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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 22 November 2006

Mercredi 22 novembre 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 22 November 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 22 novembre 2006

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): I have tabled a private member's resolution for debate tomorrow in the Legislature in response to the growing concern from residents, families, staff and long-term-care home operators over the recently introduced Liberal Long-Term Care Homes Act, Bill 140. They fear that Bill 140 will put a 10-year deadline on older nursing homes' operating licences without any plan or funding commitment for the capital renewal of older B and C beds, where 35,000 residents live. In fact, after seven years, the government can decide to do anything it wants with these beds, including closures or moving the beds to other communities. This has created uncertainty for the residents.

Furthermore, without a funding commitment or a plan for capital renewal on the part of the Liberal government, these residents will continue to live in three- and four-bed wards, with no ensuite bathrooms or wheelchair accessibility throughout the home. These homes only meet 1972 design standards.

Our government, on the other hand, undertook a plan of action in 1998 to invest \$2.1 billion in long-term-care homes so that residents could live in comfort and dignity. These homes met new 1998 design standards. We built 20,000 new long-term-care homes. We rebuilt 16,000 of the province's oldest beds to meet the new standards. I urge this government to take action on behalf of our vulnerable citizens.

GREY CUP

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): I say this reluctantly but respectfully: Congratulations are due to the 2006 Grey Cup champion BC Lions for their 25-14 win over the Alouettes last weekend.

While Toronto football fans are feeling the disappointment of the Argonaut loss in the final game of the CFL East, it's now time for the people of Toronto to start looking ahead to the 2007 Grey Cup. We look forward to coach Pinball Clemons leading our Argos to the championship, but we should also start getting excited about

the fact that the location for the 2007 Grey Cup game will be none other than here in the city of Toronto. This is a great opportunity for Ontario's capital to showcase itself to the rest of Canada. It will be a great opportunity for Torontonians to come together to welcome Canadians from coast to coast as they come to our city to celebrate this great Canadian tradition.

The theme of the 2007 Grey Cup will be Over the Top in Toronto. Work has already begun on the Over the Top festival, which builds excitement in the days leading up to the Grey Cup game itself. I can't talk about the details yet, but this may be the biggest party Toronto has ever seen. It will be an experience for the whole family. Come enjoy a piece of Canadian history and culture and an opportunity to partake in a celebration unlike any we've seen before.

I'm confident the Grey Cup celebration 2007 will be the best celebration in the 95-year history of this great game. I say to the people of Ontario and the people of Toronto, it's time to start getting excited about the 2007 Grey Cup game in Toronto.

GEORGE LESLIE MACKAY

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I am pleased to stand today to talk about an Oxford county hero, Reverend George Leslie Mackay.

Reverend Mackay was raised in Zorra, in the north end of Oxford county. In 1872, he traveled to Taiwan as a missionary, where he became known as the Black-Bearded Barbarian. Eventually, he won over the locals, not only with his preaching, but his work healing the sick and practising dentistry. Over 20 years he extracted more than 21,000 teeth.

During a visit home, he tried to raise funds to build a school in Taiwan at a cost of about \$4,000. In 1881, through the leadership of Reverend Mackay and the Woodstock Sentinel Review editor, people came together from Oxford county and the surrounding area. Together, they raised over \$6,000. In honour of Reverend Mackay and the generosity of Oxford, the school was named Oxford College, and it still exists as a successful university today.

During his time in Taiwan, Mackay established over 60 chapels, several schools and a hospital. He remains a national hero in Taiwan. His work has created a strong connection between the people of Oxford and the people of Taiwan.

Several years ago, the university that Mackay founded honoured Oxford county by presenting them a statue of

Mackay. Reverend Mackay is being honoured in a Rogers OMNI documentary, which will air this Saturday, November 25. I encourage everyone to take the time to watch the documentary and learn about this legendary man from Oxford county.

CANCER SCREENING

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): The dismal news today that Canada can't participate in a clinical cancer trial because most provinces don't pay for Avastin, a cancer drug for colorectal cancer patients, means provinces like Ontario, which refuse to fund this drug, have an added responsibility to screen for it so it can be detected and treated early on.

I'm concerned about the ongoing delay in establishing a screening program in Ontario. In March 2004, Cancer Care Ontario began a one-year screening pilot project using the fecal occult blood test. The main objective was to compare the participation rates of eligible individuals who were recruited for screening through a public health program or a primary care physician. The key findings were completed in February of 2005, and CCO submitted its final report to the Ministry of Health at the end of March 2006.

I would have hoped after a year of study, CCO would have come up with the most effective screening model to recruit eligible patients. So I was very surprised that on October 16, the Minister of Health said the model he got didn't have the level of physician involvement needed to get the best results from a screening program. I can only hope this matter gets sorted out very soon and a screening program gets under way.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer in Ontario: 3,000 Ontarians died from it last year. If detected early, the cancer is 90% curable. Given that Ontario refuses to fund Avastin for advanced colorectal cancer, it's more critical than ever to screen and detect this cancer long before a serious treatment regime is ever required.

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YEAR OF THE WAR BRIDE

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): A few months ago, our government hosted a reception here at Queen's Park celebrating 2006 as the Year of the War Bride. At this reception, war brides and their families gathered to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the arrival of over 45,000 war brides and the contributions they made to our great province.

It is my pleasure to tell all members of the House here today that celebrations continue in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh. On Friday, November 17, I was fortunate enough to be present at a special art exhibit at Sue's Art Gallery. Entitled War Brides on Canvas, the exhibit was organized by six local artists who showcased numerous pieces of stunning art featuring 11 war brides from in and around the Cornwall area. I

wish to take a moment to congratulate the artists of the Focus Art group: Charlene Bennett, Patricia Campbell, Rose Desnoyers, Patricia Fish, Jacqueline Milner and Micheline Tanguay are to be commended for embracing this initiative and contributing to the commemoration of the Year of the War Bride.

The war brides themselves are to be commended. They have helped to shape this province and continue to play an active role. My constituency assistant, Jeremy Gowsell, has had the chance to participate in several events with local war brides, including riding with them to Toronto to participate in that event this past year. He has continued to be impressed by their charm, their goodwill and their incredible stories. Certainly, go on the war brides website and you can read about and understand those incredible stories.

It is my pleasure to support these wonderful ladies and join with them in celebrating 2006 as the Year of the War Bride here in Ontario. I wish the war brides well in their continuing celebrations during this year, and I certainly appreciate the efforts that Bea Surgeson from my riding has made to profile the war brides here in Ontario.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 107

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby-Ajax): I'd like to speak just for a moment about integrity, and in this specific case the lack of integrity shown by this Liberal government with respect to Bill 107, and the lack of respect that they've shown to the members of this Legislature and to the hundreds of presenters who've been lined up to speak to this matter for several months. For several months, they've been led along by this government in the expectation that they would have a fair hearing before the justice policy committee. Actually, up until November 20, all of us in this Legislature and all of the presenters were under the impression that they would have this opportunity, before this government last night brought down the guillotine and choked off the debate on this fundamental issue so important to all of Ontarians.

Not only that; there haven't been just procedural problems here. There are substantive issues and there's a lack of integrity shown here, issues around the so-called amendments that have been presented to the committee. In fact, they're not amendments at all. One of the significant presenters, Ms. Toni Silberman, called them "vague, amorphous promises." I couldn't agree more.

There has been a lack of clarity with respect to these amendments, because in actual fact I don't think they even know yet what they want to do with some of these things. They're leading us along, hoping that somehow a solution is going to be found, to the detriment of the people of Ontario.

SENIOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): On Tuesday morning I had the honour and privilege of attending the Ontario Senior

Achievement Awards, held by the Lieutenant Governor here at Queen's Park. The Ontario Senior Achievement Awards are an opportunity for us to recognize the many contributions seniors continue to make to Ontario. This year, we honoured 21 seniors from across the province for a variety of achievements. These Ontarians come from many places and from all walks of life, but they do have one thing in common: They've each spent a lifetime contributing to Ontario, from serving in the armed forces to volunteering in their communities, to encouraging governments to take action on specific needs.

One of the honourees was from my own riding of Brant, Doug Snooks. Doug worked for almost four years as chair of the Eagle Place seniors' centre to get a chair-lift for that centre. When he started his quest, there were 51 members of the seniors' centre. Many of them had difficulty climbing the stairs to the second floor of the building, and some couldn't attend the meeting at all. Doug knocked on doors, petitioned the city and worked with city staff, city councillors, the mayor and myself. He was unsuccessful in the early going, but he kept pushing until Eagle Place got even more than he asked for: an elevator and much-needed renovations to the seniors' centre. Now a whole review of older buildings has been requested to complete the road to accessibility for all seniors and all of our citizens.

Doug Snooks's efforts are just one example of what the senior achievement awards are all about. Thank you, Doug, and thank you to the 20 other extraordinary seniors that we celebrated on Tuesday.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I rise today to congratulate Ontarians on their job creation record during the last three years. In that time, the hard-working people of this province have created 250,000 net new jobs. Our government is doing its job to position Ontario as a world leader in the knowledge economy. That's why our Reaching Higher plan calls for an historic \$6.2-billion investment in post-secondary education—benefiting institutions like the University of Toronto at Mississauga—so that Ontario workers will be the best educated in the world. That's why Ontario has made record investments in health care at Trillium, at Credit Valley and at William Osler, because we understand that strengthening our greatest competitive advantage, our people, is good for our economy. That's why Ontario has used our \$500-million strategic auto sector investment fund to leverage some \$7 billion in new auto industry investments in Ontario—because ours is a race to the top, not the bottom.

The Premier led a trade mission to China last year. This year he's leading one to India and Pakistan. That's why our Minister of Economic Development and Trade is going to Alberta. Our leaders lead by example. They get out there and build opportunity for Ontario businesses, Ontario organizations and Ontario families so that we can be leading edge, now, next year and for decades to come.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): I rise in the House today to speak as a proud northerner. I fight every day to represent the interests of northern Ontario and my constituents in Nipissing. As a government, we are helping the forestry sector invest in the innovative transformation required to compete in today's market. That's why we are providing over \$1 billion in financial support. This government understands that there are serious challenges facing the forestry sector during this transition. That is why on Monday we announced \$140 million for forestry rebates that could reduce the electricity costs of participating companies by 15%.

The wood products that come out of Ontario are a world-class commodity, and you couldn't find a more dedicated workforce than you will find right here in Ontario. I see it every day when I am at home in North Bay and visiting Mattawa in my riding. Families and towns have built themselves around the forestry industry. These are some of the hardest-working people out there. We recognize that, and that is why our government is committed to the sustainability and competitiveness of the forestry sector.

Progress is being made. We have applications in now that would lead to over \$1.2 billion in new investments in Ontario's forestry sector. That tells us there's confidence in the industry and things are not all gloom and doom as the members opposite would like to you believe. The Minister of Natural Resources, together with many of his cabinet colleagues, has been working tirelessly on this file. Together with the sector, we are working to secure the future of hard-working families in northern Ontario and all of Ontario.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTING VULNERABLE WORKERS ACT (EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES), 2006

LOI DE 2006 SUR LA PROTECTION DES TRAVAILLEURS VULNÉRABLES (AGENCES DE PLACEMENT)

Mr. Dhillon moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 161, An Act respecting employment agencies /
Projet de loi 161, Loi concernant les agences de placement.

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. Vic Dhillon (Brampton West–Mississauga): Many of my constituents face a considerable amount of abuse as a result of employment agencies that operate in my riding. I'm very unhappy with some of the activities that are taking place, so I am introducing this bill, whose purpose is to establish a licensing scheme for the control and regulation of businesses that operate as employment

agencies. That term is defined in the bill. "Employment agency" means both businesses that bring together employees seeking jobs and potential employers and temporary help agencies that contract out persons to organizations.

WORKPLACE SAFETY
AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(INDEXING), 2006

LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE ET
L'ASSURANCE CONTRE LES ACCIDENTS
DU TRAVAIL (INDEXATION)

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 162, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 162, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail.

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.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): This is following up on an activity of a couple days ago, when we raised the issue of the untenable position that injured workers are in with the erosion of their payments as a result of inflation because the indexing that they need to make sure their benefits are able to withstand inflation is not in place.

What the bill does is index two types of payments that are received by injured workers. It amends the act to enable annual cost-of-living increases to WSIB compensation paid to injured workers in Ontario by removing the existing reduced indexing factor. This bill also provides for the unreduced indexing factor to apply to all payments made on or after January 1, 1994. If any payment made to a person on or after that date was less than the amount that would have been paid using the unreduced indexing factor, the board must pay the difference to the person.

The short title is Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act (Indexing), 2006. I expect every member, including the minister—

Interjection.

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The Minister of Health will come to order.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

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 private members' public business. I'll see if I can get our people to agree to this.

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

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following change be made to the ballot list of private members' public business: Mr. Tory and Mr. Murdoch exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Murdoch assumes ballot item 65 and Mr. Tory assumes ballot item 70, and that, pursuant to standing order 96(g), notice be waived for ballot item 65.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 107

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Acting Premier. Mr. McGuinty and your government used the parliamentary majority you have to bring the guillotine down on the committee hearings on Bill 107, a fundamental piece of legislation regarding the Ontario Human Rights Commission. This was done despite the promises and repeated assurances, some of them in writing, from the Attorney General that he would let debate happen for "however long it takes."

I want to know why the government decided to break this promise, to go back on the word of the Attorney General. Why couldn't they, for example, keep the commitments that were made in writing to Margaret Parsons and others that hearings would be held over the course of the winter, and why couldn't the government live up to the commitments in advertisements, at significant public expense, that appear today in the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star and the National Post, among other places? Why did you go back on your word and break your promise to listen to these people on a piece of legislation of this importance?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I guess it's obvious to anyone who is joining the debate that the leader of the official opposition has now made himself an expert on the matter of guillotine motions, recognizing that no one has been more expert at this practice than the party he is privileged to lead. The list of those motions and issues that were brought forward is really quite extraordinary.

What we know about the issue at hand is that it's a fundamental issue. It's critically important and, accordingly, has had the advantage of very considerable debate already. More than 40 hours have been dedicated to it; 70 presentations; a wide variety of opportunities for individuals to make their views known. There are, obviously, differing points of view, and I think it's an appropriate opportunity for the legislative committee to be able to

work through a variety of amendments that may come forward with a view toward strengthening the bill and bringing it back here for yet further debate.

Our government is very pleased with the progress that's been made, and the debate and the opportunities that have been presented. We think it's time to move on on this fundamental issue.

Mr. Tory: It's interesting to me that when the Acting Premier or others bring up the past, they sort of suggest it was wrong then but it's okay now.

I think the reason Premier McGuinty and the Acting Premier won't stand up and admit to is that they've made a political calculation that it's actually easier and better for them to muzzle people who are interested in this legislation, muzzle people who, in many cases, are vulnerable and marginalized and just want to be heard, than it is to hear them speak. It's very odd that that would be the case when we're talking about human rights legislation, and I suggest that is the wrong decision.

David Lepofsky calls it "a blistering betrayal." Mohamed Boudjenane of the Canadian Arab Federation calls it "anti-democratic." Barbara Hall, a good friend of the Acting Premier, says, "What should have been a broad consensus-building exercise ... was undertaken in a way which ... caused division within the communities concerned."

We agree. Reform is needed, but this government is going about it in the wrong way.

Acting Premier, yesterday we made an offer of co-operation to let the committee hearings continue as planned and then to let this matter come to a vote when we come back here in March. Why would you not accept that offer of compromise and co-operation on human rights legislation?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The honourable member has effectively got himself wrapped up in the discussion about process today, but in using the word "vulnerable," the honourable member doesn't manage to find any empathy for those people who have waited too long for the justice associated with appropriate action of these bodies.

He speaks about an individual as an example; he names David Lepofsky. This is an example of an individual we all have a tremendous amount of respect for. That's why I had breakfast with him on this issue.

The point is, over a long period of time there has been an opportunity for people to make their views known in a variety of settings and forums. Those views are well expressed already, through the wide variety of presentations at committee and presentations that have come in the form of submissions and letters to all of us individually, and most certainly to our colleague the Attorney General. Accordingly, it's appropriate that we give the legislative committee the opportunity to work through a series of amendments, which will be brought forward from a variety of perspectives, reflecting an opportunity to strengthen the bill and bring it back to the House for yet further debate—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Tory: I'm delighted to hear that the Acting Premier had breakfast with Mr. Lepofsky, and that's great, except it does nothing at all for the hundreds of other people who want to be heard on this.

We just finished saying—I said it last night and again today—that we agree reform is needed. What we're arguing about here is that people want to be heard on this bill and you won't let them be heard. It's an insult, frankly, that you won't even address the offer of co-operation that was made about bringing this to a vote after people are heard. This is an area where we have to show we can listen and co-operate with each other if we deserve to be called leaders.

1400

June Callwood wrote to the Premier today. She said that she supports reform and that she has some concerns about the bill which she thought would be addressed at committee. She goes on to say, "I beg you, I urge you, to reschedule the hearings."

I will ask you again: Will you accept our offer to have this matter brought to a vote in the first couple of days when the House resumes the week of March 19, 2007, in return for hearing the people who want to be heard on this human rights legislation? We could undo the travesty of last night with unanimous consent right now. Why won't you do it?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: It's only through action that we can undo the travesty, which is that they're pretending to be interested in an issue that for eight and a half years they ignored. In fact, their only action on this file was to reduce the amount of resources available for those people who needed legal assistance. That is the legacy of your party.

Just take, as an example, the comments of June Callwood: What did you say? How did you characterize it? You said that she thought the committee was the place where some of the concerns she has will have the opportunity to be addressed, and indeed that is the way the process works. The honourable member wants to talk and talk and substitute process for action. Instead, we think it's important to give the legislative committee an opportunity to consider amendments from a variety of perspectives, which will give advantage to a stronger bill. I look forward as a member to have the opportunity in this House to stand and vote on third reading in advance of reform and action, not more process and talk, for which the honourable member opposite has now become the standard-bearer.

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): Once again to the Deputy Premier: I noticed that never once in that dissertation from you did we hear the word "listen," because you don't know how and you don't want to, on this or any other issue.

Let's talk about another matter. Here we have déjà vu all over again on another issue. Almost exactly a month

ago, we stood in this House and asked questions about serious allegations concerning the integrity of the lottery system operated by the lottery and gaming commission. At the time, we asked for an independent forensic audit into the operations of the OLG after it was revealed that an impossibly high number of lottery insiders had won prizes of more than \$50,000. Premier McGuinty refused to have that independent audit. Four weeks later, we now have allegations of nearly 10% of scratch-and-win prizes being collected by lottery insiders, 65 jackpots totalling \$10.7 million, with none of that information being made public at all—ever. Will the Deputy Premier admit finally that it's time to have an outside, independent forensic audit to get to the bottom of this?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): To the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I want the member and all Ontarians to know that this government treats these and any other allegations as very serious matters. That's why, in fact, we have an independent officer of this Legislature, the Ombudsman, looking into the security of the lottery system, and I eagerly await the work that he has undertaken.

In addition to that, the chair of the board, Mr. Gough, supported by all members of this Legislature to assume that very important responsibility, is conducting a review. He has undertaken KPMG—I hope you're familiar with that firm—to conduct a forensic audit and investigation, to do the appropriate investigation and analysis, and to report back as soon as possible. Every member of this Legislature should have total confidence that I will take the appropriate action to protect the public interest and to protect the integrity of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.

Mr. Tory: Mr. Gough is a fine gentleman; I've known him for years. The problem you've got here is that he's investigating the corporation of which he's the chairman. That's the problem here.

Interjection.

Mr. Tory: He's hired them; he's their client. What silliness is this? You don't understand.

Here is what we have in the latest—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. I will not warn the Minister of Health again.

Mr. Tory: Here's what we have in the last instalment. CBC gets documents about the lottery corporation through freedom of information. CBC tries to interview Duncan Brown and they're physically ejected from the property. Mr. Brown reconsiders, and in the interview he finally agrees to give, he says that he's never seen this documentation ever before.

These things have happened on the watch of all three political parties. It goes back to 1993 or something like that. It is not about politics; it is about the integrity of lotteries, the integrity of the tickets, and being able to satisfy the buying public. Why won't you order an

outside independent forensic audit instead of asking this company to investigate itself? Why won't you do that?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I am a little bit surprised that Mr. Tory has no confidence in KPMG, one of Canada's leading audit firms. In fact, I know that Mr. Tory has used KPMG to do the annual reports for Rogers Communications. In fact, KPMG is also the audit firm for the Ontario PC fund.

So I think that Mr. Tory, on one hand, engages a firm which has an excellent reputation, which is able to do that. Mr. Gough, on behalf of the shareholders, the people of Ontario, engages KPMG to do this kind of work. Also, in addition to that, we have an independent officer of this Legislature with full authority and power to conduct the kind of review to get to the bottom of the matter and to move as quickly as possible to provide some insight, because whatever action needs to be taken, I want to assure this member and all Ontarians, will be taken to protect the public interest.

Mr. Tory: KPMG is a fine firm, but if the shareholders are going to retain them on an independent basis to investigate the lottery corporation, it should be you who are retaining them on behalf of the shareholders and not the corporation itself. You don't understand. They are going to submit their report to the very people who are being investigated here, or who should be.

What I'm trying to do is hold you to account here for the failure to take this seriously enough and to put in place the independent, outside investigation done by the shareholder, which is you, not the chairman of the board. The measures as announced last month are not going to address this scratch ticket situation. It was never addressed at all. Mr. Brown assured us that everything had been done.

The OLG provides a billion dollars in funding to arts and culture groups, not-for-profit groups, hospitals, schools and so on. They are the people who are going to take it in the ear if you don't act on this. You have an obligation to protect the integrity of this system. Why won't you order that independent audit and do it now?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: In fact, we don't have just one but we have two independent—one is an officer of this Legislature who has shown himself to be a tireless advocate and to do some excellent work. I have full confidence.

I'm surprised that Mr. Tory and the Conservative caucus do not have confidence in André Marin, an officer of this Legislature charged with these responsibilities who is undertaking this kind of work. I am shocked that Mr. Tory and the Conservative caucus do not have faith and confidence in their own party's auditor, who is conducting the kind of forensic review which he calls for.

In fact, Mr. Brown and OLG came out with a seven-point plan to protect security and to provide the confidence of Ontarians, be they shareholders or be they lottery players, in the lottery system. I want to assure Mr. Tory, I want to assure this House and all Ontarians that if further actions are required, they will be taken to protect the public interest.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Acting Premier.

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): Deputy.

Mr. Hampton: Deputy Premier, two days ago, the Premier was patting himself on the back over his too little, too late one-cent electricity rebate for paper mills. Today, northern Ontario communities learned just how weak the Premier's announcement really is. In the two days since the announcement, Bowater and Tembec, two companies that were happy to appear with the Premier, have announced mill closures or more job cuts. These are on top of the 45,000 direct and indirect forest sector jobs already destroyed under the McGuinty government.

Deputy Premier, if the Premier's one-penny electricity rebate is just what the doctor ordered, according to the Premier, how come forest sector companies are already laying off more workers?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I want to say to the honourable member that I think it is his strategy typically to take a wide variety effort, a comprehensive response and approach to the challenges we are all conscious of related to the forestry sector, and shrug off another billion dollars. This is really, in a certain sense, what is the heart and the culture of the party he represents: to diminish the efforts that have been made and to appropriately acknowledge that it's going to take a significant effort on the part of all partners, I dare say including the federal government, to ensure that the sector moves forward in a way that is strong.

We know it faces many challenges. That's why on a comprehensive basis our government has responded this week with an additional resource with respect to the challenges of energy cost, and previous initiatives that have outlaid a serious amount of provincial investment, to send a very strong message about our desire to work in partnership with all of those who agree that it's important to make sure that Ontario has a strong and stable forestry sector. There is of course significant work to be done, acknowledging very—

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The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: The Deputy Premier talks about other investments. This government keeps talking about \$500 million in assistance. Only 3% of that \$500 million has been taken up by the industry. That's what they think of your so-called announcements.

This morning the McGuinty government let those working families down again in another crass exercise in media spin. The Minister of Natural Resources had the nerve to say that northern forest sector communities have gotten off relatively scot-free. Tell that to the 45,000 workers who are out of a job under the McGuinty government. That shows just how out of touch you are.

I think the McGuinty government owes northern Ontario forest sector workers and communities an apology for this crass exercise in media spin. Deputy Premier, when will those laid-off forest sector workers get that apology from the McGuinty government?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: One would only have to spend a week around this place to fail to hold to appropriate suspicion any comment offered by the honourable member that didn't come with a transcript. I think the evidence of the minister's commitment and our government's commitment to people employed by or benefiting from the economic advantage of the forestry sector is the fact that, as a government, we have contributed over \$1 billion to ensure that it is there in the future.

An example of the challenge we have with the honourable member's information is that in his first question he talked about a new announcement from Tembec when in fact the only announcement which is new is that Tembec has announced that they're reopening for eight weeks.

The circumstances are clear. We have a challenging circumstance in the north and in the forestry sector. We're working very co-operatively and proactively to provide resources that will ensure that the sector is able to move forward on a more stable basis. We recognize there are many challenges and we commit to continue to work together in partnership—

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: The Deputy Premier talks about working together. The only thing that is resulting from the McGuinty government's work on this file is that more workers are being laid off.

Here's what happened in Thunder Bay the next day after the Premier's announcement: Bowater sends a letter to its workers about a site-wide restructuring that would mean more job reductions; not new jobs, not mill reopenings, not job restoration—more job cuts. I ask the Deputy Premier this question again: If the Premier's forest sector announcement is "just what the doctor ordered," according to the Premier, if northern Ontario is getting off scot-free, how come Bowater and Tembec are announcing more job cuts immediately after the Premier's announcement?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: There he goes again. Even in the course of the two questions he's asked, he's made it up. He has chosen to use different language to characterize what he presented as a quote. This is exactly what we expect all the time from the leader of the third party. He talks about Tembec, yet he's not prepared to acknowledge that Tembec has made an announcement about people coming back to work for a period of time.

With respect to Bowater, there is no presentation from the honourable member that acknowledges that in partnership, respecting the fact that we have made resources available to the forestry sector to assist them in transforming their operations so they're viable in the long term, Bowater has been a participant in that, signalling their desire to move forward and provide important and stable employment for people.

We're working together on that basis with \$1 billion in provincial investment to demonstrate our commitment to the people in these communities.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Hampton: Every time the Deputy Premier opens his mouth on these issues it demonstrates once again just how out of touch the McGuinty government is. I've got the Tembec press release. They're going to reopen for a brief period because they've got timber rotting in their yard. But it says in the press release that as soon as that timber is sawn, they're not going to just lay off the workers, they're going to give them termination notices, meaning no more job.

I say again to the members of the McGuinty government: What does it say about the Premier's latest forest sector announcement, where he patted himself on the back, and just after he made the announcement, Tembec announced that these workers are going to be terminated?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The honourable member wants to read one line but not the rest of it. Tembec also committed, as they work to enhance market conditions and circumstances, about their dedication toward the mill's reopening. We want to work in partnership with those who have a vision for an environment for a sector that is more positive.

Only the honourable member can pretend his way through this as he does. Very many days he likes to talk about how Ontario, as an example, is the only jurisdiction facing these circumstances, when we know that very recently in Quebec 10 sawmill closures were made.

The point is, we know there are very serious circumstances for the forestry sector. The demonstration of our commitment is the comprehensive response we have engaged in, not just one announcement with respect to energy but also serious commitment on our part to address the costs associated with getting timber out of the bush, and also with resources to allow these organizations to make investments that will ensure that their productivity is enhanced and that costs are lowered. This is the dedication we have to the forestry sector, and we will continue—

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: The McGuinty government uses words like "making it up." So I want to quote the Ontario Forest Industries Association, where it says it "doesn't know of any mill that will reopen as a result" of your scheme. The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers say your scheme won't save a single job in forestry. Today's Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal says, "Clearly, what McGuinty offered ... is not enough," and calls the Premier's forestry policies "pale in comparison with demonstrated need and obvious solutions."

Industry leaders, union leaders and municipal leaders said they needed \$45 a megawatt hour in order to sustain the industry. Can you tell us why the McGuinty government, after all this deliberation, after all the media spin, couldn't deliver \$45 a megawatt hour, couldn't even get close?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The honourable member doesn't quote Ken Buchanan, president of Buchanan

Forest Products, who said, "This is great news for Ontario's forest sector. It helps us stay competitive. It will keep jobs in the north. This is good for our industry and a 'win' for the communities in the region."

We acknowledge there are serious challenges with this industry. We've been working very diligently over a period of time with affected communities and the companies that are there. We recognize there are international challenges and that there are things we can do. Accordingly, we've sought to be a strong partner, not like the federal government sitting on the sidelines and doing nothing to help this sector, but working very vigorously to bring \$1 billion of resource forward, to support lower energy costs, to support organizations that transform themselves to lower operating costs and be more competitive, to support reduction in costs with bringing the product in from the bush.

We recognize these challenges. We stand in solidarity with those individuals who are affected, and we will continue, as a government, to move forward with initiatives—

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: The McGuinty government says it stands in solidarity with those workers. You've destroyed 45,000 of their jobs and you're busy destroying more of those jobs on a daily basis.

Here's what the chief of northern economics at Lakehead University had to say about the Premier's announcement: "I don't think this is going to do very much." Here is what the Chronicle-Journal newspaper said: "Lest anyone think McGuinty's announcement will make 'the big difference' to that industry, one read of the devastating memo Bowater sent to its Thunder Bay employees the same day McGuinty flew into town dispels the notion in a hurry."

Deputy Premier, one way to make a difference for northern Ontario forest workers is to pass today's NDP opposition day motion, which calls for a job protection commissioner to sustain jobs and a reasonable hydro policy that can sustain jobs. My question is, will members of the McGuinty government support our opposition day motion, or are you going to let these workers down again and destroy more—

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

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Hon. Mr. Smitherman: We'll let all members speak for themselves on the issue of the vote, but coming from the honourable member, now he's turned his ever-changing energy policy into a reasonable one. This is the umbrella that he seeks to operate under, because he changes his position on this point, as my colleague the Minister of Energy has said often.

He likes to quote from professors. Well, here's a quote from Michael Power: "We think on balance this will make a big difference and allow us to move forward on other fronts to ensure that we remain competitive."

The point is that we're working hard with the forestry sector in northern Ontario, recognizing the challenges

that they face. We've been prepared, point by point by point, to work together and to meet the challenges. We will continue, through the leadership of our colleague the Minister of Natural Resources, through the work of the Minister of Energy, through the leadership of the Premier and our colleague the Minister of Economic Development, with a view towards making sure that we move forward in a fashion which sustains our forestry sector and, in a very competitive environment, ensures that it's there to provide important stability for people in the north and other parts of Ontario.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 107

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Today, in one of the last few remaining hearings of the justice policy committee on Bill 107 before the debate gets choked off, we heard from a great many groups and individuals who are fiercely opposed to your government's decision to invoke closure. I should say, these are people who brought a fresh perspective, who brought information to the committee that we had not heard before. So any suggestion that you've heard it all, that you don't need to hear any more, was completely negated by the evidence from these people this morning.

For example, we heard from Operation Black Vote Canada, which stated in their submission:

"We find the Liberal government's action undemocratic and unconscionable. The Attorney General stacked the first days of hearing with his supporters for Bill 107...."

"My community has been completely shut out."

A former MPP from York East, Gary Malkowski, an individual representing the Canadian Hearing Society, who is also deaf himself, was passionate in his pleas for you to cancel the motion. "I cannot believe you are doing this," he repeatedly stated.

Deputy Premier, it's one thing to say that you want to move forward with this legislation, but you're muzzling the public from expressing their views on human rights. You and I both know that the right thing to do is to listen to these individuals who are pleading with us to be heard. Why won't you cancel this motion and let them be heard?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): To the Attorney General.

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General): Again we hear from the opposition about concerns about the process that will lead to the reform, but nothing about the reform itself. I've yet to hear a single thing from the member about how Bill 107 may or may not be improved; how in fact we can take a human rights commission, a legal support centre and a human rights tribunal system that might be improved.

I know they have concerns about the process. What about the delay of eight years to reform the human rights system that was visited upon those same people during

the eight years in which that party was in power? What about the delays that are affecting the people who go to the human rights system, in some cases eight years? We heard yesterday from someone who was before the human rights system for some 10 years. My concern about process, Mr. Speaker, is a process being faced by victims of human rights discrimination, and the purpose of this reform is to address those delays in a meaningful way. With this bill, we'll be able to do just that.

Mrs. Elliott: Again to the Deputy Premier: We also heard in committee today from Elizabeth Bruckman, who is a staff lawyer with the Parkdale legal clinic, and her evidence was quite revealing. She advised the committee that when she and a number of other presenters attended the technical briefings on the amendments to Bill 107 that were arranged by the Attorney General's staff last week, they asked a number of questions of the staff about the legal support centre that the Attorney General has promised. Surprisingly, they were advised that it's too soon to know what form the legal support centre will take but certainly that not everyone will be represented by a lawyer—notwithstanding the two statements made by the Attorney General in this Legislature that everyone will be represented by a lawyer.

Deputy Premier, do you have any idea whatsoever how much this centre is going to cost, how it's going to be funded, what form it's going to take or how it's going to operate?

Hon. Mr. Bryant: Well, that person was at a technical briefing, and that is the point. We are sitting down with people, for those who want to sit down with us, and trying to get the information and work with them to put together a human rights system that draws upon their expertise. They want to talk about more process and more process; they want to talk about more committee hearings. We're having more committee hearings. We said that there would be more debate and there is more debate. The question is, at what point do the Legislature and the government say that after 44 years it's time to take a bill, bring it to this Legislature and let the people decide, through their members of provincial Parliament, what the human rights system is going to look like?

We've heard a lot of talk over the years from the NDP, who did nothing about that. We heard no talk about the subject from the Conservatives, who also did nothing about it. Now we've got a bill before the House. It has been here for more than 200 days. We've had committee hearings. We will have more. We'll have more debate and we'll have more amendments. I look forward to getting members' input on this. But we have got to move forward with the human rights reform.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, when you announced the cancellation of hearings on your human rights scheme and quashed debate, you tried to represent that June Callwood, a member of the Order of Canada, was in support of the government. But I have June Callwood's letter from yesterday, where she says:

"I am concerned with some sections of" Bill 107, "and I assumed these would be addressed in scheduled hearings over the next few weeks.

"To my great dismay, these hearings have been cancelled, and the government will not have the benefit of listening to thoughtful analysis of those elements which could in future cause some injustice....

"I beg you, I urge you, to reschedule the hearings."

Deputy Premier, is this the McGuinty government's definition of "justice" and "human rights" in Ontario: "justice denied"?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The honourable member apparently doesn't subscribe to the widely held notion that justice delayed is justice denied. He stands among those who have acknowledged that it is their desire, it is in their interest, to stop the progress and advance of a bill. This is the interest that he takes, but he does not acknowledge that to the people of Ontario. The person beside him, who many days leads that party, has very aptly demonstrated that, and that is in the record of this place. He has put on record that it was his desire that people should turn old. But the reality is that many have, because this issue has been around for a long, long time and has not received the consideration that it needs.

June Callwood has an expectation of some enhancements of the bill. That point of discussion is coming soon through the actions that we've taken. A legislative committee will have the opportunity to consider the perspectives that have been brought forward, to make alterations and to bring back a bill for third reading that has been enhanced as a result of a considerable amount of process.

Mr. Hampton: I don't know whom the Deputy Premier is trying to fool, but this bill has now been time-allocated. There won't be any time to hear these thoughtful suggestions from people who care about human rights. There will be almost no time in committee to deal with these amendments.

Here is the reality: An unsuspecting person in Ontario who picked up Toronto's Globe and Mail today would think that there are going to be hearings. An unsuspecting person who picked up the National Post would think that there are going to be hearings. An unsuspecting person who picked up Metro would think there are going to be hearings. An unsuspecting person who picked up the Toronto Star would think there are going to be hearings. In fact, that is a fraud. There are not going to be any hearings. There's not going to be any more deliberation. There's not going to be any more discussion.

I say again to the McGuinty government, is this your definition of the protection of human rights, the protection of democracy: simply shut it down, deny it and pretend that it might happen some day?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Bryant: The leader of the third party talks about unsuspecting people. An unsuspecting person tuning in to the legislative channel in 1991, listening to the NDP minister responsible announce that human rights reforms were coming, might have been led to believe that

human rights reforms were coming. An unsuspecting person who heard that the Cornish report had been filed before this Legislature under that government might have thought that reforms were coming. That unsuspecting person would have been fooled into thinking that that government cares a whit about reforming the human rights system—so clinging to the status quo today that they will do everything in their power to derail this bill.

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We will not allow that party to derail human rights reforms overdue for too many years. We will have committee hearings continue. We will have clause-by-clause hearings when amendments can be heard, and it will come back to this House—

Interjections.

The Speaker: We can wait. We'll just wait. The member for Timmins-James Bay, I won't warn you again.

New question.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Yesterday in Markham, you announced that the McGuinty government will be expanding programs to further help newcomers in gaining employment. The number of newcomers in York region has steadily increased over the years. In the period 2001 to 2005, 43,000 new immigrants settled in York region; 58% of the new immigrants to the region were of the economic class, which means the majority of them are skilled workers.

Minister, having taken groundbreaking steps to address the issue of registration and licensing for regulated professions through the introduction of Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, I see you have also partnered with the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council to coordinate projects which will help employers connect with skilled newcomers. Could you tell us about this \$1.75-million investment to expand programming to help employers tap into the wealth of talent and skills of newcomers?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): The member from Thornhill is so right in that there's really been a dramatic paradigm shift in the settlement patterns of immigrants. Now, many immigrants are going directly into York and Peel regions in great numbers, and most of them are very skilled. That's why we've teamed the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council to connect small- and medium-sized business with the highly skilled foreign-trained newcomers.

This \$1.75-million investment would ensure that the small businesses that don't have the time and all the resources to do the background work will now get that support. There will be workshops, there will be human resources available so that small business will win in York region and Peel region, and so will the talented newcomers. It's a win-win situation.

Mr. Racco: Yesterday, when I was in attendance, I saw that Ratna Omidvar, the executive director of TRIEC and the Maytree Foundation, had indicated that this investment will help them provide the tools and resources to help small and medium-sized employers better equip and retain skilled immigrants. Minister, could you tell us who are the partners in this expanded program and how this will be a win-win situation for small business in the 905 and, in particular, the region of York and the region of Peel, where most of those people are going to live?

Hon. Mr. Colle: The critical thing here is that there's a landmark report put forth by York region called Growing Pains. The commitment we've made—and we're delivering on that commitment—is ensuring that as the regions grow and the number of newcomers grows, we also give the service agencies the ability to help those newcomers find employment. So it's a direct investment, along with organizations like COSTI, ACCES, TRIEC, the city of Markham, the Brampton Board of Trade, the Markham Board of Trade. They're providing the job connection, because ultimately these newcomers want a job. So this investment means there are going to be more jobs and more opportunity for newcomers.

As you know, in Markham itself, two newcomers from Hong Kong over a dozen years ago created ATI industries. Those two newcomers now employ 3,200 people in the city of Markham. That's the kind of investment we make in newcomers. When we invest in newcomers, we invest in cities, we invest in Ontario.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Minister, you're aware of the McGuinty strategy of saying anything to get elected. After all, you were the first member of the promise-breakers' club by allowing housing on the Oak Ridges moraine. On June 16, you enhanced your legacy. You promised in a news release to compensate Caledonia homeowners and to have detailed recommendations within three days. It has now been 159 days—no recommendations, no money.

I have a letter from a Caledonia homeowner. They sold their house. I quote: "I had no choice but to accept an offer \$25,000 below bank appraisal.... Now I wish to be compensated...." Minister, will this homeowner be compensated, or is this yet another McGuinty broken promise?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the member very much for the question he has just posed. As he well knows, a number of different ministers and ministry people have been meeting with the committee in Caledonia. I had a meeting with the mayor there some time ago, and with a number of other people as well, to make sure that the program that is going to be put in place will be beneficial to all those individuals who were affected in one way or another by what's happening in Caledonia. We're working on the details of that particular program, and that program will be announced as soon as it's available.

Mr. Barrett: Minister, your news release was last June. This is all about your credibility. I have your news release right here. This message is on your letterhead: "Assistance will go to households directly affected by the blockade."

Minister, you received a letter from my constituent. He lives next door to the occupied site. I quote: "I was both shocked and annoyed when I was told we were not directly affected by the occupation. The value of our property has gone down to ground zero. The buyout of Douglas Creek ... land has directly affected the future property value of our home."

Minister, you didn't answer. You just sent this letter to Minister Ramsay. You've created a false hope by giving a false promise. Have you no self-respect? Why will you not stop passing the buck? Why did you promise compensation if you have no intention of keeping your word?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: As the member well knows, there has been a business recovery plan in place that was looked after by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, who was immediately on the scene when this happened back in the spring. There has also been a counselling program to assist those individuals who in one way or another felt they were physically or emotionally affected by the goings-on that are still happening or happened in Caledonia. We are working on the plans as well for the recovery program, as we set out in our release of June 16. It will happen.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): My question is for the minister responsible for housing. Today is National Housing Day. National Housing Day was established to raise awareness of the thousands of people living on our streets without housing and without adequate food and health care. There are 122,000 households waiting for housing, most of them within the \$300- to \$400-a-month rate. Minister, can you tell me how many of your so-called affordable housing units actually fall in that \$300- to \$400-a-month rental rate?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I can tell you this: I had the opportunity yesterday to speak to the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association conference, and the reaction to the various programs that we have announced, that we're funding, and that units are actually being occupied by individuals—this is an organization primarily involved in providing non-profit housing across this province. They seemed to be extremely well pleased by the actions this government has taken so far.

There's always more work that can be done. I can tell you, one of the things we have done is to put pressure on the federal government in every meeting I have had with the minister responsible for CMHC to, number one, make sure that the SCPI funding—the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, primarily for homelessness—will continue after March 31. It's the first issue I ever raised with her. Secondly, I've asked that the legacy

funding with respect to the social housing out there will be made available so that the existing social housing—

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

Ms. DiNovo: This is why they call it “question period” and never “answer period,” because I didn’t hear an answer to my question.

I’ll restate my question: How many units have you brought forward for 122,000 waiting households in Ontario that they can actually afford, that is, \$300 to \$400? That’s the rate affordable by ODSP earners, OW and minimum wage earners. They’re waiting for your housing. You promised 20,000 units. I’d like to know if there’s even one unit at the \$300- to \$400-a-month rental rate.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Let’s just take a look at the facts. The facts are that since we’ve come into office, we have added 3,300 rent supplement units to the system for low-income individuals. The fact is that 130 projects are currently being built right across this province that are going to supply housing for 6,500 individuals. The fact is that through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, over 2,200 units are going to be made available for individuals with mental health issues. The fact is that we’ve got a rent bank that has kept 6,600 families and households in their place who would otherwise have been evicted.

We have started the process. We are going to deliver on our housing allowance program. We are going to deliver on the affordable housing units that we set out in our campaign. A lot of work has been done and more work needs to be done. We want to make sure that the vulnerable in this province are adequately housed, and it will happen.

RENEWABLE FUELS

Mr. David Oraziatti (Sault Ste. Marie): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, today you announced the opening of the Prince wind farm near Sault Ste. Marie, with an investment worth almost \$400 million, demonstrating the co-operation our government achieved with Brookfield Power. Energy projects such as this and the recently announced \$135-million cogeneration facility at Algoma Steel allow companies to benefit from their investments through our clean and renewable energy strategy.

Here’s what Harry Goldgut, CEO of Brookfield Power, had to say: “The completion of the Prince wind farm represents a major achievement for Brookfield Power.... In a little over a year, we have constructed Canada’s largest wind farm. It’s a tribute to the members of the local community, our employees and construction partners and ... in particular, the Ontario government.

I know that our government is committed to bringing more renewable energy online because it not only helps boost our generation capacity in the province but also has positive environmental impacts through a reduction in greenhouse gases.

Minister, with today’s announcement, where does Ontario stand when it comes to the amount of wind generation produced in Canada?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): I want to thank the member for Sault Ste. Marie, especially for sharing the quote of Harry Goldgut, the CEO of Brookfield Power, with respect to the Prince wind farm. Let me say to the member from Sault Ste. Marie, thank you for your commitment to making this happen. I wish the Leader of the Opposition was so strong in his advocacy in his riding for wind power.

Something happened yesterday at about 3:15 in the afternoon: Ontario went from being last in Canada in wind energy to being first when that power was hooked on to the grid at about 3:15 in the afternoon. Last to first in three years: When we took office we had 15 megawatts of wind and today we have 482; by this time next year, it will be over 1,300 megawatts. That’s how you reduce emissions associated with coal. That’s how you move this province forward on an environmental and health perspective.

Mr. Oraziatti: On behalf of my community, I want to thank the minister for his leadership in addressing our energy challenges. He’s doing an outstanding job, in stark contrast to the previous Tory government, which brought no new generation online. In fact, between 1995 and 2003 our installed generation capacity fell by about 6%. At the same time, electrical demand increased by about 8.5%. The NDP built no new electrical supply in Ontario, ended all conservation initiatives that would have saved Ontarians 5,200 megawatts by 2000, paid \$150 million to cancel the Manitoba power agreement, and drove hydro rates, as the member from the third party likes to say, through the roof by 40%. Despite the past government’s abysmal record and our continued efforts to be bring more renewable power online, the leader of the third party tries to pass off our announcements, like the one today, as “very modest” and a “public relations exercise.”

Minister, can you clarify for the House what projects like today’s announcement mean for Ontario’s economy?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: First of all, Mr. Speaker, a good chunk of this wind farm is in your riding. You too, I know, have for many years worked on these types of projects.

We’ve launched two renewable RFPs that resulted in 18 successful projects. Others would like to have you believe that they’re not being built, but I can tell you that they’re up and running, and the rest that aren’t are coming on stream. Why? Because we think it’s important to clean up the air, unlike the New Democrats, who closed all opportunities.

They did nothing on renewables. When they’re up north they want to keep the coal plants open, and when they’re down south they want to close the coal plants. I am trying to find parliamentary language which will reconcile the inconsistency in that position but, unfortunately, like so much the leader of the third party says, it’s irreconcilable with fact.

The fact is that one government in this country has moved forward on renewables like no other. It's the McGuinty government, in the interest of our environment and in the interest of public health.

COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): My question is for the Minister of Energy. You made a solemn promise to the standing committee on estimates on September 26 to reveal the names of those so-called energy experts, and so far you have failed to honour that promise. Yet you proudly, through your deflecto agency, the OPA, want to tell everybody about the consultants you've hired at \$1,500 a day to advise you with regard to the energy policy and the integrated power system plan going forward.

Minister, if you're so quick to put out the names of these agencies that you're paying \$1,500 a day to sit and advise—and it's quite an eclectic group, I might add—then why are you not willing, as you undertook to the standing committee, to name the names of the energy experts that advised you on your failed, ridiculous, impossible, undoable, “Say anything, do anything to get a vote” coal plan?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. We can wait. Government House leader. Order.

The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): We think it's important to fund participation in public consultation around our power system plan. I think it's important to provide funding to environmental groups to have a say in these matters, I do, and I think it's worth the money. I think it's worth the money to fund groups that have come out opposed to some of the decisions the government has made. Why? Because we believe—by the way, intervener funding was something your government established in principle, and you should be proud of that. We think it's important to hear from these people.

Some of them have publicly opposed the government's plan, and we want to hear from them. These are very technical, complicated issues. The government, through the OPA, the rate base, spends a lot of money to develop plans. We think, to give other groups in the community the opportunity to respond in an informed, meaningful fashion, they should be funded even though in many cases they don't agree with the government's policy.

Mr. Yakabuski: He's not the Acting Premier but he certainly fancies himself a premier actor. Again no attempt to provide this Legislature with the information we've asked for.

Minister, what you are doing here, spending \$1,500 a day with this eclectic group of consultants that the taxpayer is picking up the bill for through the rate base, is building another premierial shield around Dalton McGuinty so that when you guys screw it up again, like you screwed it up with the coal plan, you're going to

have somebody to blame, but this time you're going to give us the names.

1450

Minister, I'm asking you again—a solemn promise to a standing committee on estimates—to provide the names of those who led you to make the decision to make a promise that was undoable. Give us the names, or just prove that you'll say anything, you'll do anything, to get a vote. And you know what I'm telling the people of Ontario? You're going to do it again.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: I think it's important to hear from environmentalists. I think it's important to hear from local distribution companies. I think it's important to hear from engineering experts. And, by the way, these groups, I can assure you, don't necessarily support what the government is doing. In fact, I think it's a principle on something that's this important that we give them the opportunity to come to not only the OPA but eventually the Ontario Energy Board with expert advice, commentary, some of which won't be coincident with what the government's policy is.

I would remind the member opposite that your government hired some consultants on the energy file. I remember the American dream team on nuclear power. I say \$1,500 for an environmental group is a lot better than \$40 million for a team of Americans who not only didn't fix the nuclear situation, but arguably made it worse, because none of them, it turns out—

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

New question?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, order. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Mines. The failure of the McGuinty government to properly consult Ontario First Nation communities, as required by Supreme Court of Canada decisions, forced Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation to go to court to defend themselves against a \$10-billion lawsuit launched by a mining company, Platinex. Now, as part of a court-ordered resolution, the people of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug are developing a consultation protocol in conjunction with Platinex and the Ontario Ministry of Mines. But, what a surprise: You, as Minister of Mines for Ontario, refuse to sign the consultation protocol.

My question, Minister: Since Ontario is a signatory to Treaty 9, which covers Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug's traditional lands, will you, the Minister of Mines, commit to personally signing the consultation protocol in keeping with the nation-to-nation spirit that Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug deserves?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): The leader of the third party knows very well that there is ongoing litigation regarding this matter and, as part of that litigation, the court re-

quired a consultation process, which is still ongoing. As this is a litigation matter, I would rather not comment on it, because I think it would be inappropriate.

However, I believe that these discussions should be at the negotiation table, where they belong and where they are. However, it is important to recognize that the protocol is still being negotiated in good faith by all parties and that it's not yet complete. My ministry staff have already indicated that they would be prepared to sign the completed protocol. Once the protocol is complete it is more appropriate for my ministry staff to sign what would be a technical process agreement, and that's what we're talking about.

Mr. Hampton: Imagine this: The people of Kitchen-uhmaykoosib Inninuwig go to the table in good faith, they negotiate a protocol, and then they find that the Minister of Mines for the McGuinty government won't sign it.

Look, Minister, 18 months ago, with much fanfare and self-congratulation, the McGuinty government announced "a new approach to aboriginal affairs." You said, "Our new approach calls for working with aboriginal people." What did you do after that? You failed to consult with this First Nation community. What happened? The court said you were in breach of the Constitution and in breach of legal rights of First Nations. Now they come to the table, they want to negotiate an agreement and you won't sign.

I ask this question: Will you commit today to a consultation agreement that doesn't attempt to cap funding at wholly inadequate levels but fully funds the First Nation's need for legal expertise—

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

Hon. Mr. Bartolucci: The leader of the third party knows full well that Judge Smith's decision was that all three parties should work actively to try to come up with some resolution. From that ruling to today—

Mr. Hampton: You're holding it up.

Hon. Mr. Bartolucci: The leader of the third party is giving inaccurate information when he says that we're holding it up. That's inaccurate; that is not fact. We have been at the table from the very beginning; we remain at the table. We are very anxious to enter into that protocol agreement. There has been ongoing dialogue. For the leader of the third party to indicate otherwise is completely inaccurate, as it is not fact based on anything. He should know better.

PETITIONS

WATER QUALITY

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

This is brought to me by many individuals from my constituency.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I have a petition today:

"In Support of Skilled Immigrants—Bill 124

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"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 agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it, and give it to page Ian.

LAND TITLES

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

"Whereas in the current environment of an escalating problem of title theft and mortgage fraud property protections for homeowners are warranted and real measures are necessary to address real estate fraud; and

“Whereas MPP Joe Tascona’s Restore the Deed Act, Bill 136, has passed second reading in the Legislature and has been referred to the standing committee on general government; and

“Whereas among others, the Restore the Deed Act has four primary benefits:

“Reduce the harm by ensuring that the person who is the rightful owner of the property keeps the property. The innocent buyer or the innocent lender must seek compensation from the land titles assurance fund, as is New Brunswick law.

“Prevent the fraud by restricting access to registration of documents to licensed real estate professionals who carry liability insurance, by requiring notification statements and the freezing of the registration, as is Saskatchewan law, and by establishing a system of ‘no dealings’ where landowners can mark their title, which can only be removed by them using a personal identification number prior to the property being transferred or mortgaged;

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“Access to the land titles assurance fund be reformed as a ‘fund of first resort’ and be operated by an arm’s-length board of directors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, composed a broad representation of consumer, real estate industry and law enforcement groups.

“Victims of fraud prior to the enactment of the Restore the Deed Act will be eligible to apply for compensation under the reformed land titles assurance fund; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s proposed legislation will not get the job done;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to enact the measures to protect homeowners from having their homes stolen as contained in MPP Joe Tascona’s Restore the Deed Act.”

I’m pleased to sign this very long petition and present it to the Legislature.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas these children should be getting the best special education possible in the form of applied behaviour analysis (ABA) within the school system; and

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

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

“Whereas, as stated on the website for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, ‘IBI can make a significant difference in the life of a child with autism. Its objective

is to decrease the frequency of challenging behaviours, build social skills and promote language development’;

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

I agree with these petitioners and have affixed my signature to this.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly regarding cross-border travel:

“Whereas the United States government, through the western hemisphere travel initiative, is proposing that US citizens will require a passport or single-purpose travel card to cross the Canada-US border; and

“Whereas a passport or single-purpose travel card would be an added expense, and the inconvenience of having to apply for and carry a new document would be a barrier for many Canadian and US cross-border travellers; and

“Whereas the George Bush government proposal could mean a loss of as many as 3.5 million US visitors to Ontario, and place in peril as many as 7,000 jobs in the Ontario tourism industry by 2008, many of which are valuable entry jobs for youth and new Canadians; and

“Whereas many of the US states bordering Canada have expressed similar concerns regarding the punitive economic impact of this plan, and both states and provinces along the US-Canada border recognize that the importance of the safe and efficient movement of people across that border is vital to the economies of both countries;

“Be it therefore resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario support the establishment of a bi-national group to establish an alternative to the proposed US border requirements, and inform Prime Minister Harper that his decision not to advocate on behalf of Ontarians is ill-advised and contrary to the responsibilities of the elected representatives in Canada.”

In support, I put my signature to this petition.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the parents of St. Paul’s elementary school in Alliston have raised many issues regarding the security, cleanliness and state of repair of their school; and

“Whereas a 2003 condition assessment completed by the Ontario government identified the need for \$1.8 million in repairs to St. Paul’s elementary school; and

“Whereas the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board has approached the Ministry of Education

with the intention of having the school deemed prohibitive to repair as they believe the school requires \$2.28 million in repairs, or 84% of the school replacement cost; and

“Whereas there are ongoing concerns with air quality, heating and ventilation, electrical, plumbing, lack of air conditioning and the overall structure of the building, including cracks from floor to ceiling, to name a few;

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

“That the Minister of Education immediately deem St. Paul’s elementary school prohibitive to repair, secure immediate funding and begin construction of a new facility so that the children of St. Paul’s can be educated in a facility that is secure and offers them the respect and dignity that they deserve.”

My mother taught at this school for 33 years, and I went to this school from kindergarten to grade 8. I certainly agree with the petition, and I want to give it to page Mariam to bring to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It’s been sent to me by the Service Employees International Union. It reads 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 have affixed my signature to this.

GRAVESITES OF FORMER PREMIERS

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): I have a petition here from some individuals

from the Windsor Community Museum, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Premiers of Ontario have made enormous contributions over the years in shaping the Ontario of today; and

“Whereas, as a result, the final resting places of the 18 deceased Premiers are among the most historically significant sites in the province, but have yet to be officially recognized; and

“Whereas, were these gravesites to be properly maintained and marked with an historical plaque and a flag of Ontario, these locations would be a source of pride to the communities where these former Premiers lie buried, and provide potential points of interest for visitors;

“Now therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Enact Bill 25, an Act that will preserve the gravesites of the former Premiers of Ontario.”

As I agree with this petition, I affix my signature and send it to the Clerk’s table.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario”—and again, it’s a petition from Dr. Tim Hillson’s office in Orillia, an ophthalmologist in the city.

“Whereas age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in the elderly and is present in some form in 25% to 33% of seniors over the age of 75. AMD has two forms: the more common ‘dry’ type and the ‘wet’ type. Although the wet type occurs in only 15% of AMD patients, these patients account for 90% of the legal blindness that occurs with AMD. The wet type is further subdivided into classic and occult subtypes, based on the appearance of the AMD on special testing. Photodynamic therapy, a treatment where abnormal blood vessels are closed with a laser-activated chemical, has been shown to slow the progression of vision loss in both subtypes of wet AMD;

“Whereas OHIP has not extended coverage for photodynamic therapy to the occult subtype of wet AMD, despite there being substantial clinical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of this treatment in patients with either form of wet AMD. Untreated, these patients can expect a progression in their visual loss, with central blindness as the end result;

“Whereas affected patients are in a position where a proven treatment is available to help preserve their vision, but this treatment can only be accessed at their own personal expense. Treatment costs are between \$12,500 and \$18,000 over an 18-month period. Many patients resign themselves to a continued worsening of their vision, as for them the treatment is financially unattainable. The resultant blindness in these patients manifests itself as costs to society in other forms, such as an increased need for home care, missed time from work for family members providing care, and an increased rate

of injuries such as hip fractures that can be directly attributable to their poor vision.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of the occult subtype of macular degeneration with photodynamic therapy for all patients awaiting this service.”

I am pleased to sign my name to this and give it to Andrew to present to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I have a petition here signed by residents of the extended care units in Timmins and Kapuskasing, and also by a number of families, including the residents councils and the family councils organized by Tesca Alberton and others. It reads as follows:

“Help Put Care into a Careless Act

“The government has not listened to the voices of residents, families, staff, volunteers and others in drafting the proposed new Long-Term Care Homes Act. We all know what the residents need is more care. The government obviously believes that instead, home needs must rule. In fact, if this act is passed, government will have more power and less responsibility and commitment to residents’ care than they do now. They will leave homes with more paperwork, less time for residents. Homes will feel more like institutions than home;

“Therefore we, the undersigned residents, families and staff and volunteers and supporters of Extendicare Timmins, need you to ask the government to make this act about what residents need most, that is care, and to commit to providing the resources required to implement the act.”

I sign that petition.

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FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): This is a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly regarding access to trades and professions in Ontario:

“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, professional and managerial 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 certainly agree with this and I will attach my signature to it and hand it to page Colby.

OPPOSITION DAY

MANUFACTURING AND FOREST INDUSTRY JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognize that manufacturing and resource jobs have formed the economic foundation of prosperity and economic security for Ontario’s working families for more than a century;

That failed provincial policies are causing that foundation to crumble;

That those failed policies have led to a recession in Ontario’s manufacturing and forestry sectors and caused great hardship for Ontario’s working families;

That decisive action must be taken now to keep good-paying manufacturing and forestry jobs in Ontario; and

That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario call upon the Ontario government to take immediate action to sustain jobs by providing greater institutional support to manufacturing and resource workers whose workplaces are threatened, starting with a reasonable hydro policy that can sustain jobs and the creation of a job protection commissioner for Ontario—as recommended by the NDP job protection act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): I recognize the member for Kenora–Rainy River.

Mr. Hampton: I wish at this time to announce I’ll be sharing my time with the member for Timmins–James Bay and the member for Hamilton East.

For more than a century, manufacturing and resource jobs have formed the foundation of prosperity and economic security for Ontario’s working families. Now, due to changing economic conditions and failed provincial policies, that foundation is threatening to crumble. The numerous auto parts closure announcements, including the loss of 600 jobs due to the closure of the Ford engine plant in Windsor, along with the seemingly endless sawmill and pulp and paper mill closures in northern Ontario, are really just a symptom of a much larger

problem. Ontario needs a completely new economic policy tool box to sustain and grow the kind of good-paying jobs that are at the heart of Ontario's economy.

A Statistics Canada labour force survey shows a loss of 136,000 manufacturing jobs, more than 13% of the total in the past two years under the McGuinty government. The trend is clear and alarming, threatening to cost Ontario as much as 100,000 more jobs in the coming years unless decisive action is taken.

Ontario's traditional manufacturing strength was based on a policy framework of stable, reasonable-cost electricity, a high-quality workforce, pro-industry trade measures, a competitively priced Canadian dollar and something we've come to know as the medicare advantage. The quality workforce is still here, but Ontario's workers are increasingly left stranded by flawed free trade initiatives—the latest one being the softwood lumber agreement, which the McGuinty government endorsed wholeheartedly—soaring hydroelectricity costs, a loonie that is skyrocketing in value and a McGuinty government that is giving away the medicare advantage. Together, these forces are delivering a knockout blow that is leaving Ontario manufacturing and resource-based jobs and workers and communities reeling.

The McGuinty government's response has been slow and feeble at best. While about a year ago the government launched something called the advanced manufacturing investment strategy, offering loans of up to 10% of eligible costs for introducing "leading technologies," whatever payoff will come from this patchwork program will be years down the road. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of layoffs have been implemented, with the program not even coming close to stopping the bleeding.

The McGuinty government's hydroelectricity policy has been even more disappointing. The deregulated Harris-Eves spot market has been maintained by the McGuinty government, despite their promise that this was dead, despite their promise that they believed in a public power system. The result of the McGuinty government continuing on with the Harris-Eves spot electricity market has been hydro rates for industrial users that have skyrocketed, and this is never more evident than in northern Ontario.

Across northern Ontario you can find a surplus of electricity. Northern Ontario actually has more electricity than it can use. Not only that, but because most of the electricity is generated from falling water, it is among the lowest-cost electricity, not just in Ontario, not just in Canada, not just in the United States, but among the lowest-cost electricity in the world. Electricity is generated in northern Ontario for costs under two cents a kilowatt hour, but it's McGuinty government policy to force the paper mills and pulp mills, which in many cases are located right beside the hydro dam, to pay six and seven cents a kilowatt hour for electricity that is generated right there beside the mill at only two cents a kilowatt hour. Meanwhile, these mills have to compete with mills from Quebec, Manitoba, British Columbia, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, where hydro rates are much more reasonable.

The McGuinty government wonders why 45,000 direct and indirect jobs have been destroyed in the northern Ontario forest sector economy. I can tell you, and literally dozens of mill managers will tell you, their corporations will not invest in Ontario as long as the McGuinty government continues that strategy of driving hydro rates through the roof.

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I want to address some other issues. Primarily, I want to address how the McGuinty government is giving away the medicare advantage. What does the medicare advantage mean in terms of manufacturing? Well, all you need to do is look at areas like steel or auto, where the same company may have a plant in the United States and a plant in Ontario. In the United States, they have to purchase private health insurance for their workers. In Ontario, they pay the employer health tax. The difference between private health insurance in the United States and the employer health tax in Ontario literally works out to thousands of dollars a year per worker. In some cases, the cost saving in Ontario is \$3,000 or \$4,000 dollars a year. When Ford, General Motors, Chrysler and many of the steel companies in the United States talk about reducing their costs in the workplace, what do they go after? They go after the private health insurance. That's what is happening at Ford, General Motors and Chrysler. That's what happened at US Steel. They tried to shed responsibility for purchasing private health insurance for their workers. So that's been a huge benefit to Ontario workers in terms of locating jobs in Ontario.

But what do we see of the McGuinty government? We see, piece by piece, day by day, the McGuinty government giving away the medicare advantage. Under the McGuinty government, despite all their promises, we see more profit-driven, private delivery of home care. We see more profit-driven, private delivery of long-term care. We see, in early ads in the newspaper from clinics and operations, Americans setting up here in Toronto, offering profit-driven private health care.

Where's the McGuinty government? Allowing it to happen. In fact, the McGuinty government only three years ago said that any move toward profit-driven, private-finance hospitals would be a big mistake. It would add to the cost of hospitals and drive up the cost of medicare. The McGuinty government said that a move toward profit-driven private financing of hospitals would be a bad idea. Now we see the McGuinty government promoting not the two profit-driven, private-finance hospitals that were supported by the Conservatives but actually promoting almost 30 of these hospitals.

What does that mean for the cost of medicare? The Brampton hospital illustrates it in colour. The Brampton hospital was supposed to cost \$500 million as a publicly financed hospital. As soon as you bring in profit-driven private financing, the cost of the hospital goes up by \$150 million. If you just do some simple math: 30 hospital projects, all profit-driven private finance, and let's just assume that the added cost for each one of them isn't \$150 million but only \$100 million for that private

financing and the profits which have to come out it. Over a 20-year period, which is what these bonds are typically financed for, you're talking about an additional \$3 billion being added to the cost of the health care system.

Do you get better health care as a result of it? No. Do you get more health care as a result of it? No. What you get is profit-driven private finance, profit-driven more private delivery and a health care system that is becoming more and more costly. That is the destruction of the medicare advantage. I leave time here for my colleagues to speak about other individual aspects of this.

The McGuinty government so far has ignored to a large extent the manufacturing and forest sector job crisis in this province. I'm happy that there are some workers here today who know at first hand about how bad this is. They know what's happening in their workplaces. I just say to the McGuinty government that you need to have a hydro rate policy that doesn't destroy forest sector jobs, that doesn't destroy manufacturing sector jobs. You need to have a health care policy that doesn't destroy forest sector jobs, that doesn't destroy manufacturing sector jobs. You need to have a health care policy that doesn't drive up the cost of health care by going towards more and more expensive, profit-driven private delivery. And you would need to look at strategies like a jobs commissioner.

British Columbia was losing a lot of jobs in the early 1990s. It was actually a Social Credit government that established the office of a jobs commissioner. The jobs commissioner had the tools and the responsibility and the resources, when a company was in trouble and in danger of laying off a lot of workers or in danger of closing the doors, to go into a community, to look at, "Are there things we can do in terms of hydro rates? Are there things we can do in terms of getting you better financing? Are there things we can do in terms of sitting down with the union and workers and working out a new collective agreement? Are there things we can do in terms of government policy that will give you an advantage?" Is any of that happening in Ontario today? No.

The McGuinty government stands on the sidelines while literally some of the best jobs—jobs that are at the core of our community—are wiped out. And about all you get from the McGuinty government is a comment like, "Oh, I feel your pain. I really feel your pain." But working people in Ontario don't need a Premier who says, "I feel your pain." Working people in Ontario need a Premier and a government who are prepared to take action: prepared to take action to sustain the medicare advantage, prepared to take action to ensure that we have stable and reasonable hydro rates, and a government that's prepared to take action and implement a jobs commissioner position so there is actually somebody in government who is focused on these issues, paying attention to these issues and taking up these issues on a day-by-day community basis.

This issue, these problems, can no longer be ignored. It is affecting far too many workers, far too many communities in this province. If the McGuinty government

doesn't start to take action on this front, we're going to see the loss of thousands more good-paying jobs go that are at the heart of our community.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): I rise today to make comments on the motion that's been put forward by the third party. I really must say that it takes some nerve to criticize the commitment this government has made towards creating employment and furthering economic development. I would argue that the third party has no right to criticize any government after the severe damage they did to the economic stability of this province in the early 1990s. I would also argue that this government has done everything within its power to stimulate job creation and business investment in the province, and it has made Ontario's economy more stable for both the immediate and distant futures.

Let me start off by talking about some of the many accomplishments that the McGuinty government has rendered in the economic sector after taking office. While it is true that a strong dollar and higher-than-expected energy costs have caused some sectors in the province to face ongoing challenges, we have been consistent in helping those industries deal with the challenges in an attempt to find viable long-term solutions. It should be clear to everyone in this House that our government has a plan, and it's a plan that is rendering positive results in Ontario's economy.

We have remained prudent in our fiscal planning since taking office, and the result has been the creation of more than 250,000 net jobs in the province since October 2003. On top of that number—almost astonishing—is that nine out of every 10 of those jobs have been a full-time, high-paying variety. We've also consistently reduced the annual unemployment rate during our term to a new four-year low of 6.6% last year.

In addition to the aforementioned jobs that have been created in our mandate already, nearly half a million jobs will be created in the province by the year 2012, thanks to several of the initiatives that we have brought in since taking office. This includes a \$1.2-billion Move Ontario plan for roads and bridges and \$30 billion for ReNew Ontario infrastructure investments, as well as the many initiatives surrounding energy programs. This is in addition to the \$6.2-billion investment to improve post-secondary education and training and a \$2.1-billion investment in a job skills renewal strategy. These are just a few of the many initiatives that the McGuinty government has put forward to help stimulate employment growth and the overall health of Ontario's economy in the three years since taking office.

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While our government programs have helped to stimulate the economy, we are also helping with industry-specific programs to assist in hard times. One of the industries that is vital to the prosperity of Ontario's economy is the manufacturing sector. There have been many issues concerning the Ontario manufacturing sector, but let's not forget that there are hard times everywhere throughout the world in this industry. Ontario has

been very proactive in trying to assess and eliminate those problems. The United States lost 11% of their manufacturing jobs last year; that's in addition to a loss of 16% in Japan, 20% in Brazil and 15% in China.

So what has the McGuinty government done to combat these losses in Ontario? We have created the advanced manufacturing investment strategy, which will help with \$500 million in loans to assist and ensure that Ontario's manufacturing sector stays competitive. We've also helped it by attracting \$7 billion in overall investments to the province and with a \$1.4-billion labour market agreement as well. We've also helped the sector cope with rising power concerns by an energy rate cap for large industrial in the manufacturing industry.

Let it be shown that we have also helped with fiscal support to others in need within the province. This includes committing over \$1 billion in support to the Ontario forestry sector, which has helped it to become more competitive and to secure jobs that are essential to maintaining a very strong northern economy in the province. We've also committed \$140 million to help northern Ontario's pulp and paper sector to achieve greater energy efficiency and sustainability by way of a rebate program that will allow companies to transition to competitive and sustainable performance.

I'd also like to take a minute to cite some very specific examples of economic investment in the riding of Huron-Bruce, which I represent. Through the Ontario Power Authority, we have signed a long-term energy contract with Bruce Power—which is located in my riding—a \$4.25-billion investment that has created 1,500 new, high-paying jobs. I can tell you that this has been received—it is a tremendous success. The riding is rejuvenating itself. We have gone through some very difficult times and we are revitalizing our communities in the surrounding area.

One of the things that my riding was so enthusiastic about—we have had steady unemployment, steady loss of jobs from our rural communities. For the first time in—I'll tell you, it's probably 15 years—we received a grant from the Ministry of Health, a growth initiative for our hospital in Kincardine. I can't tell you the difference that makes in our community. So when I hear the leader of the third party stand up and talk about what has happened and what continues to happen from the McGuinty government, in the riding of Huron Bruce—I've spoken to the initiatives that we have done; I'm speaking to specifics now—I have never seen such excitement: our new ethanol plant in Hensall, my agricultural community. We have seen hard times, and \$910 million has been re-invested back into the agricultural sector for income stabilization.

We know that we do have challenges; we recognize that. But what can we do as a government? The McGuinty government has come repeatedly to the table, but where do we see our opportunities? When I see the excitement in my riding and the rebirth that's happening in my riding, I say to the members in the House today, it is a day for Huron-Bruce that we thank the McGuinty

government for the good work that has happened. We know that those challenges have not gone away and we know that we'll have many more to overcome, but we know that we will do it with the aid of the McGuinty government.

When I talk about the progress that the McGuinty government—let's talk about the third party.

Interjection.

Mrs. Mitchell: I didn't interrupt them, Mr. Speaker, so I would hope that they show me the same courtesy, but I know it's difficult for them.

I know that your energy policy—this is one of the things that has been talked about. What would my riding look like, for instance, if their position on energy came forward? I can tell you what my riding would look like. It was just a few short years ago that we bused people in to get them interested in moving to our communities. That's what the energy policy you propose would do to my riding of Huron-Bruce.

Let's look back at the third party's spotted record. During the period from 1990 to 1995, Ontario lost 10% of its good-paying jobs in the industrial sector. In addition to that, more than 100,000 vital manufacturing jobs disappeared during the same period, during the reign of the NDP. This contributed to a total net job loss of 74,700, compared to the 250 net gain during the NDP's term in government. That equates to a total of 1,300 jobs lost a month.

Let me also remind the members in the House that the NDP government was responsible for carrying four consecutive budget deficits in excess of \$10 billion annually. This strategy by the NDP caused Ontario's debt to triple. Those are just some of the numbers one needs to take into consideration.

While the NDP government was in power, 14 mills were closed down in the province, costing Ontarians in excess of 700 jobs. They were also in office when the number of Ontarians working in the forestry, mining, and oil and gas sectors was reduced by 6,000 people. They were also the party that drastically cut agricultural spending and direct income stabilization for support for my agricultural community—an astounding 20% reduction. They increased spending in the other areas by 20% while my agricultural community took a whack of 20%. These are indeed astonishing numbers, and they're made that much more incredible by the fact that the third party often calls themselves the party of the worker.

As a small business owner in a rural community during the governing years of the NDP, I can tell you that I still remember the lack of stability in our economy, and I remember what our communities were sustaining at that time.

The McGuinty government has learned from the mistakes others have been made in the past. We are continuing to be diligent in our quest to maintain a viable and stable economy that businesses want to invest in and where people can maintain good-paying jobs. While there is no doubt that more work needs to be done—and I do want to acknowledge that more work needs to be

done—I think that we have been able to make many strides in accomplishing these goals that will continue to make Ontario very exciting and the proud province of Ontario our first choice of where to live.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): As you might imagine, I don't necessarily agree with the member from Huron-Bruce, who just spoke.

Mrs. Mitchell: No. I didn't see that coming.

Mr. Chudleigh: I know you find that surprising. I'm going to start by quoting the member from Mississauga West, who was making a statement today. They talked about 200,000 new jobs created in Ontario in their first three years of being in government. That rate is the lowest job-creation rate as a percentage in Canada, and this government was coming off the boom years of over a million new jobs created during the term of the Progressive Conservative government. In 1995, when we took office, our first three years created 363,400 new jobs—and we were coming off the recession years of the NDP. That's 110,000 more jobs than the Liberals created in their first three years. We're 110,000 jobs ahead of where the Liberals were; 250,000 new jobs is a dismal record.

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Today in Ontario, we have low inflation. The CPI just came out today, and we're about 0.6%. We have low interest rates. By historical standards, a 6% prime rate for the bank is a low rate. Our growth rate is projected at 1.5%, a full percentage point under where the rest of Canada or where the United States might be, and that is a dismal record. It's what you get when you put half-efforts into things. It's like the half-truths that this government is becoming known for.

Yesterday, the Attorney General quoted the member from Whitby-Ajax as wanting to suspend hearings on Bill 107. Later, the member for Whitby-Ajax explained the rest of the story. She explained that we wanted to suspend the hearings until the amendments were tabled so the committee could deal with the reality of what the bill was about, as opposed to the hypothetical nature that they were debating. The rest of the story: Following this, a member of the Legislature suggested that watching this government operate was like watching a Laurel and Hardy movie. I remember the old quote from Laurel that the AG—"This is another fine mess you've got us into, Ollie." This is the same Attorney General who, in the summer of 2005, which was known as the year of the gun in Toronto, with the highest shooting incidence in Toronto's history, was taking bows for his recent pit bull legislation—a dismal record.

The Premier was quoted not long ago as saying that over 1,000 jobs were lost at GM in Oshawa and calling this a "small contraction." What a dismal record for a Premier. The member for Markham at the time, talking about municipalities which were reeling from plant closures all across this province and asking the government to do something, asking for meetings with the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, which the minister wasn't willing to give them—but they were asking for

them—the member for Markham referred to these municipalities as "crybabies." What a dismal record for a government to have.

The member for Guelph-Wellington, when announcing that 550 jobs were lost at Imperial Tobacco, wasn't referring to the jobs lost; she talked about how their plan was working. What a dismal record for a government to have. Some 115,000 manufacturing jobs gone in Ontario—what a dismal record.

Other sector job growth is some of the lowest in Canada—a dismal record for any government. Growth rates—a dismal record. Innuendo, half-stories and half-truths—a dismal record. Lost jobs, "small contractions," "crybabies" and "our plan is working"—a dismal record.

On October 4 of next year, Ontarians will judge you on your dismal record.

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth): I am very pleased to speak in favour of the motion put forward by the leader of the NDP, Howard Hampton. When you actually look at the way the Liberal Party has approached the economy of this province, you can only conclude that they have decided to demolish the foundations of this economy. They have decided to demolish the foundations of manufacturing in this province. They've decided that really ensuring that there is a framework for people to work in is not of concern to Dalton McGuinty or the party that follows him.

If you look back at Ontario's history, if you look back to the beginning of the 20th century, there was a guy—not an NDPer; a Tory—Sir Adam Beck, who put forward the idea for Ontario Hydro. At the time, electricity was generated in small coal plants all over southern Ontario—very expensive power, privately owned. The price that was charged was the price the market would bear. After what was called the great coal famine of 1905, when a massive strike in the United States stopped the flow of coal to Ontario, Beck said, "We in Ontario have to have an energy base for manufacturing that will allow us to develop the industrial base that this province needs." He brought forward Ontario Hydro, and the Liberals fought him every step of the way. But he was right.

As the century wore on, it was clear that our party understood the essential need for a stable, publicly owned power generation utility that would set the base for industrial manufacturing and industrial investment in Ontario. The Liberals are taking it apart piece by piece. They don't have the boldness that a Mike Harris had to take a meat axe to it. They're just slicing it away, piece by piece—privatize this, privatize that. As new generation is built, it's built by the private sector, not by public utilities. So we face an ongoing privatization and undermining of that stable electrical energy base you need to have good manufacturing jobs in this province.

This government is committed to a \$40-billion investment in nuclear power in this province over the next few decades. I'm going to explain why that's a huge problem, because those of you who are paying electricity bills now, those of you who work for companies that pay

high electricity bills, should know that there's a \$19-billion debt from a whole bunch of dead nuclear power plants, the last generation, that hangs like a millstone around the neck of Ontario's economy. Yet we're about to embark on another gigantic roll of the dice to see if this time we can be lucky, to see if this time nuclear power won't bring Ontario to its knees. But this government is enamoured of nuclear power and cares nothing about its long-term impact on industrial jobs.

This is a government that has an energy minister who has recently made speeches about high prices for electricity. He says it's good for conservation. I'm happy to debate that with him. But I have another piece that has to be pointed out. He said that we need high prices to attract investment in generation capacity. You know what? He's right. If you look at British Columbia, if you look at the United States, wherever you've got deregulation and privatization, you've got a driving up of prices to draw in those investor dollars. That chokes out energy efficiency, it chokes out investment on conservation, and it's the path of efficiency and conservation that stabilizes energy prices and makes it possible for a jurisdiction to attract investment, to attract jobs and to hold on to the jobs we have. The Liberal strategy is to undermine the base for industrial and manufacturing activity in this province. That's where they want to go.

It isn't just in the electrical sphere that they're wrong-headed and narrow in their policies. People living in the greater Toronto area, in the greater Golden Horseshoe, know about traffic congestion. They know how long it takes to get from A to B in this huge urban area. What most people don't know, though, is that it's projected to get dramatically worse over the next few decades. So now businesses are stuck with costs in the billions of dollars a year because of traffic congestion in the GTA. Over the next 25 years it's expected that travel times in the GTA will grow by 40%. So if you're sitting in your car now, listening to the radio, playing tic-tac-toe—you know, one of those scratch-and-wins we heard about earlier today—waiting for traffic to move, well, a few decades from now you're going to be waiting a lot longer. One of the government members just a few weeks ago talked about how, when you go down the QEW from Hamilton, you can see the cobwebs growing on the front grill of your car because the traffic is so slow. I have to say, she's right.

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When you ask the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, who says he's going to put tens of billions of dollars into infrastructure, how much impact his investments are going to have to keep travel times down or actually to improve travel times, what impact his ministry is going to have on making this area more attractive for investment—because we want to make sure that people can get from A to B pretty quickly, that goods can get from A to B pretty quickly—he has no target. I pressed him on this in estimates. I said, “So you're going to spend tens of billions of dollars and you don't know whether you're actually going to make anything better? You

mean, with this projection of a 40% increase in travel time over the next 25 years, you have no idea? You don't even know where you want to go on this one.” No, he had no idea—no number, no target, nothing.

So we have a government that does not care about the stability of energy prices, that is welded to private generation of electricity—and thus they are welded to a strategy that will not deliver energy efficiency and conservation—that doesn't care or doesn't understand that in the industrial heartland of Ontario, which is the industrial heartland of Canada, intelligent investment in transportation has to make a difference. No understanding of that whatsoever.

Continued inaction on the part of this government is bleeding the manufacturing sector of this country, and every person in this House who looks at the facts should be supporting the resolution put forward today by Howard Hampton.

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): Thank you for giving me the chance to speak against the motion brought by the third party. It is very important to speak in this House and explain very important topics to the people of Ontario all the time. Today the third party brought a motion. I agree with them that we have a lot of losses in manufacturing jobs, but not just in Ontario. Due to global economic changes, we are losing some jobs in Ontario.

As a matter of fact, the third party leader is not speaking about how much the provincial government and our initiatives in this place create jobs in Ontario: a lot. If we didn't create those jobs, the situation would be very, very bad.

If we examine the auto industry, you will see our investment. If we didn't have a strategy for the auto industry, you wouldn't have the many good-paying jobs in Ontario at the present time. Nine billion dollars will come to Ontario due to our investment in the auto industry. A town like Woodstock is hosting the most important company on earth, Toyota, which is going to open very soon—it's going to create almost 700 big-paying jobs; Hino is also going to open near Woodstock; and many different investments in the auto industry: a Cami plant, GM, Oakville, all due to our strategy in the auto industry in order to maintain the good-paying jobs in Ontario.

Besides that, our investment in infrastructure in this province, close to \$30 billion to maintain our highways and that our bridges function well, creates a lot of jobs. Our investment in high school and post-secondary education: \$6.2 billion to maintain the skilled professional people in Ontario. As you know, we live in a very competitive economy. If we don't invest heavily in education, innovation, research and highly educated people, we won't have the ability to compete in a global market.

I think we're going in the right direction. This investment in education, in health care, in infrastructure and in an auto strategy will give us the ability to maintain the jobs we have in the province of Ontario. But in the meantime, some sectors are facing some kinds of difficulties,

and we understand that. We're trying to overcome these difficulties by reinvesting in communities and by overcoming these changes in the global economy, because we are trying to absorb and minimize the effect on our provincial economy.

I think that we in this province understand the need for investment. We understand the importance of investing in our economy, because it's the only source for giving us back the ability to fund the very pillars of this economy, the fundamental pillars of our communities like health care, education, infrastructure and social networks.

Mr. Speaker, you were with us this morning debating a very important bill, Bill 124. We're trying to break down the barriers facing the many newcomers who come to Ontario with high skills and professions. They want to get accredited in this province to use their intelligence, their skills and their abilities to help us continue building the economy of this beautiful province of ours.

I think we've taken all of the measures, we've taken all of the steps available to us in order to maintain a good, vibrant economy. Now we have the third party leader come to us, not to give us a strategy and a plan for what we're supposed to do, but I think he just wants to complain and send a message to people that we're not doing the right things. I wonder what he would do if he was in our shoes, if he was in our spot here. He would do what we're doing.

We monitored the government of the NDP when they were in power almost nine years ago. Back then, I was working for the government. I was working for community and social services. I know the struggle that was being faced by the province of Ontario at that time. They accumulated a debt of almost \$10 billion a year in this province. That wasn't the right strategy back then. It was a foolish strategy. They didn't invest back in the important elements of our economy. They didn't invest in infrastructure. They didn't invest in the auto industry. They didn't invest in education. They didn't invest in health care. That's why today we have a deficit: a social deficit, an education deficit, a health care deficit and an infrastructure deficit.

That's why our government is working hard on a daily basis to recover this deficit, to reconstruct our economy again—which is built on the strong foundations of education, research and innovation, and health care—and also to utilize all of the abilities in the province of Ontario, especially the newcomers, which we debated this morning. We listened to many stakeholders tell us that so many intelligent people come to this province, so many high-skilled workers come, but they don't have the ability to utilize their abilities to help us to maintain and keep reconstructing this province of Ontario.

That's why we don't leave anything out. We want to work together in order to—

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): Partners.

Mr. Ramal: Partners. That is our strategy.

We met yesterday with the multi-faith community, which came to Queen's Park to talk about affordable

housing, to talk about poverty and child poverty. Today, the food bank executive and the chair of the food bank came to Queen's Park to talk to us about child poverty, to talk about affordable housing, to talk about the poor working people of this province. So we're putting a strategy together.

That's why we on this side of the House listen to people. We listen to all elements of society. We listen to everyone. We don't ignore people. I want to tell you, on this side of the House we apply democracy when we invite people to come to us and advise us, when we create a round table about every element in every ministry to consult the people who specialize in every area in order for them to advise us and give us the right direction.

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Today, I'm puzzled when I listen to the leader of the third party talking about the economy. I was puzzled. The person who was part of a government that bankrupted the province of Ontario—

Mr. McMeekin: You'd never get it anyway.

Mr. Ramal: He laid off all the workers. He closed hospitals. He closed schools.

Mr. McMeekin: You remember that?

Mr. Ramal: Now we are back to reconstruct the damage of the past. The opposition party was also part of the game to destroy the social network in the province of Ontario. That's what we're facing now, with poverty and education and health care.

Mr. McMeekin: You've got to do a better job than that.

Mr. Ramal: They were the government of Ontario that closed a lot of hospitals and a lot of schools. They also told poor people they shouldn't be living. All of us on this side believe that everybody—the poor, the rich, the healthy and the wealthy—should work together, should walk together. That is the province we're looking for in the future. That's why we are working hard, as a government, as ministers and as the Premier, to put us on the right track, to fix the damage created by the past two governments.

Today, we're discussing a very important motion, but I want to tell you something very important. I have full faith in our government to study all the elements, all the damage, and to create a strategy to overcome the losses in manufacturing jobs. As you know, sometimes you cannot help it—you cannot do much about it—but you have the ability to reinvest and shift the direction of the economy. That's what we're doing. We believe strongly that the only way of creating the right direction in the economy is by investing heavily in post-secondary education, by creating investment in innovation and research. This is very important to give us the ability to proceed not just tomorrow, not this year, not next year but for five, 10 and 20 years in the future.

Mr. McMeekin: Put the puzzle together.

Mr. Ramal: Yes, it's very important. You cannot do it with ordinary people. You have to invest heavily in intelligent research people who can invent something

unique and put us on the map globally. Everybody knows we don't have the population to compete; we don't have great numbers of people to compete. But we have unique, intelligent and skilled people to compete. That's the future of competition in the global market. That's why our investment went to colleges and universities, to invest in highly skilled, intelligent people to give us the edge in the international economy.

I'm very positive that we'll create a mechanism to absorb the loss of jobs in Ontario. But I believe our continuous investment in many different elements in our economy in the north, the south, the west and in Toronto will give us the equity to support northern factories by giving 15% less in hydro prices. Giving them the ability to compete is a very important element. Opening more markets to those people will give them the ability to continue working and producing and also connecting many different business people—

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): The only thing you're doing is supplying wind energy.

Mr. Ramal: Wind energy—many different things. We're not ignoring any part of our economy. We're investing in wind energy, infrastructure, education, health care and the auto industry. We're investing in anything we think is going to give us the ability to continue to prosper in the province of Ontario.

There's no doubt that the manufacturing industry is suffering, as mentioned, but I'm fully confident, due to our many different strategies, whether it's energy or facilitation in creating more skilled workers to provide the industry, by more connection globally, like the trip the Premier took to China to open more doors to connect Ontario business people with Chinese business people—maybe his trip to India and Pakistan next month will create more opportunities, more markets for our industry, our intelligent people, our skilled people in the province of Ontario.

I'm very confident. That's why I am voting against the motion. All of us in this House have to work together to put strategies together, not just one party talking negatively about our strategy. It's a national issue, not just a Liberal issue, not just a Conservative issue. All of us should be involved in creating a strategy to maintain our prosperity—

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): We asked you to do that last year.

Mr. Ramal: We are working together. We are open all the time for any suggestions, but we're not open to negativity in this House. We're not open to negative positions. Let's go work together: the only way we can proceed, the only way we can be successful.

The Acting Speaker: The clock was frozen very briefly during the government's remarks, so I've asked the table to adjust it prior to the next government speaker. I'll remind members that you can neither speak nor interject from anywhere except your own place.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I'm pleased to add to the debate today on the NDP opposition motion. Eleven months ago, our party also tabled a

resolution calling for a comprehensive strategy to deal with the job losses occurring in the province. That motion passed, and yet we've seen no meaningful action whatsoever, just a series of one-off responses in hopes that the issue will disappear.

I won't read the whole motion today, but it says, "That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognize that manufacturing and resource jobs have formed the economic foundation of prosperity and economic security for Ontario's working families for more than a century;

"That failed provincial policies are causing that foundation to crumble;

"That those failed policies have led to a recession in Ontario's manufacturing and forestry sectors and caused great hardship for Ontario's working families," and it goes on. We support the majority of this resolution. I don't support one part, and that's the creation of a job protection commissioner for Ontario.

Looking at Mr. McGuinty's approach to economic policy, it becomes abundantly clear that he lacks the foresight to effectively manage the province's economic interests. People in Ontario want to know when he will finally acknowledge the problem, instead of simply taking a band-aid approach to crisis after crisis. McGuinty's policy of high taxes and runaway spending has chased over 100,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs out of Ontario and weakened Ontario's competitiveness. We've seen, in the time this government has been in power, corporate taxes increase some 27% over what they would have been had the Conservative government been re-elected. We've seen the health tax come in, which affects just about every taxpayer in the province—a huge tax increase despite the promise that was made in the 2003 election.

In 2006 this government spent a massive \$5.7 billion more than they promised in their Liberal fiscal plan that they released during the election, despite breaking promise after promise after promise. Over the past three fiscal years, total program spending has increased by 8.8%, 8.9% and 7.6%, respectively. The Liberals are running a deficit solely because they refuse to control spending.

Ontario, in the past, has been a leading economic engine of Canada until the McGuinty Liberals came along. Now Ontario's growth has fallen behind all provinces and is predicted to be dead last in Canada this year. Time and again Mr. McGuinty has shown Ontarians that he has no grasp of the problems and no vision—no economic vision, no vision for health care and no vision when it comes to energy policy.

Three years ago, Mr. McGuinty started the energy crisis by insisting that coal plants could be shut down by 2007, without any regard for how he was going to make up the lack of power from shutting down those plants. I know the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has asked the Minister of Energy, and actually had a commitment in committee, that he would provide the information about the experts who gave the Liberal Party the advice on how they were going to shut down these

plants and not affect the supply of electricity. Reliable, affordable energy is a key piece of the puzzle for industry and resource sectors. Mr. McGuinty, through his failure to grasp the obvious, created uncertainty in the business sector.

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To make matters worse, next he and his government did nothing. Take forestry, for example. An expert panel report was commissioned and some 26 recommendations were made. Many have been ignored. Others were implemented, but too late. Then the closures really picked up. In case you've forgotten, let me remind you about some of the closures: Domtar, Nairn Centre, 140 workers; Cascades in Thunder Bay, 370 permanent jobs lost; Abitibi-Consolidated in Kenora, 350 permanent jobs lost; Norampac container board in Red Rock—I travelled around the province and met Lorne Morrow, the manager of Red Rock, two years ago, and he was saying how desperate things were, yet the government didn't take the necessary action—that plant is now closed; Columbia Forest Products veneer plant in Rutherglen, 63 jobs lost; the OSB mill in Hearst, some 76 jobs; Weyerhaeuser, one paper machine and wood house, 115 jobs lost for the community of Dryden; Weyerhaeuser sawmill in Dryden, 385 jobs lost permanently; Weyerhaeuser in Sturgeon Falls, 125 jobs lost; EXCEL sawmill in Opatatika, 78 jobs lost permanently; Domtar sawmill in Chapleau, 67 permanent jobs lost; Bowater newsprint in Thunder Bay, 100 jobs lost permanently; Bowater kraft mill in Thunder Bay, 250 jobs lost permanently; Smurfit-Stone container-board, Thunder Bay, 100 jobs lost permanently; Temagami Forest Products, Temagami, 55 jobs; Tembec Sawmill in Timmins—I'll come to that one in a second; Tembec, Smooth Rock Falls, 230 jobs lost indefinitely—it's the only employer in town, and that is the case in many of these operations—Tembec in Mattawa, 111 temporary jobs lost; Tembec in Kapuskasing, 65 permanent jobs lost at the Kruger plant; Longlac Wood Industries, 350 jobs lost; Domtar pulp and paper, Espanola, 100 jobs lost; Devlin sawmill, Kenora, 30 jobs lost permanently; Patricia Logging, Dryden, 35 jobs lost; Interlake Paper in St. Catharines, 48 jobs; Sturgeon Timber, 70. The list goes on—some 4,500 workers in northern Ontario.

Your energy announcement made this week in Thunder Bay was another poor attempt at a Band-Aid solution. In fact, the day after that announcement was made—and that announcement was of a 15% reduction in the price of energy over three years for big pulp and paper operations, those that use over 50,000 megawatt hours of power per year, and pulp and paper only. What about the sawmills? What about the small operators who are excluded from that deal? The day after that announcement was made—it was made on Monday; I was up in Thunder Bay for the announcement as the official opposition critic—I received an e-mail from an operator, and I won't say who it is, but from my own riding. The e-mail says:

“Another one bites the dust for our supply chain.

“The Timmins mill”—which has reopened for eight weeks but then is shutting down—“equates to about 10% of our total sawdust volume.

“Are you both aware of the growing list of indefinite mill closures in the sawmill industry? If not please let me know and I will gladly supply the list of indefinite closures that are affecting us.”

I note that in Timmins, the Tembec mill was opened for a temporary time period, but as the daily press notes, “‘Once the conversion of this log inventory is completed, the sawmill will then be shut down for an indefinite period,’ the company said in a press release,” despite the Deputy Premier today in question period making it out like it was good news that the mill was open for eight weeks, and then perhaps—hopefully not, but perhaps—permanently shutting down.

What does the industry association say about your most recent announcement? Well, Jamie Lim of the Ontario Forestry Industries Association, speaking to the CBC about the announcement, said she didn't know of a single facility that is closed currently that would be helped by your announcement.

Another executive who asked not to be named was quoted in the *Globe and Mail* as saying, “The government's response has been somewhat sporadic.... What we don't have is the grand master plan yet.... It's taken a long time to get serious attention for this issue and for people to realize this isn't just a cyclical swing.”

Industry leaders have been clamouring for action for almost two years. Municipal leaders have been demanding action for more than a year, and they haven't given up yet. At least a dozen municipal councils, including NOMA, chambers of commerce and community organizations have unanimously endorsed a resolution demanding action from the McGuinty government. Your lack of vision and inaction has had a heavy price for northern Ontario and now it's costing the rest of Ontario as well.

As I said at the outset, I'm supportive of this opposition day resolution, the great majority of it, with the exception of the job protection commissioner. Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Are you going to ask for further speakers, further debate? Speaker, I was waiting for you to make that call. It's certainly my pleasure and I thank you for recognizing me to speak to this very important motion.

It is very interesting that the closing remarks on this motion by the previous speaker were referencing municipal councils and other organizations that have been calling on this government to take more action on the job file. Interestingly enough, I pulled from my own *Hamilton Spectator* a candidate who was running for mayor in the last municipal election. The very first plank that person had in his platform, in terms of what he wanted to see happening in the city of Hamilton, was a turnaround of some of the major issues that were facing our city, one of which was thousands of lost jobs and companies leaving. Well, that mayoralty candidate actually won

election in Hamilton, certainly in a squeaker and a shocker, but I think it was reflective of the real concern that people of my city have, not only on the job file but on a number of other files in the city of Hamilton that are not being addressed by the McGuinty government at all.

I have to say that it's a sad day in this Legislature when we hear government members across the way who are not acknowledging the extent to which they have squandered such great opportunity in the province of Ontario, with a robust economy over the last couple of years. They have a disgraceful record of ignoring the job file. They have recklessly abandoned industry and the manufacturing sector in Ontario. That is reflective not only of what's happening in the north—and I know my leader, Howard Hampton, the presenter of this motion, talked about jobs in the north, and I know that my friend from Timmins–James Bay is going to begin his remarks very shortly in that regard, so I'm not going to focus on that. Neither am I going to focus on some of the underpinning issues that were raised by my leader from Rainy River, Howard Hampton, things this government is refusing to acknowledge are hurting even more than some of the larger forces they point to as the only issues, which of course are the global economy and the global shift of jobs.

What our member from Toronto–Danforth brought to the table—and it's extremely important—is the issue of hydro pricing and what that has done to manufacturing jobs in Ontario. I say shame on you for not only not acknowledging that but for stubbornly refusing to fix it. It's bad enough that it's happening, it's bad enough that we're watching these jobs leave Ontario, it's bad enough that families are hurting and suffering because they can't get a decent-paying job in the manufacturing sector anymore, but for you to sit there and ignore it and pretend it's not happening and hold the covers over your heads hoping it's going to go away is a disgrace. It ain't going away. The only thing that's going away are the good-paying jobs that people rely on in the province of Ontario. So I say “Shame on you” to this government.

And shame on you for refusing to acknowledge the very sound argument that was raised, again by my leader, Howard Hampton, in regard to the way you're whittling away our competitive advantage in terms of the way this country—particularly this province—deals with health care, and the economic advantage that companies have with a health care system that is a public, universal system like the one that we, as Ontarians, so significantly cherish. But you don't care that we cherish it. You are squandering hundreds of millions of dollars with your private financing of hospital schemes. We have seen evidence across the globe that shows that costs get driven up, services get driven down and jobs—at least the good-paying health care jobs—go south. So we can't wait for the next couple of years with this government's activity on the health file. Not only is it going to continue to chase away good-paying industrial and manufacturing jobs, but, darn it, it's going to be chasing away good health care jobs as well. It's a disgrace and a shame that this government is prepared to do that.

The issue of jobs is a big concern to me. Watching 136,000 jobs leave the province over a couple of years is not just an ephemeral concept in my mind; it's an absolute reality that I face and that the people of my community face every single day. At some point, I'm going to mention some of the other communities near mine in southern Ontario that are suffering from the lack of proactive policies by this government to protect jobs. Instead, they ignore the file and we deal with the fallout.

What is the fallout? The fallout is plant closures like Rheem Canada, Camco, Levi Strauss, and Ball Packaging, like so many so many other companies that have closed their doors in and around my community in Hamilton. There are more just down the road in St. Catharines, more in Hamilton, more in Burlington. Some jobs will never ever come back to the city of Hamilton. What does that mean? That means that our city, my city—the city at the head of the lake that was the leader when it came to the industrial revolution that shook this province at the beginning of the last century, right? Hamilton was known as the economic driver for its industry in the province of Ontario and, in fact, nationwide. Now it is a shell of its old self in terms of good and decent jobs that the industry used to bring to the city of Hamilton. It used to be a beachhead for investment and for manufacturing; it is no longer. I would submit that this government has a significant role that they played or, in fact, a role that they should have been playing to keep those jobs. Instead, they decided to play a backseat role and watch those jobs leave our city.

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It gives me no comfort at all that there are a number of Liberal members from my city that sit in this Legislature and they have not been able to have a voice; they have not sounded the alarm bells. If they have, it certainly hasn't been heard by the government, because the job creation file has been absolutely ignored by this government. It's not good enough for the members to come to training adjustment centres and talk the good talk and smile the sweet smile and not do a damned thing about the fact that we're losing jobs like crazy in the city of Hamilton.

It is an absolute shame that, in a robust economy, this government has allowed the good jobs that sustain families—

Interjections.

Ms. Horwath: They want to argue. Then you tell me why, in the last two years, Hamilton has matched Toronto in its poverty rates. Because we don't have jobs to sustain families anymore, that is why; because the jobs that come to our community are low-paying, no-benefit, no-pension jobs that don't sustain families, so that moms and dads are working two and three jobs in the service sector to try to make ends meet. You tell me how that's good for a family. I certainly don't know and I certainly don't believe that it is. But instead of taking an active and proactive responsibility on the job file, the government continues to pretend that there's nothing it can do.

I'm telling you that one thing they can do is support the motion that's in front of us today. They can support

that motion and they can begin to take on the responsibility that any government should have in terms of ensuring that the standard of living, the quality of life of the people of the community that they purport to govern, is not only maintained but enhanced.

That is certainly not what the people of Ontario are seeing. Their quality of life has not been enhanced by this government and it's a crying shame that it hasn't, because this government has squandered the opportunity to do many positive things in this province in the robust economy. Now what's going to happen is, the economy is going to start to slide and, holy smokes, the government's going to say, "Well, gee, it's not our fault. It's the economy's fault." You know what? The bottom line is, not only have they squandered the opportunity that they had, but we're facing down some real changes that are coming shortly. I do not have an iota of confidence that this government is going to be able to help this province get through the next couple of months or years.

I dread what my community is going to look like and what this province is going to look like, because the government we currently have has no commitment to maintaining good-paying manufacturing jobs in the province of Ontario, jobs that not only sustain families—and the member from London–Fanshawe—I remembered this time—talks about education and talks about these other sectors. Absolutely; we have a new centre that's being developed in Hamilton to play on our robust number of resources around the health care sector, so there's an innovation centre that's being developed. Of course, people think that that's a good idea. But the bottom line is, if the kids in our communities can't afford to go into the schools, can't afford to take post-secondary education to be able to get jobs in an innovation centre or to develop companies and businesses from that innovation centre, what the heck good is it? What the heck good is it if they're going to end up with tons of student debt because their parents couldn't pay because they don't have jobs and their tuition fees are so high that, at the end of the day, it's going to be like paying two mortgages, not one, just to pay their student loans? What the heck is that going to look like at the end of the day? It's going to look like a fancy, shiny new facility that's not doing a heck of a lot for the economy.

I would put to you that this government has failed miserably on the job file. The people who are suffering the most as a result are absolutely the families and the individuals who live in cities like my city, because we're seeing it day in and day out. My mayor-elect is very concerned about what's happening to the erosion of our good manufacturing job base in Ontario, particularly in the city of Hamilton, and is concerned about what's going to happen if this is not reversed.

I say to you, it's time you showed some good faith to the people of Ontario. It's time you started sending some signals to manufacturing sectors and cities that provide good manufacturing jobs and saying, "We are not going to continue to allow your jobs to walk out. We are not going to allow your property rates to go up like crazy.

We are not prepared to continue to watch brownfield after brownfield be created as these industries leave our communities." Instead, what you need to do is support this resolution and make a real commitment to save jobs in Ontario, including in the city of Hamilton.

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): It's a pleasure to enter into the debate this afternoon on the opposition day motion. I see that we have a few members in our gallery here today who will be very interested to hear a very informed debate this afternoon on what the NDP has offered to Ontarians and compare and contrast that with what the Liberal government has been doing for Ontarians over the last three years.

I can tell you, coming from my community of Sault Ste. Marie, we have seen tremendous progress under the McGuinty government. It is like a breath of fresh air in our community. We can never, ever afford to go back to NDP representation provincially in Sault Ste. Marie, because it was a disaster.

Interjections.

Mr. Oraziotti: I hear them laughing. We're going to talk about that right now.

Interjections.

Mr. Oraziotti: Absolutely.

Let's compare and contrast a few areas here, because we will take no lessons from the disastrous record and the complete incompetence of the New Democrats—and many of them are over there today—who were in cabinet at the time and made some of these disastrous decisions and foisted them on the people of Ontario, with disastrous results.

We talk about our young people in this province being our future. We created a new Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the first government to do that, to focus on the future of this province. I have to tell you that in Sault Ste. Marie we have an additional 44 child care spaces and a number of new jobs as a result of a \$1.3-million investment in our community. You can easily contrast that to a cut of 6,000 daycare subsidies and over \$20 million from community agencies delivering child care when the NDP was in government.

Here's what Kerry McCuaig, the executive director of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, said: "The NDP killed provincial child care." That was in the Toronto Star, March 31, 1994.

When it comes to areas like policing, our commitment of 1,000 new officers on the streets in Ontario, in Sault Ste. Marie that has meant eight new officers fully funded for the first time provincially, ever. It also meant that when it came to municipal fire services in Sault Ste. Marie—uploading, not downloading—for the first time in more than 20 years, a grant of \$178,000 to support our local firefighters. We've got eight new officers fully funded by the province in Sault Ste. Marie.

I can tell you, the record is much different when we're talking about the NDP. The social contract and the cuts meant simply fewer officers on the streets in Ontario. The OPP cut 90 sergeant positions and 350 clerical positions because of the social contract. The member

from Hamilton East likes to talk about good-paying jobs. Well, that's the record of their government. When they were in government, they were cutting those good-paying jobs that we need.

"Shortly before the 1995 election, the NDP put together a commission that suggested reducing the scope of the SIU's mandate. The commission also recommended less civilian oversight over the police. When the head of the SIU, Howard Morton, objected to the changes, he was fired by the NDP," according to Tracey Tyler. That was in the *Toronto Star*, March 13, 1995.

"The NDP is just dumping constantly on police officers": Metro Police Association president Art Lymer, on the day that police officers voted to begin work-to-rule in 1992.

When it comes to democratic renewal, something that the opposition did not support, we fixed election dates, as we said we would—October 4, 2007—and we're moving ahead with electoral reform with the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform to give Ontarians more say.

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Let's talk about the economy now: 250,000 net new jobs in three years on our government's watch; a \$500-million auto sector strategy that has landed a billion-dollar investment by Ford in Oakville, a \$2.5-billion GM Beacon project. And we have, as a jurisdiction, landed more auto sector investment than anywhere else in North America, and that's something we should be very proud of.

The opposition and the NDP like to talk about the forestry sector. Obviously, it is front and foremost on our minds these days, and as a government we have come to the table. In our community we've been working with St. Mary's Paper to try to ensure that those 380 jobs of those workers at St. Mary's Paper are protected. I was there the other day when we made our electricity rebate announcement to them. It means \$10 million into the pockets of that company to help them through these challenging times. I might add that it's a time when the forestry sector is challenged right across North America. In Quebec, mills with lower energy rates are closing. So, quite simply, it is much more than energy rates. The dollar has been a \$55-million impact alone to St. Mary's Paper. Every time the dollar moves up a cent, it costs St. Mary's Paper \$1.5 million in lost revenue.

Our over \$1-billion commitment now to the forestry sector: As a government, we're proud to support the forestry industry and we're going to keep working with them. It's over \$1 billion. There's no other government at the table. I encourage the opposition members to pick up the phone, call their colleagues in Ottawa and ask them what they're doing to help Ontario's forestry sector, because they're doing nothing. Jack Layton shows up in Sault Ste. Marie the other day and says, "We support the cogen project." Where's your money, Jack? Where is the federal Conservative government's money? These are representatives who have done nothing on the forestry sector, nothing for St. Mary's Paper, and I'm waiting. Any time they want to come to the table, I'm happy to

work with them. But let's not make any mistake about it: The McGuinty Liberal government is at the table with the forestry sector and over \$1 billion in commitment is certainly tangible. It's more than the auto sector investments and it's a substantial investment into the sector.

We can easily compare and contrast that when it comes to the NDP's economic record: four straight deficits of over \$10 billion a year, which made Standard and Poor's lower Ontario's credit rating three times in three years, costing Ontario hundreds of millions of dollars in interest. Ontario's debt more than doubled. Under the NDP, it went from \$35 billion to over \$90 billion. The NDP likes to try to escape this and they don't want to take responsibility for this: "What are you talking about?" Let's make it clear. There are members over there who made those decisions, who were in cabinet. The leader of the third party and his gang were part of those irresponsible decisions foisted on the people of Ontario.

Here are the facts. Every day the NDP was in power, the debt grew by \$33 million, almost at a rate of \$1 million an hour, as reported in the *Toronto Star* on December 21, 1994. Ontario lost 94,000 net jobs under the NDP. That's 1,300 jobs a month. It's dismal. We can't go back there, ever.

They raised taxes for the most vulnerable, \$160 for those living on incomes under \$20,000. By contrast, when we're talking about the health premium, people earning under \$20,000 are not impacted. In fact, they voted against Bill 2, the Fiscal Responsibility Act, that repealed the Tory corporate tax cuts and the private school tax credit—up to \$500 million into the private school system. The former government and the NDP members voted against that. I'm surprised, very surprised.

Let's talk for a second about education. So far to date: \$2.7 billion of new money put into Ontario's education system; 6,800 new teachers hired in the province of Ontario—good unionized jobs with good benefits to support working families in Ontario; \$280 million to invest and leverage \$4 billion for school infrastructure and repairs; good construction jobs with many companies getting the work with Ontario school boards, because there is significant investment in this particular area. It's easy to contrast it. Class sizes increased under the NDP, something that, with the primary grades, is certainly decreasing under our government.

They froze transfer payments to school boards under the social contract, downloading costs to municipal taxpayers. They said they'd increase funding to historical levels of 60% but in fact reduced it to 43%.

Interjection: Whatever happened to public auto insurance?

Mr. Oraziotti: I don't know; I don't know. Good question.

Post-secondary education: \$6.2 billion in base funding over the next four years, the largest investment in post-secondary education in more than 40 years. We have more than 70,000 people in our colleges and universities

getting the training they need to reach their maximum potential and to participate in Ontario's economy. It's incredibly important.

In 1987, the NDP said they'd eliminate tuition fees, that they'd make it free. In 1990, they said, "Well, we'll just freeze them," but once they got in government they raised fees by 50%. Wow. I don't know, Speaker. It's definitely a stark contrast.

On the energy file: We've been challenged in recent years on the energy file. It's incredibly important to this province. We want to keep the lights on, ensure that we have a stable supply and increase supply so that we can drive prices down and ensure Ontarians can rely on their energy system. Since taking office, we have 3,000 new megawatts of supply that have been added. This represents 9% of provincial capacity.

The former Conservative government added no new supply to Ontario's grid. We have about 125,000 immigrants coming to Ontario every year. I don't know what they thought was going to happen, but sitting on their hands and irresponsibly trying to manage the Pickering project was not the answer. No new supply—that's their record.

I know that in Sault Ste. Marie alone, we have a deal with Algoma Steel to pay them back about \$30 million a year over a 20-year contract. That's about \$600 million for their investment of \$135 million into a new 70-megawatt cogen plant. That's protecting the workers' jobs. That's improving workers' security and improving the efficiency of that mill. It's a new program that our government put in place to work with industry. It's the first of its kind in this country. Certainly, no other government has done that. We should be very, very proud of that.

Today, the second phase of the Brookfield wind farm plant, which is the largest wind farm in Canada, was fired up. Its 126 turbines are now out there producing enough power for 40,000 homes; as well, 20 permanent jobs.

The ASI project, at Algoma Steel, is 200 construction jobs for two years just to get that up and running.

Here's the comparison yet again: The NDP paid \$150 million to cancel a hydro lifeline for Manitoba that would have brought in more power to Ontario. They paid \$150 million to cancel the Conawapa power project. I don't know; that doesn't make any sense to me. They built no new electrical supply, and they cancelled all of the conservation initiatives, which would have equalled 5,200 megawatts in savings by 2000, and in fact raised hydro rates—as the leader for the third party likes to say, "put hydro rates through the roof." I think he needs to take a look in the mirror. They went up 40% on your watch. It is absolutely beyond me.

When you come to health care, this is something that is very sensitive to Ontarians. The number one concern is with respect to physician supply. What happened with regard to physician supply? I can tell you that our government has taken three key steps to increase physician supply in Ontario: 23% more doctors; 90 to 200 spaces for international medical grads; we've increased

first-year enrolment in five medical schools by 15%; and we've built the first new medical school in Canada in more than 30 years, with 56 new seats.

This government, the former government, the only government in the history of this province to cut the number of seats in medical schools in this province, should be ashamed of that record—an absolute disaster. No new hospitals were built. In Sault Ste. Marie, we're building a new hospital. In North Bay, we're building a new hospital. We have billions of dollars of hospital builds, much-needed infrastructure that needs to be repaired that neither of these parties took the time to get right and to move forward on, and they have the nerve to sit here and say today, "Boy, your government isn't doing enough."

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The compare and contrast is pretty obvious. I know in Sault Ste. Marie people are happy with the progress. We've got many new jobs in our community. I've got a list here, and I could go through these: 60 at the finishing plant, 600 for Borealis, 38 teaching positions, 25 in the new justice centre we're building, 25 at the new Flakeboard plant, 1,400 at Sutherland, five new transit positions as a result of the historic provincial gas tax funding, and on and on.

I can tell you on behalf of the people of Sault Ste. Marie, we never want to go back to NDP representation because it was a disaster. Thank you. I won't be supporting the motion.

Mr. Yakabuski: I want to comfort the member from Sault Ste. Marie. He's very concerned that the Liberals might win that seat, and I'm with him—

Interjection.

Mr. Yakabuski: Or the NDP might win that seat—thank you very much, member for Hamilton East. He's very concerned the NDP might take back that seat on him, and we're going to do everything to make sure that doesn't happen too, because we're going to try to win that seat. But I'm quite certain you're in great difficulty, member for Sault Ste. Marie. He's very concerned about his own seat there, so he wants to take every opportunity to get that little shot into the debate. But you know what? The facts don't support his bid for re-election. No, no, no.

Mr. Oraziatti: John, have you ever been to Sault Ste. Marie?

Mr. Yakabuski: In fact, I have, David. Have you ever been to Barry's Bay? You might just want to sit down and read some more of those notes and keep quiet.

When you look at the job loss record of this government, 105,000 manufacturing jobs in 2005, they don't have much to be proud of. They stand up there and they crow, but the record doesn't support their crowing—105,000 jobs.

And they talk about the jobs they've created: 250,000 jobs in three years in government. I want to contrast that to the 370,000 jobs that were created by the previous government in their first three years of office, and most of those jobs were private sector jobs. Almost half of the

jobs this government has created—what they call “created”—are public sector jobs. If you compare the impact of a private sector job versus a public sector job, I think you’ll find that this government’s record is sorely lacking. Not only that, they take a great deal of credit for the so-called creation of those jobs. The member for London–Fanshawe was going on ad infinitum about “the jobs we’ve created as a government, the investment we’ve made, and the impact we’ve made creating those jobs,” but then, when the focus shifted to all of the problems that are facing Ontario’s economy, he said, “But, you know, there are times when there’s just nothing we can do about it.” You see, he wants to suck and blow. He wants to take credit for every job that’s created, and say, “Sorry, there’s nothing we can do about the jobs that are lost.”

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): It’s the old Liberal “both ways.”

Mr. Yakubuski: The old Liberal “both ways.” But you can’t have it both ways. If you want to take credit for the jobs created, you have to at least be willing to take some of the responsibility for the jobs that are lost.

I met with a group of people in the construction industry the other night, and they’re very concerned. They’re very concerned about where Ontario is going to be if there’s another four years of Liberal government. Those are their words, not mine. Those are their words: “Where is this province going to be under another four years of Liberal government?” They’re extremely worried.

This motion by the leader of the third party is directed a lot at the forestry sector, that the lost jobs and the failed policies of this government have caused a great deal of hardship in the forestry sector, and there’s no question about it: 45,000 direct and indirect job losses as a result of this government’s failed policies. The losses in forestry sector jobs in the north have been absolutely staggering, but there have been losses elsewhere too, and it is all part of the lack of an economic policy.

The member for London–Fanshawe said we need to have an economic policy and strategy. That is precisely the motion we brought before this House last year and passed. And what have they done? Zip, zero, nada, nothing. Now we’ve got their own members saying we need to have an economic strategy that brings all ministries together so that your economy, your energy and your environment are all meshing and we can move forward in a way that supports—notice I’m not saying “creates”—the creation of jobs in this economy by ensuring that the entrepreneurial spirit that is alive and well in the province will be able to flourish, not be stifled by this government as it is right now.

The member for London–Fanshawe: I hate to be picking on him but I was making my notes when he was speaking. He’s actually quite a nice fellow. He just bought one of my CDs, by the way. Thank you very much. He said they listen to the people. Well, the questions that have been asked in this House over the last few days would indicate that this government is not interested

in listening to the people. It’s interested only in its own agenda. Do you know what else he said? He said that the previous government closed schools. He made it sound like somehow this government is out there opening these schools. I once heard the member from Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh say, “Our government is out there reopening rural schools.” What are you talking about? My riding alone has seen six schools close last year under this government. You talk about us closing schools and you opening them. That’s a load of you-know-what. Six rural schools closed in my riding. Shame on you. If you’re going to be talking about your record, then at least put it on the table and be straight about it. Be honest with the facts about what you’ve actually done.

The Premier talks about consultation. I’ll tell you, the Premier, the then Leader of the Opposition, Dalton McGuinty, did quite a job of consultation. That’s for sure. That’s how he came up with this crazy energy policy, which is part of the reason that all these jobs are being lost in this province, to the member for Sault Ste. Marie. He came up with this plan, that he says was supported and advised by experts, that he was going to shut down all the coal plants in this province by 2007, no ands or ifs or buts about it. Come hell or high water, Dalton McGuinty promised he was going to do it. Either Dalton McGuinty is among the most incompetent people in Ontario or he absolutely, totally invented that policy on his own.

Mr. Bisson: Is it hell or high water?

Mr. Yakubuski: I’m going to high water. I’m not sure where he’s going. He invented the whole thing, and now he has the audacity to stand in front of this House and deny the people the right to know where he got that so-called expert advice. I don’t know where he gets his advice, but he calls them experts. There is an old saying, “An expert is anybody with a briefcase 20 miles from home.” I think that might be some of those people where Dalton got his advice. Actually, do you know what? He didn’t get the advice from anybody. He made it up. He invented it. He fabricated it in order to be able to go to the people and say, “Look at our distinctly different policy. This is how we’re going to win votes,” because it is clear that Dalton McGuinty will do anything, will say anything if he thinks he will be able to get a vote out of it.

Every day we ask that question in the House, because we now think it’s important: If you’re going to make a decision on an issue as important as the energy future of this province, which affects our manufacturing, our forestry sector, every part of this economy, which in turn affects our standard of living and our ability to provide those much-needed services we do provide, such as health care and education, without a standard of living, without a vibrant economy, you won’t be able to provide those either. If you have a failed energy policy, you’re going to have a hard time having a vibrant economy.

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This energy policy, which was written on the back of an envelope because he thought he could hornswoggle

the people into voting for him if he just told them what he thought they might want—now he stands in front of this House and doesn't want to come clean. For an issue that important, I think the people should know whom he relied on for that advice. Where did he get that advice from? But to compound it, the Minister of Energy, in front of a legislative committee of this chamber, of this House, made a commitment, a promise, that he would provide the names of those experts. That is a promise made to a legislative committee. And what has he done with that? When asked about that in the House, he sloughs it off. He doesn't even address the matter, so much so that I've had to request a late show from the minister.

For you people out there who are watching this, a late show is something that the opposition has a right to demand when the minister has shown so much contempt for this chamber that he won't even address the matter at hand. That's what had to happen here, because if you're going to be developing policy based on the so-called advice of experts, then I think the people in Ontario have the right to know whom you relied on. It goes to your own credibility. If you're willing to take somebody's advice—with all due respect to my good friend from Erie–Lincoln, if I was planning to devise some way of sending a new type of vessel into outer space, I wouldn't get my advice from Mr. Hudak. I wouldn't; I'm sorry. He's a bright man, but I wouldn't get my advice from him on that subject.

Mr. Hudak: You admit I'm better than Dalton's experts.

Mr. Yakabuski: That's right.

I want to know whom Dalton McGuinty was talking to when he got this advice and I think the people of Ontario want to know. If I did take my advice from Mr. Hudak, then you'd have the right to say, "You know what? That Yakabuski doesn't know what he's doing, because he's taking advice from a guy who is clearly not qualified to give that advice."

Mr. Hudak: Why are you picking on me?

Mr. Yakabuski: Because you're beside me. You sat here.

If Dalton McGuinty is willing to take advice from people who are not qualified to give it, then let us know who those people were, or just admit that you made the whole thing up, you invented it, it's a figment of your imagination because you were so overcome by your desire to be Premier that the facts and a straightforward approach to the people of Ontario simply wouldn't do. It was the thirst, that insatiable desire for power, that drove Dalton McGuinty to make a promise that only a fool would think he could keep, but he insisted that he could do it. Do you know what? Most of the members of his caucus went around their riding, saying the same thing: "Oh, yes, we can shut them down by 2007." How do you feel now, I've got to ask you, when you go about your ridings?

I sat on a talk show with the member for Mississauga East, and he sat there going on, "Our plan is good. Our

coal plan is right." The host was a television host, he wasn't an energy expert either, but he didn't claim to be one. He—

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): What happened to Lakeview?

Mr. Yakabuski: We shut down Lakeview. Elizabeth Witmer ordered that place closed.

Now they go back to their ridings, and people say to them, "What were you guys doing? What kind of a promise was that? Where do you get this stuff? Do you just invent everything?"

Mr. Hudak: "Yes."

Mr. Yakabuski: Aha. Yes. Thank you very much, to the member from Erie–Lincoln. They just invent things.

So when we go to the polls in 2007, I want the people of Ontario to know: Take your slicer and your dicer with you, because you're going to have to take that Liberal policy and slice it and you're going to have to dice it, and when you've got just a little, wee bit left, that's the part you might be able to believe, because most of it is just going to be made up—

Mr. Bisson: Slicers and dicers?

Mr. Yakabuski: That's what we need, slicers and dicers, because most of it's just going to be made up as they go along. They're going to be sticking their finger up to check the wind to see, "What do we need to do today, what do we need to say today to try to get some votes?" You can rest assured that that's exactly what they'll be doing.

In conclusion, I want to say that while I don't agree with everything in this motion—

Interjection.

Mr. Yakabuski: No, I'm not big on the creation of this job protection commissioner, and I'll tell you why. By the time Dalton McGuinty is finished with Northern Ontario, by the time Dalton McGuinty is finished with industrial Ontario, if we go ahead and create this job protection commissioner, he'll be the only guy left there with a job.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): It's a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to speak to this motion this afternoon. Indeed, I asked the research people in the legislative library to do a little work for me this afternoon and look at the record of the NDP when they were in power from 1990 to 1995.

Mr. O'Toole: Do it without the notes.

Mr. Leal: These are my own notes from the legislative library. I have disregarded the government notes, because here's the real record. Actually, it took two researchers most of the day to compile the train wreck of the NDP record from 1990 to 1995. It's interesting to note that some of the co-pilots of the 747 wreck are still with us today, namely the members from Nickel Belt, Kenora–Rainy River, Niagara Centre, Timmins–James Bay and Trinity–Spadina.

I want to quote from the Financial Post from January 1993:

"Ontarians received more bad news about the province's sickly economy Friday when the Ministry of

Labour said a record of 123 manufacturing plants employing nearly 16,300 workers were shut in 1992.

“The plant closure figure was an increase from 1991, when 118 plants were closed, throwing 14,269 out of work.

“The ministry also revealed that the 1992 plant closures, when combined with job cuts related to companies reducing operations, cost Ontario 27,529 jobs—a 6.1% increase from the 25,957 similarly affected in 1991.”

It goes on to quote Paul Nykanen, who was then the Canadian Manufacturers’ Association vice-president for Ontario: “Plant closures reflect business jitters over tax increases and the province’s soaring deficit. He said 238,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost” in Ontario since 1990 and the bringing in of the Bob Rae government. So that’s an interesting first step. I also—

Mr. Hampton: Isn’t Bob Rae one of yours now?

Mr. Leal: He’s not one of mine because I don’t support him. So I’ll get that on the record.

It’s also interesting to note that we’ve seen over the last number of years an appreciation of the Canadian currency vis-à-vis the US dollar, from about 63 cents to its peak at 90 cents, 91 cents; today it’s back down to 87 cents. I asked the Bank of Canada to provide me with some data on the exchange rate vis-à-vis the American dollar from 1990 to 1995. During that particular time, the Rae government and its co-pilots who are with us today enjoyed a very low exchange rate between the US and Canadian dollars. So during that five-year period, they also enjoyed the discount of the exchange rate. We’ve seen the appreciation of the exchange rate, as I said, going from 63 cents to 91 cents, and back down today to 87 cents.

1700

It is clear, when you read the financial pages of most of the business media, that a number of companies in Ontario certainly took advantage of the time when they had that exchange rate advantage, and many of them did not make the capital investments necessary to upgrade their equipment during that particular period. So some of the responsibility—it was even articulated in yesterday’s business section of the *Globe and Mail* that during the good times, when they were mounding up significant profits in some of these industries, they didn’t take the time to invest in the capital investment to retain high levels of productivity that are so important to the economy.

Interjection.

Mr. Leal: I hear some heckling from my good friend from the riding of Durham. I know he’s a close friend of his buddy the federal Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty. I just happened to find an interesting quote from Mr. Flaherty in the *Globe and Mail* business section on Tuesday, June 13, 2006. I know the Conservative members who are still here will certainly support what Mr. Flaherty said. Let me quote what Mr. Flaherty said in a London, England, interview with regard to manufacturing jobs. It says that in June the Canadian economy lost 21,700 factory workers. I quote Mr. Flaherty: “Canadians

are able to find other comparable, well-paying employment if they lose their jobs in manufacturing.” The Ontario economy is strong, generating new jobs. People who are losing their jobs in manufacturing have alternatives to get high-paying jobs. That’s Jim Flaherty, their good friend, on Tuesday, June 13, 2006. I’m glad we got that on the record.

I also want to talk about it being no secret that I support nuclear energy having a role to play in base load power in Ontario. In fact, Team CANDU is partly made up of Siemens, Babcock and Wilcox and General Electric of Peterborough. So I say to my good friend from Toronto–Danforth that he could come to Peterborough any time and look my good friend Mike Keating, president of CAW local 524, right in the eye and say, “I’m prepared to get rid of all your jobs, because I don’t believe that nuclear energy has a legitimate role in base load capacity generation in the province of Ontario.” I say to him, come to Peterborough any time, talk to Mike Keating and say, “I want to get rid of your jobs and those of about 1,000 other employees with Siemens, Babcock and Wilcox and General Electric of Peterborough,” and also at a plant in Arnprior, Ontario, in my friend Mr. Yakabuski’s riding.

When you look at these investments we’ve made to shore up manufacturing in Ontario, it’s a good record and a record we need to keep pushing forward on.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): I was in hopes that Mr. Hudak would be here, but he’s not—I thought Mr. Leal would speak much longer.

It is my duty and privilege to speak on the NDP opposition day motion. I want to put on the record at the beginning that, in the broadest sense, this argument is about the forest sector in northern Ontario. I think there have been points made, and I will put on the record some of the responses over the last month. I’ve gone through the Hansard record to kind of put in perspective the driving argument, led primarily, I must say, by Mr. Bisson and the NDP caucus, on the dismal effect the McGuinty government’s policies have had on that particular sector. I see, and I respect, many of the members in the gallery here tonight who are certainly working with that sector.

As I said, these are all from the Hansard transcripts, Mr. Speaker, and you’d know as I quote them if I can use these.

I would say that job creation was a topic on November 2. The speaker at the time, Ted Chudleigh, our critic in that area, went on to say, “Ontarians facing layoffs and job losses were given a new sense of hope.” I believe he was talking to the Premier at that time, and he said, “You promised to respect the traditions of this House. Traditionally speaking, a motion passed unanimously by this House is a promise that should be followed through on. You have failed to do that.” It was an opposition day motion he was responding to. He goes on to say:

“In September alone, 2,700 jobs were lost in the auto parts sector, and the carnage continues in the manufacturing sector: Affinia in St. Catharines, 250 jobs lost;

Lipton-Unilever in Belleville, 145 jobs lost; GH Packaging in Belleville, 80 jobs lost; Emerson Tool in Markham, 380 jobs lost; and, most recently, another 250 jobs were lost. Minister, when are you going to recognize the depth of the catastrophe"—and he's really talking about the economics, the fundamentals of jobs for the people of Ontario and their policies and the impact on the economy.

I can say to you that that day, like most days, there was no response. But I don't want to attribute all of it to the lead by our critic, Ted Chudleigh. I've taken a random look at the last month of debate in this House, and I'm looking now where Mr. Chudleigh's talking about employment supports. This is on November 14, and I'm quoting again:

"This government would do better to address their frivolous tax-and-spend policies and try to put an end to the stories we hear about the closing of manufacturing plants in Ontario and the demise of manufacturing jobs, the backbone of Ontario's economy.

"In the first three years of our government back in 1995 to 1998, 363,400 jobs were created, mostly by the private sector—about 90% of them by the private sector. That's 110,000 more jobs than the dismal record"—of the current Liberal government—"with only 274,000 new jobs in this province. Our government was coming off the worst recession"—when we took office—"in the province in 50 years."

I must say, at that time when we assumed office in 1995, the Bob Rae government, now led by Howard Hampton—Bob Rae, about to be the new leader of the Liberal Party—had had a serious recession on their hands, and in fact about 25% of their total budget was deficit. Their budget was about \$45 billion and the deficit was around \$11 billion or \$12 billion at that time. So that's 25 cents on every dollar. The economy was going south and the expenses were going north.

What happened, quite frankly, was that there were three attempts before the social contract, and those attempts were authored, I guess, by Floyd Laughren and Bob Rae—probably most of these people were here. One was called the expenditure reduction plan, and that plan was trying to reduce the payroll because municipal and other partners—their budgets are payroll. Basically that's the budget. What he was really trying to do with the social contract was save jobs—not get rid of jobs; save jobs by everybody lowering the water a bit on their salary take-home. Obviously he got thrown out of office because the partners wouldn't agree with him.

That response was just a matter of the job loss. I'm going to continue here, and this particular section that I'm dealing with now was from November 15. It's a question by Mr. Hampton. In a long dialogue, he says, "My question is for the Premier." On the Stats Canada jobs of that day, he says that "under the McGuinty government, 136,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs have been lost while your government has done virtually nothing." A pretty poignant question. He went on in some detail in his supplementary. This is what he said of

the Premier of Ontario, and I think he has some truth in this.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): He raised taxes, though. He did something; he raised taxes.

Mr. O'Toole: He did raise the health tax.

Here's Howard Hampton—to give them full credit, they've carried the economic torch on this very well, I think—talking to the Premier of Ontario: "The Premier believes that Wal-Mart jobs will replace good manufacturing jobs." I think that's the strategy they've got here. "I'm afraid, Premier, that's just not the case.

"You talk about \$900 million for the forest sector. No one across northern Ontario has seen even a fraction of that amount from the McGuinty government.

"You talk about the auto sector? The biggest decline is, in fact, happening in the auto ... sector, which posted a decline of 8.2% in one month." That's in November. "Premier, you have to only pick up a paper anywhere in southern Ontario to see a list of auto parts plants," and he goes on to say that there's a loss of jobs—high-paying, good-quality jobs—in the resource sector and in the auto sector, the very heart and soul of the economy in Ontario. What did they do? Nothing. They put money that the sectors can't get at by the rules and regulations, and I'm sure Mr. Hampton will say more about that later.

1710

I think the opposition is speaking for the people of Ontario. I think one of the loudest voices has been Mr. Bisson. On November 20, Mr. Bisson raised a question specifically tied to his area—and I'm quoting Hansard again: "My question to the Deputy Premier"—the Premier wasn't here that day; there are a lot of days he's not here, sort of ducking the questions—"...an announcement on the part of the McGuinty government with regard to its new policy when it comes to electricity pricing for northern Ontario industry. I can tell you that, by most accounts, listening to the people of northeastern and northwestern Ontario, it's a complete letdown. You've continued down the path of driving hydro rates up. It has caused thousands of jobs to be lost, 45,000 jobs to be specific. And what have we got? We've basically got the government coming back and announcing something that is going to have almost a nil effect when it comes to saving those jobs that were lost up to now.

"The northern mayors, industry—everybody was unanimous. Everybody in northern Ontario told you that what you needed to do was to get the price to \$45 per megawatt."

They don't get it. They don't understand it. I don't know why they don't, because the energy policy is actually an economic policy. When it comes to sectors of the economy that are primary sectors, especially the resource sector, energy is about 30% of the cost of production. If you don't address it in a specific and direct way, as they've requested, this is going to spell a long-term loss in a sector that will be hard to recover. Through any of the policies that encourage investments in re-capitalizing and efficiency, one of the driving factors is the whole sector itself and the dependency on reliable and affordable energy.

I want to say that this whole debate today is about two sectors, but there's frankly another sector I represent, which is the agricultural sector. If I look at some of the primary sectors, agriculture being one, that's another case where there's serious job loss. We've seen protests, we've seen demonstrations, we had Farmers Feed Cities! I can tell you that in my area even the very successful agricultural operators are now spending their equity. That's how they're staying in business. There's no plan by this government and no plan into the future. I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, as you listen to the debate today, that every job loss, not the 100,000 or 200,000 jobs lost, is a family that doesn't have an income and a government that doesn't have a plan.

Quite frankly, it's alarming that it took this opposition day motion—ours a month or so ago and Mr. Hampton's from the NDP today—to even draw some attention to this important debate. As I see it, all governments—if you look at the economy between 1990 and 1995, they were in a serious recession and that recession affected the revenue of the province. About 85% of the revenue of the province is generally redistributed to the partners: the hospitals, the schools. If you look at the symptoms today, they've raised the taxes, and they have a robust economy, technically, and high-paying jobs that are being lost. That's going to threaten their economy.

Why I do say that? If you look at the economy of the United States, the primary sector there is starting to falter. I can tell you from a quote just recently—this is important; this was by David Dodge. Greg Sorbara has now adjusted his forecast because Dodge and those people know the housing sector in the US is going south, and like a volcano it's going to collapse on itself. The forest sector and all the appliance manufacturing and primary manufacturing jobs are tied to the US economy, basically our major trading partner. He said, "Worse, the new national estimates paper over the distressing melt-down in Ontario's manufacturing sector. Derek Holt, assistant chief economist at RBC Financial Group, estimates that Ontario will grow more slowly this year" than in some time.

If you look at this article I'm quoting—it's from the *Globe and Mail*, October 23—they've adjusted their GDP forecast down by about a point. When the GDP goes down a point, the actual loss of revenue is about \$600 million to \$700 million, but there's an expense that occurs because of retraining, relocation and other adjustments in the economy. So for every point down in the economy, you lose the \$600 million of real revenue and spend about \$400 million in investments trying to readjust the economy.

So they're heading south, and I look around at the primary partners: the universities, the hospital sector. Almost every hospital has maxed out their line of credit. They are carrying a deficit until after the 2007 election. That's what's happening. We've seen school boards—Peel, Toronto and a couple of others—who have an auditor in running the books. They've spent money in education; I given them that. But ask yourself if it's any

better. All the school boards have spent their reserves. Special education, autism and the pressures are real and there.

The economy is going south. They're heading for what I would call a cataclysmic adjustment in the economy. I don't want to be a pessimist, but I'm saying the reality is you've got to protect the primary sectors, and the primary sectors are what this motion is about. What are the effects of it, not just in agriculture or the auto sector or the forest sector—it's all manufacturing jobs.

I promised my good friend Mr. Martiniuk—he has been working very hard for an industry in his community, and I'm going to read an article. This is from *Cambridge*, July 22, 2006. It says, "550 Lose Jobs as Image Craft Shuts Down." Here's what it says: "Shock and dismay swept across a 550-strong workforce at greeting card maker Image Craft Inc. here yesterday, as the plant suddenly shut down because the owner ... is filing for bankruptcy."

The article went on to say that Image Craft sent a letter to the employees: "Signed by Mike Goeller, an executive at Paramount Cards, the letter reads, in part, 'You are not to come to work on Monday and you should file for unemployment benefits. You will be contacted by phone if our situation changes, however you must assume that you are not going to have a job...'"

How would you and your family feel at this time of year with something like that in your mailbox or your personal box at your workplace? That's what's happening in Ontario, and that's the real story here today. This isn't about politics; it's about people's lives and about jobs and the economy of Ontario. More importantly, it's about a Premier, a Minister of Finance and others with no plan. The plans they have for recovery are unattainable by the sectors that are struggling with their obligations, as they are today.

I'm going to wait for our finance critic, Tim Hudak, the member from Erie—Lincoln, to put on the record some of the real numbers, but I appeal to the government today to listen to this third party NDP motion and I encourage members to participate in this debate.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Hudak: Whose time is running down?

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): Don't worry, Mr. Hudak; I'm sure we'll be able to put that time back up for you.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion. As I stated earlier today in the House during statements, I am a proud northerner, and I'm particularly proud of the investments that the McGuinty government has made in the north and the resources that we have put into the north as we build our northern economy and we continue to grow that economy.

It's certain that certain sectors are experiencing challenges because of the strong dollar and the higher-than-expected cost of energy. I and my colleagues in the McGuinty government appreciate how difficult job loss is for families around the province. We have seen some major job losses—there's no doubt about it—but we've

also seen some job creation and some very positive stories. I wanted to focus for a little bit on some of the positive things we have done in the province, particularly in the north.

Through our Move Ontario plan and our infrastructure investments, we have seen and are continuing to see job growth across the province. We have seen job loss, but so have other jurisdictions. We are not alone. We've certainly seen that in Michigan, our major competitor, they've lost more jobs than we have in the last year. In the United States alone, they've lost 11% of their manufacturing jobs, while Japan has lost 16%, Brazil 20% and, surprisingly, China has lost 15%. It's important to remember that there is a major restructuring taking place all across North America and in fact globally, as those numbers indicate.

I want to focus for a moment on the forestry industry. Certainly, as a northerner, I and so many in the north have been affected by the structural change in the forestry industry around the world. Every province has been hit by job losses in the forestry sector. We have, however, taken great steps to assist our forestry industry in this time of need and have announced over \$1 billion in support for the sector, which will help the industry become more competitive, secure jobs and ensure that it continues to play a vital role in our northern economy. Our funds will help with the cost of forest access roads and reduce stumpage fees paid by companies.

It will also assist the pulp and paper mills by providing transitional energy relief. Just this week, we announced a further \$140-million program that will reduce electricity costs by 15% over the next three years, to allow companies to transition to a more competitive and sustainable platform. We've assisted our major forestry companies across the north in this transition period by assisting them in investments in energy efficiency and sustainability and by offering rebates that could reduce the electricity costs.

1720

I would like to focus for a moment on some of the infrastructure investments that we've made in other sectors that are contributing to the growth and success of the north. We have contributed major infrastructure investments in the health care field across the north, as the member from Sault Ste. Marie mentioned earlier. We have a new hospital in the Soo, we're continuing to build a hospital in Sudbury, and we have not one but two new hospitals in my riding of Nipissing. The North Bay hospital has been long awaited. We've been waiting for this project to go forward since the 1980s. It was under Mr. Harris's watch that it did not move forward. Although he did announce it a number of times, never did it ever go to tender; never was it so close to having shovels in the ground as it is today. I'm very proud that we are moving that project forward for the entire community and for the entire northeast region which will benefit from this new health facility.

In the town of Mattawa—I would like to focus on the town of Mattawa for a moment—they have been hit by some job losses related to the forestry sector through

Columbia Forest Products. The province moved into that area and provided them with some transitional funding to assist the workers that were affected. We've also recently announced that their hospital will be going forward—that hospital has been in portables since the late 1960s, when the original hospital built in the 1930s had a fire. This is a ringing endorsement for that community, the fact that it has not been forgotten. We are moving forward with a major infrastructure project that will see jobs in the area over a two-year period as that hospital is built, but also it will form a foundation and a strong basis for that community to rebound and to continue to grow.

In that community as well, we have F.J. McElligott high school, a high school that, under the Tory watch, was at risk of being closed down. That would have been a huge blow for that community. In fact, we have turned that high school around. We have merged the municipal library into that school. We are now providing a welding course at the high school that is co-sponsored by Canadore College, where students are receiving their ticket in welding right there at the high school facility. It's a great investment. It's a fabulous partnership between our post-secondary education system—in this case, Canadore College—and F.J. McElligott and the Near North District School Board. Through the first graduating class—and I was very pleased to be at their first graduation—we had a number of students who had been affected by the downsizing at Columbia Forest Products who had now found themselves the retraining that they needed and were moving forward into a new field. That retraining was made available because of the McGuinty investments that we are making in education across the province. That is allowing for the retraining of some of these affected individuals and putting these affected families back on a stronger footing by providing them with the education and resources they need to find the future again.

We've also seen major investments in highways and other infrastructure projects. In particular, in my area we're continuing with the four-laning of Highway 11. We've seen \$120 million worth of contracts move forward in the last year on that particular project. In North Bay, the children's treatment centre, another long-awaited and long-promised project, is moving forward. We're going to see \$7 million to \$8 million invested in that infrastructure project, which will be located very close to our hospital project. Again, we'll see more jobs as we build those facilities.

Through the northern Ontario heritage fund, we're also making some strategic investments that are encouraging job creation and job growth. Recently, I had the privilege of attending at Rahn Plastics, where we assisted them, through a \$700,000 loan, to relocate into a much larger facility. They've been able to hire 10 new staff at Rahn Plastics in order to enable them to go to the next level and really start selling their product globally.

These are the results of the strategic investments that we've been making across the north through the northern Ontario heritage fund as well as through a number of

infrastructure initiatives that are seeing growth in the north, that are seeing development in the north. I would have to agree with my colleague from the Soo when he said that never have we seen greater enthusiasm and encouragement in northern Ontario than under the McGuinty government, where we've seen a great deal of attention focused on the north, where we've seen the north thrive and prosper.

Mr. Bisson: Where have you been?

Ms. Smith: I challenge the member for Timmins—James Bay to come up with any indication during the five years that the NDP were in power when the north was in such a positive position as they are today.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this resolution.

Mr. Hudak: I'm pleased to rise, speaking in support of my colleague the member for Kenora—Rainy River, Mr. Hampton's, resolution this afternoon. I hope some of my colleagues across the floor will do so as well, because there's no doubt that something is amiss in the province of Ontario when it comes to the state of the economy and the flight of manufacturing jobs from Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

It is, I believe, unprecedented for Ontario now to be at the back of the pack in this country of Canada. I am flummoxed to think that the province of Ontario, the province where I was fortunate enough to be born and raised, the province I've known all my lifetime as the engine of growth for this entire country—in fact, for good parts of that history the engine of growth, a leading jurisdiction in all of North America—is now at the back of the pack in Canada, and I bet near the back of the pack in all of North America in economic growth. The saddest part of that story is the loss of approximately 120,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs.

Mr. O'Toole: Families—120,000 families.

Mr. Hudak: As my colleague from Durham says, that's 120,000 families that now have to deal with losing that employment, families worrying about mortgages, families worried about car payments, families worried about sending their kids on to college or university, young families trying to get a good start in life. The bread and butter of Ontario's economy has always been the manufacturing sector—120,000 manufacturing jobs lost in the last two years. I think that since 2002 we've seen now some 10% of Ontario's total manufacturing base wiped out.

So why is Ontario different from the other provinces? I listened to my colleagues: The dollar is higher than it used to be; for a while they were saying because oil prices and gas prices were high. But why is Ontario different from the rest of the provinces? Why have we moved from our lead position, not to the middle of the pack, but to the back of the pack when it comes to the rest of Canada? The answer is simple: Dalton McGuinty's misguided fiscal and economic policies have chased well-paying manufacturing jobs from the province of Ontario.

We all remember the first major piece of legislation that Dalton McGuinty brought in. Contrary to his

campaign promises, he put taxes through the roof—a tax increase that would have made the old Bob Rae blush, but I guess the new Bob Rae would be proud of it. It was the biggest tax increase in the history of the province of Ontario, meaning that now Ontario's tax burden on working families and seniors is much higher than it used to be, reducing disposable income, and importantly as well, now the highest taxes—I think runner-up to Saskatchewan, who I believe are going to lower their business taxes. Now Ontario is in the top two of the highest tax regimes for businesses in all of North America.

Second, we've seen hydro rates increase substantially, despite campaign promises to the contrary. Third, we have seen an incredible, rapid increase in the public sector spending of the Dalton McGuinty government.

We used to think David Peterson—remember that Peterson fella? We used to think that he increased spending apace. We thought the Bob Rae government increased spending significantly. The Dalton McGuinty government has increased government spending by a rate that leaves the Peterson and Rae governments in the dust—an average of almost an 8% government-spending increase year over year over year—close to \$19 billion more coming out of the pockets of hard-working families, seniors and businesses in the province of Ontario, being clawed in by this finance minister, by Premier McGuinty, and spent in heaven knows what kinds of ways, when you see things like dropping the C for \$6 million. I say to my colleague from Peterborough, thank God they didn't go after the G. How much would that have cost? They stopped at the C, but maybe there are more plans to cut more letters out of the OLCG.

Runaway spending, high taxes, high hydro rates: No wonder Ontario's competitive position for manufacturing jobs has been dramatically undermined, and no wonder we've seen 120,000 manufacturing jobs lost from Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

I know a lot of my colleagues opposite get up and parrot numbers; I think they say 250,000 jobs have been created in Ontario since October 2003. But when you look at the actual numbers, as my colleague from Halton, Mr. Chudleigh, the critic, said it's a dismal job creation record. First of all, half of those jobs created are public sector jobs, so it's masking the decline in private sector jobs. And we all know that if you don't have a strong private sector, if you don't have people gaining work in the private sector, then money doesn't come into government coffers to support the government jobs. So I found it fascinating. I wonder if this is one of the first times that we have actually seen government jobs matching any kind of increase in the private sector, reflecting the bloat we've seen in government spending and the bloat in government bureaucracy.

1730

When you compare these kinds of job creation numbers to those that were experienced under the previous PC government, the Liberal comparison is abysmal—far, far fewer private sector or self-employed jobs created under Dalton McGuinty, and don't forget about the

120,000 manufacturing jobs that have left the province of Ontario. Let's look at 2005, for example: private sector job creation in Ontario, 51,900; self-employed, minus 4,100. The small business sector actually shed jobs. So you see a net there of about 46,000 jobs, when you see job creation under the previous PC government of 140,000 private sector jobs in 1998, 274,500 in 1999—I could go on but for a lack of time. So the Liberal numbers are nothing to boast about. In fact, they're something to be embarrassed about when it comes to the poor performance of the Ontario economy in creating private sector jobs under the McGuinty government.

I remind my colleagues about what RBC had to say: "We think Ontario will narrowly avoid a recession and post its weakest growth rate since 2003. Manufacturing is contracting in high-cost labour-intensive sectors ... and is awaiting higher auto production in 2008.... All this despite energy price relief and being one year from an election."

CIBC echoes the same, where Ontario will be dead last in growth next year and the year after. They sound the warning bells: Potentially another 50,000 manufacturing jobs could be lost from Dalton McGuinty's Ontario in the year ahead.

I know some of my colleagues have raised concerns about the job protection commissioner. I would expect that would not be a policy a John Tory PC government would bring forward. Our plan would be to reduce the tax burden and to control energy prices through a greater supply of energy. But I've got to tell you, in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, we need a job commissioner. In Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, we need a job commissioner on every street corner to fight those cuts. And I know how we can save money, I'll say to my colleague for Kenora-Rainy River. The economic development ministers aren't doing much. They're not fighting the loss of manufacturing jobs, so let's give the job commissioner their offices, their limousines and their staff, because I know at least a job commissioner will do the jobs that the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and the small business minister are supposed to be doing.

Mr. Bisson: That's the quietness that we're hearing in plants across Ontario. When you walk into mills across my riding, across northern Ontario, southwestern Ontario, Toronto and across this province, you're hearing silence because plants have been shut down. Plants that used to be active, with all kinds of activity in the processes they used to produce the goods they did, are now silent. Why? Because this government has failed to rise to the occasion of how to confront the problems we have in Ontario today vis-à-vis the international and North American economies. More importantly, they haven't done what they have to do when it comes to dealing with what's in their control.

My colleagues spoke earlier in regard to the job losses we've had in Toronto, southwestern Ontario and across this province, and I'm going to speak mostly about the north, because that's where I come from. But I want people to know right from the start that this is not just a

northern Ontario issue; this is an issue that is affecting us across this province. It's not just in the north; it's in plants across this province.

If you take a look at some of the job losses—I have some of them listed here—you'll note that they're not just in northern Ontario. General Motors has lost more than 1,000 jobs across southern Ontario because of what's happening with their own particular problems; Ford has lost 1,100 jobs; DaimlerChrysler, 1,000; Sears, 1,200; Backyard Products, Collingwood, 230 jobs; Blue Mountain Pottery, Collingwood, 37 jobs; Nacan starch products, Collingwood, 87-plus jobs. I can read the list; it goes on and on and on. It's a litany of job losses.

To date, what has this government done to address the crisis in industry? Absolutely nothing. This government seems to think that all they can do is say some nice things, as my good friend Andrea Horwath, the member for Hamilton East, said. They go out and give their beautiful speeches, they give us platitudes, they give us the press releases and smile at the cameras, and meanwhile nothing happens to address the fundamental problems we're seeing in our economy.

I was enraged as I listened to the Deputy Premier today in this House talk about what was happening in the community where I come from, the city of Timmins, and try to make people believe that Tembec had not announced a closure of the sawmill in Timmins. He said to my leader, in response to a question, that workers were being recalled to work for eight weeks and that somehow or other this was a great thing for Timmins. He fails to understand that the only reason the workers are being recalled for eight weeks is because there's timber in the yard, and if they don't saw it into dimensional lumber, it's going to rot. So Tembec has decided, because they're sitting on the asset of those logs, that they've got to pass them through the mill. They're going to run those logs through the mill and they're going to close down in eight weeks. Then they're going to issue layoff notices to the workers at Tembec, which work out to be terminations, as my good friend the member for Kenora-Rainy River, the leader of the NDP, has said.

Tembec has said to me as a local member and to my federal member, Mr. Angus, "We know that there are workers who are going to be gone, and if we decide to reopen and the market turns around or Dalton McGuinty finally realizes that he's got something to do with trying to get these plants reopened, many of these skilled workers are not going to be available because they'll have moved elsewhere."

The story is the same across northern Ontario. I listened to Minister Ramsay this morning. What was his quote, Mr. Hampton?

Mr. Hampton: Ontario has got off scot-free.

Mr. Bisson: Yes, that northern Ontario's gotten off relatively scot-free when it comes to job losses, trying to make the media and northerners believe that, "Oh, we've done really well under this government." Well, let's go through the list. Opatatika, the second most productive plant in the Tembec sawmill that was profitable, was shut

down as a result of a decision by Tembec and permission given by this government to transfer the wood that was associated with that mill to another mill down the road so they can maximize profits in a larger super-mill in Hearst.

We take a look at what happened in Smooth Rock Falls. A mill closed down, the only employer in town, and 240 employees are gone—no more jobs, plus all of the ancillary jobs that go with it—and this government's response has been nothing. If the government would have accepted the idea that my leader, Howard Hampton, put forward by putting in place a job protection commissioner, we could have had an office that could have sat down with the workers, with the employer and with the community to do the very hard work that has to be done in order to restructure and keep that plant going. That plant was on the borderline. It was making a little bit of money, but it wasn't making as much money as the company wanted. As Tembec told me, "If we have to invest money," which they needed to do in that plant, "we will invest it elsewhere"—I would argue, not in Ontario. That's exactly what Jamie Lim of the federation of independent business said in her press release: "Ontario companies will continue to invest in the forestry sector, but they will not do it here in Ontario." Why? Because the policies of this government in hydro-electricity, on the issue of softwood lumber and on other ancillary issues have done nothing, and in fact have made the situation worse.

If we had had a job protection commissioner, we might have been able to do some of the things we saw in other communities when we went through the disasters in the early 1990s, when industries were in similar situations. I want to say this to my good friend from Sault Ste. Marie. He stood in this House and said, "We have to make sure we don't go back to the days of the NDP, when they were in office, and make sure we never elect another NDP member in Sault Ste. Marie." Well, I say thank God for Tony Martin, thank God for Bud Wildman and thank God for all the people in that government who restructured that community and saved thousands of jobs in Sault Ste. Marie. I say to you, member from Sault Ste Marie, that you don't know what you talk of, because Algoma Steel would be closed today if it hadn't been for what we did. We recognized that it was a tough job. We understood that that industry was in a very bad spot.

Mr. Hampton: And Liberals were opposed.

Mr. Bisson: I'm getting to that point. Don't worry; it's on my list. I say we recognized that it was a very tough job. We recognized that there were international pressures on that mill. We recognized also that there were Ontario pressures on that mill and that something had to be done. We didn't do the easy thing and say, as Dalton McGuinty said, "Oh, well, market forces will dictate what happens." We got in and we did the hard work, something similar to a job restructuring commission, except the government did it itself. We sat down, my colleagues, Shelley Martel—I remember how many meetings there were on that issue—Tony Martin and others, and we restructured that company to where it

became profitable and became a shining light, not only in northern Ontario but across this land when it comes to what can be done when workers, management, communities and financial sectors get together with government to figure out how to restructure a company. They were basically going bankrupt. Those workers were going to be out the door.

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I say to the member from Sault Ste. Marie, yes, we need another Tony Martin in Sault Ste. Marie because, God knows, we're going through difficult times and at least Tony Martin and Bud Wildman, New Democrats who were there at the time, responded to the crisis in your community. You should be ashamed for forgetting the history of your community, a history that is a proud one that basically says that when communities, workers and employers get together, anything is possible. But you forget.

When we asked the Liberals here in the House, under Mme. McLeod, who was the leader of the day—and at the time, the economic development and trade critic was Mr. Kwinter—for their help, they gave us no help. All they did was basically oppose and say it was a bad idea. Day after day, they came into this House and they travelled across this province and tried to make people believe that workers and companies getting together and making deals, as we would do, was a recipe for disaster.

But it didn't stop there. Do you remember who the Prime Minister at the time was? Was it a Liberal? Was it M. Chrétien? We went knocking at the Liberal door in Ottawa—nothing, not an iota of help from the federal government. The province itself had to do it all alone. But it didn't stop at Algoma Steel. It got tougher. St. Mary's Paper was in the same situation. I remind the member from Sault Ste. Marie—and again I say shame on you for not recognizing the history of your community. It was restructured by our government. Again, workers from the Canadian energy and paperworkers' union, the employer, the government of Ontario and others got together with the community and restructured that company to where it basically turned around.

Yes, we're going through another crisis, but your government's response is to do nothing. I look at what happened in the 1990s in forestry and mining across northern Ontario, and, God knows, it was even worse then. We got elected in 1990. Mining was on the way down because gold prices and base metals were down. Forestry was in a crisis. We restructured both those industries. Was it easy? Heck, no, it was a lot of hard work. Did we have to be innovative? Of course we did. We had to do things that had never been done before. We had to do worker ownerships; we had to do community ownerships. We had to do financial restructurings of all types in order to assist those companies. We had to bring workers and managers together to figure out how we were able to reduce costs. But this government doesn't do that.

I say to my colleagues here and I say to the members across the way, imagine if the government of today were

to say in Smooth Rock Falls, “We were prepared before the mill closed, but even if they did it now, we can still do what has to be done to impress upon Tembec the need do a couple of things. Work with us to restructure your company, and we are willing to do so; but if you’re saying to us you’re going to close that plant completely and basically shut her down, then we want to take it over, and we will restructure it.”

That’s the whole idea of bringing together a job restructuring commission to do the hard work that has to be done with communities and workers in order to respond to what needs to be done: finding new investors, finding new markets, finding ways of reducing costs, dealing with all of the issues and pressures that are dealt with when it comes to the problems in that plant. But that’s hard to make happen because, at the end of the day, this government is nowhere.

I’ve got to say that the really sad part is that I thought for a second—and I was saying this to some of my colleagues about two or three weeks ago—that maybe the government was going to get it right. All of us in northern Ontario had been working to say to this government in one voice—not just Howard Hampton, who led the pack, but municipal leaders, chambers of commerce, municipalities, groups like STRONG, Al Simard and his group, the unions, Canadian energy and paperworkers, the Steelworkers. All of them got together and said, “We need to speak as one voice in northern Ontario and demand that this government moves on the electricity file.” Electricity prices have gone through the roof, and for those industries in northern Ontario, it is a huge problem. People need to understand that electricity is a major cost of doing business in northern Ontario. Why? Because they’re the largest consumers of energy in their processes. When you’re running a paper mill, 30% of your cost overall is energy, it’s electricity. You look at a mine, or let’s say a refinery, and it’s about 25% to 27%. When you look at a sawmill, it’s probably around 15%. Those are processes that take a lot of electricity, and when electricity costs are so high, that adds to a very bad bottom line.

I was thinking two weeks ago that maybe the government is going to do something. I didn’t think they were going to undo the damage they created when it comes to their electricity policy, but I thought that they’ll probably come back with some sort of rebate that comes close to the \$45 per megawatt hour that everybody was calling for as a reduction of electricity prices. As time went by, you started to think, “Well, you know, let’s hope it happens.” I would run across the chambers of commerce as I would go across the north, and for municipal leaders and others, certainly when it came to the municipal election, it was an issue that was raised at the door. We were hoping there was going to be some good news come Monday. Monday the government announces a program, saying, “Hurrah. We have saved northern Ontario. We have announced that there is going to be about a one-cent-per-kilowatt-hour reduction on electricity.” But here’s the kicker: It only applies to those people who are basically over—what is it?—200 megawatts per year. It’s only for

the high utility user/customers—there are only about four or five of them in northern Ontario—and for those who are even able to participate in the program, it’s over a three-year period and only if they’re able to meet certain expectations as set out by the program. In other words, they may not even get the full amount.

But here’s what’s worse. One of the people at the press conferences with the Premier to herald this new program was Bowater, and Bowater was saying that this was just a great announcement and that this was going to save jobs in Thunder Bay. On November 20, the same day the Premier was making his announcement, Bowater sent a letter to all of its employees and basically said, “We’re still in deep trouble. We’re calling meetings with our workers and managers to come together at large community meetings. We’re telling you there are going to be job losses and restructuring and closures within this mill.”

The government representatives, the Minister of Energy and the Premier, stood in this House and heralded how good a deal this was when they were trying to answer our questions on Monday. But at the very time that they were giving answers in the House, Bowater was sending letters out to their employees saying that there were going to be layoffs and restructuring in the very mill that said this was good news. What kind of good news can it be when the very people who are out there, heralding this as a great announcement, are sending letters to their employees saying that there are going to be more job losses?

I say to the government across the way that you got it wrong. You’ve got to do a couple of things, and they’re very simple. We understand that the challenge is great. We understand that what is facing the forest industry in northern Ontario is a very serious issue that takes a lot of work and a lot of effort on the part of all to be able to find a solution. But a lot of what needs to be done is at the feet of the provincial government. Electricity is a key issue. Electricity has to be dealt with in terms of developing a policy that reduces electricity and does what we’ve done in this province for years, which is to take a look at electricity as one of the base infrastructures for the province and its manufacturers.

It used to be, for years in this province, that electricity was one of the reasons we were able to attract investment into Ontario. Why? Because we had among the lowest hydro rates across North America. We as a province decided over 90 years ago—95 years now—that we would produce electricity at cost and resell it to consumers individually and to companies collectively at a much cheaper rate than in other jurisdictions. As a result of that, the Ontario manufacturing sector boomed, and in northern Ontario the natural resource sector boomed. It made sense to invest money in northern Ontario, and in Ontario generally, because electricity prices were low.

This government has taken that policy and turned it around on its ear. Where we’re at now is among the most uncompetitive jurisdictions when it comes to electricity prices. Prices in Manitoba and Quebec, the two

jurisdictions on either side of Ontario, are over two times less than what they are here in Ontario.

We say to you that there are some things you've got to do around the electricity file. You have to finally admit that your electricity policy is a disaster, that it doesn't work, not only for northern Ontario but for much of the manufacturing sector across Ontario, and that we need to recapture the ground that we used to have when it came to electricity policy and prices in this province.

When it comes to the issue of fibre costs, this government has to take a look at fibre costs and a way to be able to address those issues, which to companies are a big issue. To some companies it's not so bad, because they're situated in such a way that fibre can be transported off provincial highways because they have their own road infrastructure coming into the mill yards and they don't have to haul as far. But there are certainly others for whom it's a huge issue. We need to sit down with those companies and try to figure out what we can do to reduce costs.

The government says, "Don't worry. We have spent over a billion dollars now to assist the forestry sector," and they tout this billion dollars every occasion they have. Let me tell you what billion dollars they're talking about. They made some announcements: \$550 million for loan guarantees to companies and a raft of other programs that they say comes up to a billion dollars. There has been a 3% take-up on those programs over a period of a year and a half. Only 3% of industry has said, "We want this money."

If you're Tembec, Bowater or Abitibi-Consolidated, and you're losing money and you owe money, are you going to run to a fund and say, "Please lend me more money"? That's not what they need. They don't need more money lent to them. They need their base costs dealt with, and that's what you haven't done.

So to stand in this House and stand outside this House at press conferences around the province and say, "Oh, we've given all this help to industry," well, if you have done it, it's only a 3% take-up. All you need to do is take a look at the list of communities that have lost plants across the north and southern Ontario to see how little affect this has had.

So I urge members in this House to reach within themselves and to do the right thing; to say: "Yes, we admit that we have a problem. Yes, we admit that we have made some mistakes in the Liberal government. We will support the NDP motion in order to deal with some

key issues to make sure that we're able to try to restart the Ontario economy so that those workers who have been laid off across this province have, hopefully, one day the hope of being able to find work."

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for this time for debate.

The Acting Speaker: The time for debate has been concluded. Mr. Hampton has moved opposition day motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Will all those in favour please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1752 to 1802.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Hampton has moved opposition day number 3. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Martel, Shelley
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John
DiNovo, Cheri	Hudak, Tim	Prue, Michael
Dunlop, Garfield	Kormos, Peter	Tabuns, Peter
Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario	

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

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bartolucci, Rick	Jeffrey, Linda	Racco, Mario G.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Leal, Jeff	Ramal, Khalil
Brownell, Jim	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Cansfield, Donna H.	Matthews, Deborah	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	Mitchell, Carol	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Peters, Steve	

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 14; the nays are 38.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1805.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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