a decision to come to this country, and they are a professional engineer or a lawyer or an accountant, there is no reason why many of those qualification tests and procedures can't take place in their country of origin so that when they get here, they can hit the ground running. There's no reason why someone has

to immigrate to this country, take a part-time or a full-time job, and then go through those training programs in the evening and on weekends and create the kind of stress that that will automatically impose on families. We can work on that.

**Mr. Ramal:** Talk to Ottawa.

**Mr. Klees:** The member from London–Fanshawe says, “Talk to Ottawa.” No. This is a provincial responsibility in terms of the training. If it’s not, member from London–Fanshawe, then why are you bringing this forward? It shows that you haven’t read it, and it shows that you don’t understand the responsibilities that provincial regulatory colleges have. We, as a province, have responsibilities to set standards and qualifications, and I’m simply making a very positive recommendation here that I trust the government would consider. It’s easily done. It’s a practical measure. It’s more than just reviewing something; it’s more than just studying something. Let’s work together and create some practical solutions that I believe will not only benefit the immigrants themselves but will benefit our economy and will benefit our communities if we take that kind of step.

I submit that when we come to the public hearings, we will have an opportunity to become very specific in terms of some of those amendments that we’ll be putting forward. We look forward to the various regulatory bodies coming forward with their recommendation. We look forward to hearing the specific stories and frustrations of individuals as they’re being experienced in the system today. We are hopeful that the minister, the government, will see the wisdom of incorporating many of those changes to this legislation.

I thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. I look forward to members of the government going beyond their speaking notes. I urge you: Read the legislation, become familiar with it, and I’m sure you’ll agree that much more work needs to be done before this becomes legislation in this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Tabuns:** I appreciate the time that the member from Oak Ridges has taken to set out his analysis of the bill. I don’t agree with all of his analysis, but I appreciate the time he took to bring forward issues here.

I have to say he’s quite correct in saying that the government had promised that in its first year it would deal with these issues; it would bring forward the barrier buster so that people would actually be able to get on with their lives, to get on with the use of their skills.

I want to say that we aren’t dealing with a large number of professionals who come to this country whose standards and capacity are lower than those that exist here. I don’t think that’s the case at all. In fact, we have people coming from other jurisdictions whose skills are in some instances higher than required in this jurisdiction. We have a problem of making sure that people get to use those skills: get to use the skills quickly, get to use the skills that will build this economy, this society, and will give those people the kinds of lives that they need and that they deserve.

The bill that’s before us still in its text does not incorporate the recommendation of an independent appeals tribunal for those professions that do not already have such a tribunal and does not incorporate a support system for those individuals who should appeal.

In the postwar period, immigrants built our economy in construction. The skilled tradespeople did amazing things to make Ontario the place that it is today. We have a 21st-century economy to build. A new wave of immigrants are here, and they’re not being allowed the opportunity that the wave 50 years ago was given. Their skills are being set aside.

I say to the government, now is the time to be bold. Now is the time to fully implement what was recommended and to go beyond that, to throw the door open, to give people the opportunity to contribute the way they can contribute.

**1730**

**Mr. Ramal:** I was listening to the member from Oak Ridges giving examples. I don’t need examples, because I lived the situation. My wife is living it right now. Many of my friends are still suffering from the past government and what they did to newcomers, especially the foreign-trained professionals.

The Conservative government was elected in 1995. When did they come up with the solution he mentioned? In 2002 they gave a rubber cheque to many bridging and connecting programs across the province. We are the government that came with a solution for the issues. When our government was elected, we increased medical spots across the province by almost 100%; in London, Ontario, alone from the 28 to 52 spots. Many other jurisdictions across Ontario almost doubled. Our government addressed this issue and dealt with it right away, without playing games, because we know the importance of this issue for many newcomers to Ontario who want to be good Canadians by working and giving their skills, their abilities, their talents to help and support this province.

The member from Oak Ridges mentioned many different spots many different times and he contradicted himself, what he had said in the past and what is going on at the present time. That’s why we introduced this bill, because this bill is important to open up for many people who want to be good Canadians, to open up for many professionals who cannot use their skills, talents and education because many barriers have been put before them and do not allow them to use their education and their skills in this province.

This bill is a good step, a very good mechanism, to allowing many foreign-trained professionals to use their skills and their education in this province.

**Mr. O’Toole:** I’d certainly like first to thank the member from Oak Ridges, our critic on this file, for bringing forward what I think is the importance of the specific cases he cited, in the original case, and to look at the suggestion he made here in the context: that in the application process for people coming to Ontario and indeed Canada, to have the Internet portal to find a mech-

anism for new Canadians or persons wishing to look at Canada so that they can look at this prequalification, which in the visa application process is sometimes somewhat misleading. They tend to put a higher weight on skilled professionals in other countries, but when they get here, there are some barriers that could be removed. I think, ultimately, that's the intention of this bill.

Our critic said clearly that we're in support of this bill. It is the right thing to do. We do need to have hearings to get it right.

I was going to have a couple of things. This is what I call the McGuinty solution to everything. I don't want to be too harsh here because, again, we're somewhat in harmony here. There are actually eight parts to the bill, for those viewing today. There are 12 pages, in each official language, so it's not a large, complex bill, but there are eight sections to the bill and I just want to mention two of those: IV and V.

Part IV: "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may appoint an individual to act as the fair registration practices commissioner"—a fairness commissioner. That's a political appointment, and we all have to acknowledge that. Perhaps the Ombudsman or someone could take on that responsibility.

In part V it says they will establish an office to be known as the "Access Centre for Internationally Trained Individuals"—another bureaucracy. So every solution they have is a bigger bureaucracy, more obstacles for people coming to this great province to establish their professional credentials. I think we could be achieving more by—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much.

Questions and comments, the member for Nickel Belt.

**Ms. Martel:** With respect to comments made by the member from Oak Ridges, I agree that this bill should be in committee. I'd like to hear what the regulatory colleges have to say. Frankly, I'd like to make suggestions to some of them as well.

I want to just put on the record today some suggestions I've made to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and to this government, with respect to international medical graduates, on a much faster assessment process that is in place in Manitoba now that we should look at in Ontario if we are really serious about having international medical graduates make a contribution in Ontario, especially given the shortage of physicians.

Just on September 15, 2006, the health minister in Manitoba announced changes to a process they had in place which was called the clinicians assessment and professional enhancement, or CAPE, program, a three-day assessment process including a structured oral interview, a therapeutics assessment and a clinical and communication skills evaluation of their international medical graduates. After a three-day assessment, the international medical graduates who succeeded in getting through the three days were given a restricted or provisional licence to work with other physicians and be mentored by them, to gain the competencies and Canadian experience they

needed in order to get a full licence and be fully qualified to practise in the province of Manitoba. That process was put together by the Manitoba government—an NDP government—the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, and the Manitoba medical school.

The new process that was just announced will now involve a pre-employment interview to help identify previous clinical experience to match the candidate to a successful practice in rural and northern Manitoba, an orientation to the Manitoba health care system, a three-day classroom assessment process, and a 12-week clinical placement in a rural setting.

This is an idea I have raised with the college here. This is an idea I have raised with the government here. Why can't we take a look at this to get international medical graduates into the field?

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Oak Ridges. You have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Klees:** I want to thank the members for Toronto—Danforth, London—Fanshawe, Durham and Nickel Belt for their comments. It's nice to know they were listening to my comments.

I want to make it very clear that I and our caucus fully support the intent of this legislation. We want to see this government go far beyond simply creating another bureaucratic structure. We want to see them go beyond simply another photo op and rhetoric. We want to see them put in place very practical solutions that, frankly, would include the kind of recommendations the member for Nickel Belt has made. That solution can be put in place without this legislation. We don't need it. We don't need more rhetoric.

I believe the recommendation that I put forward to drive the actual qualification process into the country of origin of immigrants has very practical implications as well, and can significantly lighten the load for immigrants when they're here and reduce the frustration.

In closing, in my riding of Oak Ridges and throughout York region, there are far too many individuals who cannot find a family doctor. This government is failing those people. While we're spending a great deal of time debating this legislation, it will do nothing and has done nothing to add one more doctor to the supply of doctors in York region.

I ask this government to get practical and to move forward with practical solutions.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Martel:** I'm pleased to participate in the debate this afternoon, and I want to look at the bill from a perspective of some of those newcomers to the province whom I have met. They weren't newcomers anymore at the time that I met them, but certainly they came from somewhere else to make a contribution here. I want to take a look at what their experience has been and whether or not the bill in its current form is really going to do anything to help them and to help others like them be able to make a full contribution in the province of Ontario.

If that's what the bill is supposed to be about, then I can tell you, the current bill needs a whole lot of work, a whole lot of amendments and a whole lot of change if we're really going to guarantee that people who come and who have professional skills can actually use their professional skills and make a contribution on a personal level and to the economy of the province of Ontario.

A very long time ago, when I was first elected—and that was a long time ago—I lived on the top floor of 666 Spadina Avenue. It was over 19 years ago, so it was long ago. At the end of the hall there was a lovely woman who had been a gynecologist in India. She had been in Canada for some time—I met her when I was living up on that top floor—and she was unable to get her credentials assessed, she was unable to get a match through the CaRMS process so that she could have her qualifications assessed and any upgrading actually done. There was this lovely young woman who had been a gynecologist in India being forced to work in a lab in Ontario because she couldn't get her qualifications assessed and couldn't fully participate in the professional capacity that she wanted to.

**1740**

Some years after that, I met another lovely young woman, this one from Toronto, who was also a gynecologist from India. She had her family here in Toronto, and she too was desperately trying to get her skills assessed, trying—and being unsuccessful—to get a match through CaRMS so that she could get a position, because she expected she would have to do some upgrading to meet the Canadian experience. She tried for two or three years in a row and was unsuccessful through the match. She finally ended up going to Newfoundland, because Newfoundland had a program that would permit her to get a provisional licence to start out practising first as a family physician. Through that provisional licence and being able to prove her qualifications, she hoped that she would then go on to practise what she was really trained to do, which was to be a gynecologist. Sometime after she left to go to Newfoundland and start that, I heard back from her that she was established in the community, that they were becoming a part of the community—although they were unhappy to leave Toronto, where they had an extended community for support—and that she was going to be able to do, at some point in the not-too-distant future, what she had been trained to do, do what she did in India and do what she had been unable to do here in Ontario.

I want to reinforce again, from a two-minute comment that I made earlier, the experience I had at a forum at the St. Lawrence Centre. This was probably earlier in the spring. There are a number of lecture series that go on. I regret to say that I can't remember the organization that had put it on, but they are well known for putting on some very interesting, very heart-wrenching, so to speak, lectures on a number of issues that touch a lot of immigrants. This particular lecture series focused on the experience of professional women coming to Ontario and

what their experience had been in a wide variety of areas: first of all, their experience in actually gaining a position that was equivalent to the one they had left in their country of origin; what their experience had been in terms of their earning level, now that they were no longer a professional in their country of origin but were working in Ontario; what they had experienced with respect to their income level and earning capacity; their experience indeed of securing employment in the province; their experience in obtaining a bridging program so they might be able to actually get comparable Ontario/Canadian experience in the field they had left in their country of origin. I can tell you that the sad, sad reality of what I heard that evening was the experience that was common to all of these women, who represented various levels of professions etc. The experience of all of them had been so negative in Ontario, so disheartening, so overwhelming, so unhappy, that many of them said publicly that they wondered why they had come to Ontario in the first place.

I find that really difficult to accept. Imagine women—some of them had families and some didn't; some came on their own—making a decision to leave their country of origin, their homeland, where they were well established, to come to this province because they thought it was going to be better for them, they thought it was going to be better for their family, they believed they had a positive contribution to make and they wanted to make that contribution to the Ontario economy. They found that the move was nothing like they had ever imagined. It had not been a positive experience. They were in a position where they could not make a contribution to the Ontario economy with respect to their skills and their talents. They were left feeling alienated, unproductive and unwanted. In a room full of very talented professional women who had come from somewhere else to make a contribution to Ontario, it was sad, sad, sad, to hear that common story of being unable to get their credentials assessed, unable to get a bridging program so that they could have the required Ontario/Canadian work experience, learning that they were not working in their profession but working at jobs that were far below what they were qualified to do, making far less money than they had before and, all in all, having a very negative experience in this province when they had so much that they could have contributed if they would have been able to access the ways and means to make that contribution.

The problem is that the experience of the two women and the group of women I'm talking to you about is an experience that is not uncommon, not unlike the experience that so many newcomers have to this province and to this country.

I just want to read into the record some of the statistics involving newcomers: "In Canada it takes on average 10 years before a highly skilled immigrant reaches the same level of employment as a Canadian with approximately equivalent credentials"—10 full years. The source of that information is the Canada Alliance of Education and Training Organizations, Foreign Credential Recognition: An Overview of Practice in Canada, 2004. Ten years

before a highly skilled, trained immigrant gets the same employment opportunity as a Canadian who has equivalent credentials.

The second statistic: “The Conference Board of Canada, a private think tank, calculates the impact to the Canadian economy of failing to recognize immigrants’ learning and learning credentials is in the range of \$3.4 billion to \$4.97 billion annually.” The source of that statistic is *Toward Maximizing the Talents of Visible Minorities*, the Conference Board of Canada, 2004. That’s \$3.4 billion to \$4.97 billion lost because we are refusing to recognize immigrants’ learning skills, talents and credentials.

The third statistic, this one from Statistics Canada: “A recent Statistics Canada study found that one in six male immigrants leaves Canada for better opportunities elsewhere within the first year of arrival,” and those who are most likely to leave are skilled workers. Imagine: After the first year of coming to Canada in the hopes of using your skill as a skilled tradesperson, you are forced to leave and go somewhere else and take that skill and talent and skilled trade with you. What a loss to our economy. What a waste to our economy.

Fourth statistic: “Researchers found one third of male immigrants aged 25 to 45 at the time they arrived in Canada left within 20 years. More than half of those who left did so within the first year.” I’ve already mentioned that. “The study’s subject group amounts to about 50,000 newcomers a year. Of those, 17,000 immigrant men in that age range will end up leaving Canada eventually.”

I don’t think that’s any different than the scenario and the experience that I listened to that night when I was listening to this woman at the St. Lawrence Centre. It would be interesting if we had some statistics that talked about immigrant women’s experience, because I bet, for professional women, we would have almost a mirror image, the same type of undervaluation of their skills and the same decision to leave within a year or certainly within 20 years to go somewhere else where their skills would be more valuable.

Far more significant are the statistics that have to do both with earnings and, when you don’t have earnings, where you end up. Again back to Stats Canada: Their most recent report looked at earnings of immigrants. In 2001, recent arrivals had significantly lower earnings. Average earnings of recent immigrants in the 1980s were \$40,100 per year for a male aged 25 to 54. Average earnings of recent immigrants in 2000 were down to \$33,900. Over 20 years have passed, and average earnings of newcomers have dropped substantially. Clearly, their experience wasn’t a whole lot better. I think what that also has to say is, we’re certainly not doing the best we can to make sure that their level of skill is recognized and that they’re able to practise or to be involved in the skilled trade they were trained to be in. That’s having a huge impact on their earnings; it’s having a huge impact on our economy.

**1750**

I think the most telling and most important statistic, though, comes from the Daily Bread Food Bank. In 2002,

they took a look backward at who has been using the food bank, and they pointed out the following: The percentage of immigrants with at least some college or university education who were using food banks in the spring of 1995 was 12%. By the spring of 2002, that was up to 59%. The number of people with a university education or a higher education who were using food banks in Ontario was up dramatically—up to 59%. That’s probably the most telling and frankly the most damning indictment of how our system to welcome immigrants and to ensure that they can participate fully in our economy is not working. It is not working at all—not for people who come and who don’t have very many skills and not for people who come and have tremendous skills. We are undervaluing their credentials and their work experience time and time again. They are losing at a personal level, and we as a larger society are losing because we’re not incorporating those skills and those talents into our workplaces.

When I look at the bill, I say, “Okay, how is Bill 124 going to make it better for all of those people and all of those statistics that I just read into the record?” Unfortunately, I’ve got a lot of concerns about Bill 124. I certainly don’t think that, as drafted, this bill is going to do very much, if anything, to improve the situation for those newcomers whose experience I’ve just related.

Let me look at some of the problems: no appeal process. There’s nothing in the bill that gives a foreign-trained professional some type of avenue to appeal if they believe they are being stonewalled by a professional organization. We have certainly heard that again and again from a number of professionals who are very concerned about the professional bodies that regulate them. Under the bill, an applicant who is shortchanged, who feels that they have been either misjudged in terms of their credentials or not taken seriously or whatever, can only appeal for an internal review of that decision and of course that’s conducted by the very same people who gave them a negative response in the first place. So it’s hard to imagine what kind of independent new process, new look, new eye to the problem is going to come when you go back to the very same people who denied you access in the first place. That was probably why Judge Thomson, in his report for the government on this very issue, said the following, and I’m going to quote from his 2005 report:

“An independent appeals process from the registration decisions of Ontario regulatory bodies in the self-regulated professions ought to exist. The rationale is that well-developed, transparent, independent appeal mechanisms enhance public confidence in the overall registration process.

“The importance of independent appeals of registration decisions was confirmed by many participants in the consultation”—Speaker, you and I know we have heard from a number of those—“including those regulators whose decisions are currently subject to independent appeals. Independent appeals were supported for” a number of reasons. I won’t list those, but that was a criti-

cal part of Judge Thomson's recommendations. It came after his hearing directly from the experiences of those who were trying to get their qualifications judged and their potential assessed. It came to him from the experience of those who found that when they went back to their regulatory bodies and their regulatory bodies said no, they had nowhere else to go. And you know what? They've got to have somewhere else to go. There has to be an independent mechanism for appeal in this bill. It's not in there, and it's got to be.

Let me deal with the second concern: no guarantees of support for newcomers. So the government, in the bill, will create an access centre. That access centre is only going to provide support "with respect to the requirements for registration and the procedures for applying." It is not the role of those who will staff the access centre to advocate on behalf of applicants. That's not going to be their job. That's not going to be their role. Their role is only to give the paperwork and tell people how to fill it out. Well, there's some value in having a specific centre to have the paperwork in one place. But do you know what? What a lot of these people really need is someone who's doing a bit more than handing out paper. They really need folks who are there to advocate on their behalf, who are interested in helping them navigate through the system, who are interested in listening to them, hearing what their concerns are and trying to point them in the right direction, not just trying to give them some mundane information about how to apply for registration and what the procedures are to do that. So it's very clear that somewhere in this bill there needs to be the creation of those levels of advocates who are there not only to help provide information but who are truly there to support people and work with them and help move them through the registration process so that they understand what they're doing, what is required and how they can get where they need to be. That's not anywhere in this bill, and it really does need to be included in this bill.

Thirdly, there's no guarantee that all the regulated professions will be covered. I heard some of the Liberal members talk in their two-minute responses about the different professions that we think are going to be covered. Well, if you think they're going to be covered, and if it's good enough to read them into the record here today, why isn't it good enough to put it in the legislation? I don't understand what the problem is with this. I don't understand why we have to do this with regulation. Look, if you know that you want to cover 36

professions right now, put them in the bill right now. Then you leave a provision in the regulation section that allows the minister or cabinet to add other professions when the need arises, when the time comes. If you're serious about which ones you want to cover, do it in the bill. It has the force of law. It has a much stronger impact. The way you get around adding professions later is to have a clause in the regulation that allows the minister and cabinet to do that at another point in time in the future when other professions need to be added. So cover all of them in the bill. Do it up front. Don't do it by regulation; don't do it by the back door. If you know who they're going to be in terms of professions to be covered, put it in the bill now.

Costs: The bill talks about costs. It allows for costs to be charged to foreign-trained applicants. Those costs are going to be set by regulation. The limits around the costs are going to be set by regulation. I'd be a whole lot happier if I knew what the parameters around those costs were going to be and if those parameters were actually included in the legislation itself. I don't want to see a whole bunch of people being able to make a huge profit off of applicants. I don't think the government wants to see that. If you don't want to do that, then put in the legislation now some of those parameters, some of those guidelines that will be used in establishing the fees that are going to be charged to foreign-trained applicants who are trying to register. I think that's a fair thing to do, I think it's an upfront thing to do, and that would give them some sense of what they're going to be in for when they start to make application for registration.

My colleague from Toronto-Danforth already read into the record eight other recommendations that we think would give some teeth to the bill, that would give some force to the bill, that would actually have the government do what it promises to do. I won't go over them again. They were very well articulated. But I say to the government: You want to have a bill that's going to ensure that we use all of the skills, potential and talents of newcomers to this country. The current bill, as it stands, does not do that. We need public hearings and we need some of the amendments that we have proposed in order to make it that much better and do what we all want to be done.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until later on this evening at 6:45 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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| Durham  | O'Toole, John (PC)  | London West /<br>London-Ouest                      | <b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b><br>Minister of Training, Colleges and<br>Universities / ministre de la Formation et<br>des Collèges et Universités  |
| Eglington–Lawrence  | <b>Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L)</b> Minister of<br>Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des<br>Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration   | London–Fanshawe                                    | Ramal, Khalil (L)   |
| Elgin–Middlesex–London                                    | <b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b><br>Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail  | Mississauga Centre /<br>Mississauga-Centre         | <b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b><br>Minister of Small Business and<br>Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites<br>Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat  |
| Erie–Lincoln<br>Essex                                     | Hudak, Tim (PC)   | Mississauga East /<br>Mississauga-Est              | Fonseca, Peter (L)  |
| Etobicoke Centre /<br>Etobicoke-Centre                    | <b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair<br>of the Committee of the Whole House /<br>Vice-Président, Président du Comité<br>plénier de l'Assemblée législative   | Mississauga South /<br>Mississauga-Sud             | Peterson, Tim (L)   |
| Etobicoke North /<br>Etobicoke-Nord                       | <b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)</b><br>Minister of Transportation /<br>ministre des Transports   | Mississauga West /<br>Mississauga-Ouest            | Delaney, Bob (L)  |
| Etobicoke–Lakeshore                                       | Qaadri, Shafiq (L)  | Nepean–Carleton                                    | MacLeod, Lisa (PC)  |
| Glengarry–Prescott–Russell                                | <b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)</b><br>Minister of the Environment /<br>ministre de l'Environnement   | Niagara Centre /<br>Niagara-Centre                 | Kormos, Peter (ND)  |
| Guelph–Wellington   | Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)  | Niagara Falls                                      | Craitor, Kim (L)  |
| Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant                                   | Sandals, Liz (L)  | Nickel Belt  | Martel, Shelley (ND)  |
|   | Barrett, Toby (PC)  | Nipissing  | Smith, Monique M. (L)   |
|   |   | Northumberland                                     | Rinaldi, Lou (L)  |



| Constituency<br>Circonscription                  | Member/Party<br>Député(e) / Parti  | Constituency<br>Circonscription                               | Member/Party<br>Député(e) / Parti  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Oak Ridges                                       | Klees, Frank (PC)  | Stormont–Dundas–<br>Charlottenburgh                           | Brownell, Jim (L)  |
| Oakville   | Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)  | Sudbury   | <b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b><br>Minister of Northern Development and<br>Mines / ministre du Développement du<br>Nord et des Mines   |
| Oshawa   | Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)   | Thornhill   | Racco, Mario G. (L)  |
| Ottawa Centre /<br>Ottawa-Centre                 | Patten, Richard (L)  | Thunder Bay–Atikokan  | Mauro, Bill (L)  |
| Ottawa South /<br>Ottawa-Sud                     | <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b><br>Premier and President of the Council,<br>Minister of Research and Innovation /<br>premier ministre et président du Conseil,<br>ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation                                  | Thunder Bay–Superior<br>North / Thunder Bay–Superior-<br>Nord | Gravelle, Michael (L)  |
| Ottawa West–Nepean /<br>Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean      | <b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b><br>Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de<br>la Promotion de la santé   | Timiskaming–Cochrane  | <b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b><br>Minister of Natural Resources, minister<br>responsible for Aboriginal Affairs /<br>ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre<br>délégué aux Affaires autochtones                                   |
| Ottawa–Orléans                                   | McNeely, Phil (L)  | Timmins–James Bay /<br>Timmins-Baie James                     | Bisson, Gilles (ND)  |
| Ottawa–Vanier                                    | <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b><br>Minister of Community and Social<br>Services, minister responsible for<br>francophone affairs / ministre des Services<br>sociaux et communautaires, ministre<br>déléguée aux Affaires francophones       | Toronto Centre–Rosedale /<br>Toronto-Centre–Rosedale          | <b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b><br>Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and<br>Long-Term Care / vice-premier ministre,<br>ministre de la Santé et des Soins<br>de longue durée   |
| Oxford   | Hardeman, Ernie (PC)   | Toronto–Danforth  | Tabuns, Peter (ND)   |
| Parkdale–High Park                               | DiNovo, Cheri (ND)   | Trinity–Spadina   | Marchese, Rosario (ND)   |
| Parry Sound–Muskoka                              | Miller, Norm (PC)  | Vaughan–King–Aurora   | <b>Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L)</b><br>Minister of Finance, Chair of the<br>Management Board of Cabinet / ministre<br>des Finances, président du Conseil de<br>gestion du gouvernement  |
| Perth–Middlesex                                  | Wilkinson, John (L)  | Waterloo–Wellington   | <b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of<br>the Committee of the Whole House /<br>Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier<br>de l'Assemblée législative  |
| Peterborough                                     | Leal, Jeff (L)   | Whitby–Ajax   | Elliott, Christine (PC)  |
| Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge                          | Arthurs, Wayne (L)   | Willowdale  | Zimmer, David (L)  |
| Prince Edward–Hastings                           | Parsons, Ernie (L)   | Windsor West /<br>Windsor-Ouest                               | <b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b><br>Minister of Economic Development and<br>Trade, minister responsible for women's<br>issues / ministre du Développement<br>économique et du Commerce, ministre<br>déléguée à la Condition féminine |
| Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke                       | Yakabuski, John (PC)   | Windsor–St. Clair   | <b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b><br>Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie  |
| Sarnia–Lambton                                   | <b>Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L)</b><br>Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture  | York Centre /<br>York-Centre                                  | <b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b><br>Minister of Community Safety and<br>Correctional Services / ministre de la<br>Sécurité communautaire<br>et des Services correctionnels  |
| Sault Ste. Marie                                 | Oraziotti, David (L)   | York North / York-Nord  | Munro, Julia (PC)  |
| Scarborough Centre /<br>Scarborough-Centre       | Duguid, Brad (L)   | York West / York-Ouest  | Sergio, Mario (L)  |
| Scarborough East /<br>Scarborough-Est            | <b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b><br>Minister of Children and Youth<br>Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance<br>et à la jeunesse  | Burlington  | Vacant   |
| Scarborough Southwest /<br>Scarborough-Sud-Ouest | Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)  | Markham   | Vacant   |
| Scarborough–Agincourt                            | <b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b><br>Minister of Government Services / ministre<br>des Services gouvernementaux   | York South–Weston /<br>York-Sud–Weston                        | Vacant   |
| Scarborough–Rouge River                          | Balkissoon, Bas (L)  |   |  |
| Simcoe North /<br>Simcoe-Nord                    | Dunlop, Garfield (PC)  |   |  |
| Simcoe–Grey                                      | Wilson, Jim (PC)   |   |  |
| St. Catharines                                   | <b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b><br>Minister of Tourism, minister responsible<br>for seniors, government House leader /<br>ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué<br>aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader<br>parlementaire du gouvernement |   |  |
| St. Paul's                                       | <b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b><br>Attorney General / procureur général   |   |  |
| Stoney Creek                                     | Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)  |   |  |

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

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

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Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong  
Gilles Bisson, Kim Craiton, Andrea Horwath,  
Dave Levac, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,  
Khalil Ramal, Mario Sergio, Tony C. Wong  
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Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller  
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Kuldip Kular, Norm Miller, Richard Patten,  
Michael Prue, Monique M. Smith,  
Norman W. Sterling, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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