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of Ontario
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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 29 November 2006

Mercredi 29 novembre 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 29 November 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 29 novembre 2006

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GYPSY MOTH INFESTATION

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): I want to call the members of the assembly's attention to the growing concerns of taxpayers and homeowners in western Niagara regarding the recent problems with gypsy moth infestation. This past year, sadly, thousands of trees have been destroyed across Niagara, victims of the gypsy moths.

Experts who consulted with the township of west Lincoln are anticipating that the loss of local trees will be even worse next year if the spread of gypsy moths is left unchecked. Members know that this can result in a considerable and detrimental reduction in the aesthetic and recreational value of infested property. Worse still, tree loss from gypsy moth infestation also has a dramatic impact on the local natural system.

I recently wrote to the Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Ramsay, asking him to assist in a gypsy moth spraying program. In the past, the MNR has used helicopters to spray moth-infested woodlots in the program, cost-shared with landowners and the local municipality. I asked for the minister to restart that program even on a pilot-project basis to assist us in west Niagara.

The minister responded to me, indicating that he was not interested in doing so, and cited the example of Mississauga, which was funded totally by local landowners, with some support from the city. But I say to the minister, in a township the size of west Lincoln, with a very small industrial and commercial base, it is simply unaffordable. We are no Mississauga. I'd ask the minister to come forward with funding for a pilot program to combat gypsy moth infestation in Niagara.

NAVAN WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Navan Women's Institute for reaching its 75th anniversary, a remarkable milestone to attain.

This institute has a long history of dedicated service to women and their families, even during some very difficult times. One example is the beautiful quilts made by the women of the institute for soldiers fighting overseas during the First and Second World Wars, which still exist and are on display in Toronto.

Today the institute participates in local cultural events in Orléans, and works on national issues such as breast cancer research and awareness.

The institute is also making a difference in other parts of the world. For example, they are currently fundraising for the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers program. This program helps support grandmothers in Africa who are raising children orphaned by AIDS. The money raised by the institute will provide medicine and school supplies, helping those who are truly in need.

These activities are quite a change from the focus this organization had when it first began in 1931. At that time, the institute taught women how to manage their homes. Today, however, its focus has expanded to some of the most pressing social issues affecting women around the world.

Their concern for women's issues is also shared by this government. That's why we recently announced the \$4-million training program that will help vulnerable women develop new skills, find employment and achieve economic independence.

In that spirit of solidarity, I would like to thank the Navan Women's Institute for its 75 years of service and hope that they will continue for another 75 years, helping the women of the Ottawa–Orléans area and across the world.

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): This week, dairy farmers and egg farmers were at the Ontario Legislature informing MPPs on the need to maintain supply management. John Tory and the opposition PC caucus unequivocally support supply management, on the understanding that supply management works on three pillars: import control, production discipline and producer pricing.

Like any three-legged stool, if one pillar is weakened, the whole system is compromised. For example, without import controls, production discipline becomes impossible. Without production discipline, pricing becomes impossible. Supply management balances supply with demand and prevents overproduction, flooded markets and depressed prices for farmers.

The entire PC caucus has signed the FarmGate5 petition in support of the five supply management sectors. In addition to the dairy farmers and the egg farmers, this includes the chicken farmers—these are the broiler pro-

ducers—the Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission, and the turkey producers.

As for the McGuinty Liberals, 31 MPPs oppose supply management—they have not signed FarmGate5—including the Deputy Premier and the Attorney General. I urge this Ontario government, put your divisions aside. Sign the FarmGate5 petition in support of supply management. Why won't you sign it? Farmers are worried.

1340

LIBRARY SERVICES

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): Recently I had the opportunity to spend some time at the Bonfield Public Library. This coming Friday, I'm delighted to be opening the new Mattawa public library that is to be located in F.J. McElligott Secondary School in Mattawa. I'm amazed at the profound transformation that the library as an institution is going through. When I was a kid, libraries were simply about books. Today they are community hubs, dedicated to the advancement of literacy, learning and knowledge.

I'm very proud that this government invests more than \$28 million a year in Ontario's public and First Nations libraries. Last spring, our government announced an additional investment of \$15 million to support our library system. My libraries in North Bay, Callander, Bonfield, Powassan and Mattawa, to name but a few, were delighted.

As part of that investment, \$8 million was allocated to Knowledge Ontario, a program that was officially launched on November 20. Knowledge Ontario is a groundbreaking, multi-sector collaboration of public, university, college and school libraries. Thanks to the digital products and services offered by Knowledge Ontario, all Ontarians, no matter where they live, will be able to access the same rich, high-quality digital information using their library cards not only from the public library, but from their workplace, their school and their home computers. Province-wide access to Knowledge Ontario will create a level playing field to provide fast, seamless and free access to essential information and learning resources for all Ontarians.

I'm very proud that our government is committed to a public library system that promotes literacy and equal access to information—

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

MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): On November 20, I filed for a late show with the Minister of Energy, and that was scheduled for November 21. The minister personally came over and sat down beside me on the 21st and said, "Do you know what? I can't make it tonight." He said, "I'd like to be there myself." I said, "No problem, Minister. We'll reschedule it for next Tuesday."

Do you know what? Last night, Tuesday, the minister was a no-show—a no-show. The premise of this whole late show was about integrity, honesty and respect for Parliament, or lack thereof, of this government and this minister, because he made a commitment in Hansard to bring information forward and has refused to do so since then. What does he do on the day of the late show? He doesn't show up for that. He sent his parliamentary assistant, the member for Oakville, who never touched on the subject of the late show whatsoever; he waxed on about the purported work of the McGuinty government when it comes to energy.

Well, I'm going to tell you, this issue was about respect and integrity, and if the minister has that lack of respect for the members of this House, then the people of the province of Ontario should not be surprised to know that the McGuinty government has no more respect for you, because they break their promises to you every day in this House. They will say anything and do anything to get a vote. Shame on them.

MUNICIPAL AIRPORT FUNDING

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Yesterday in the House, I had an opportunity to ask a question of the Minister of Transportation in regard—

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): You're full of crap, Ted.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The member for Renfrew may wish to withdraw that last comment.

Mr. Yakabuski: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker: We'll restart the clock. Member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Bisson: As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the opportunity to ask a question to the Minister of Transportation in regard to the request by northern communities to have the province do what they used to do, which is to fund municipal airports. Those airports are an integral part of the transportation hub for many of our communities in northern Ontario and at the same time make economic development possible. Without an airport, how are you able to attract investment, if you don't have a full transportation infrastructure in your community?

Yesterday, in her response to my question, the minister said bluntly that there was no money in the budget for them to be able to fund airports in northern Ontario, even though for years and years the province funded municipal airports and assisted municipalities in keeping those airports open. Communities like Earlton are in crisis. Wawa, White River and Kapuskasing, I know, are having to subsidize to a great degree out of their own municipal budgets and are finding it increasingly difficult to keep those airports open.

I urge the minister to do what is right, to take a look at what has to be done in order to fund those airports. They are part of our transportation hub. Without those airports, our communities are left in the dark in regard to being able to provide a full transportation infrastructure for

those communities. For the McGuinty government to say no to funding municipal airports in northern Ontario shows yet again that this government just doesn't get it when it comes to their responsibility to the northern part of this province.

JOB CREATION

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): I want to talk about how our government gets it in Sault Ste. Marie. I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight for members the dramatic increase in the creation of jobs and new opportunities in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie. Since taking office, more than 200 new provincial jobs and more than 1,600 new private sector jobs have been created in my community, with more to come. In early 2004, the unemployment rate in Sault Ste. Marie was 8.4%. With thanks to the co-operation of local companies and provincial government initiatives, it is now down to 6.9%.

We've made great strides in diversifying our community's economy over the past three years. Our \$3-million investment in the Sutherland Group alone has created 1,400 new jobs for area residents; our \$15-million investment in the Borealis tourism development is expected to create an additional 600 new jobs; 60 new jobs are being created at the Pollard ticket finishing plant; 15 jobs were created with the opening of the nearly \$400-million Brookfield Power wind farm—the largest wind farm in Canada; with a new contract, we've also ensured employment for 332 workers at the Group Health Centre; 25 new jobs are being created at our new \$6-million youth justice facility; 25 new jobs were created with our \$3.6-million investment in Flakeboard Ltd.; the new provincial gas tax program created five new jobs; we've got 200 construction jobs at Algoma Steel working on a cogeneration facility. As Sault Ste. Marie's provincial representative, my primary concern has been the economic—

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

VISITORS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale-High Park): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just wanted to introduce to the House the members of the Ontario Real Estate Association who are visiting with us today. We welcome them.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Members' statements.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: I'd really prefer to finish members' statements. Members' statements. The member for Huron-Bruce.

LEN GERTLER

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): It's my pleasure to rise in the House to honour a great conservationist.

Len Gertler was considered a founding father of urban planning in Canada. In 1967, he looked at the environmental impacts of urban sprawl, mining and recreation on the Niagara Escarpment. His report, still referred to as the Gertler report, led to the development of the Niagara Escarpment plan, the first environmental land use plan in Canada and a cornerstone of the Ontario greenbelt. He also contributed to UNESCO, designating the escarpment as a World Biosphere Reserve in 1990.

In honour of all of Mr. Gertler's contributions, I am today pleased to announce that our government is re-naming one of the most outstanding parks on the Niagara Escarpment, the Loree Forest, to the Len Gertler Memorial Loree Forest. This forest is located in the Blue Mountains, halfway between Collingwood and Thornbury, overlooking Georgian Bay.

Sadly, Mr. Gertler passed away in 2005, but I'm very pleased that his three sons are here today for this special occasions: Denis, with his wife, Maryjean Lancefield, and their children, Willa and Evan; Kim Gertler and family friend Mark McLean; and his other son, Meric Gertler, with his wife, Joanna, and son Miles.

Two of Mr. Gertler's sons visited the site earlier this year. Here's what they had to say: "The escarpment was a special place for our father, both as a natural treasure to protect and a focus for one of his greatest land use planning achievements. The Gertler family hopes Ontarians will come to the park and enjoy its trails, forests, views and peacefulness." Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Gertler.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): I would like to take this opportunity to welcome members of the Ontario Principals' Council who are here today to meet with members of the House.

The OPC is the professional organization representing 5,000 principals and vice-principals in our public elementary and secondary schools. The purpose of principals' day is to provide ongoing dialogue between elected members and school leaders. Principals deal with an assortment of issues and situations that arise in our schools every day. They're on the front line, and we very much appreciate the good work that they do.

As our government continues to focus on increasing the literacy levels for all students, principals act as instructional leaders, helping teachers enhance their skills so they in turn can help every single student to reach his or her full potential.

Today our schools are involved in many initiatives, helping students learn to read, keeping schools safe, finding alternative learning opportunities for our at-risk kids, encouraging students to stay in school longer and reinforcing the importance of character education. All of these initiatives occur under the guidance of our principals. They play a vital role in the success of our schools.

1350

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the principals here today and those across the province for coming here today, for the work that they do day in and day out, and for keeping us on top of all the positive things going on in our schools.

The McGuinty government is proud of the progress we're making in improving our education system across Ontario. We're also aware of the need to continue those efforts in the year ahead. We look forward to advancing the quality of education and working in partnership with those—

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

VISITORS

VISITEURS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: It's a pleasure for me to introduce two very good friends of mine who are in the members' east gallery today. Jack Doris has been a member of Peterborough city council since 1967. He served as mayor from 1991 to 1997 and was re-elected on November 13. I must say Jack Doris is also a cousin of the member from Durham. My other good friend is Glenn Pagett, who served on Peterborough city council for 28 years—he was my ward colleague for 15—and was the city of Peterborough's athlete of the year in 1960. I'd like to welcome them to the gallery today.

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James): Sur un point d'ordre, j'aimerais féliciter la présence de notre traducteur—pas notre traducteur, l'instructeur de français pour nos greffiers, Patric, qui est ici avec nous aujourd'hui, puis on lui dit bonjour à notre parlement.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to introduce two of my constituents who won a day at the Legislature with their MPP: Sarah and Sheila. They're here to see what it's all about. Please be gentle today.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

The Acting Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr30, An Act respecting Red Leaves Resort Association.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 29, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1353 to 1358.

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

Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick	Kwinter, Monte	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Leal, Jeff	Pupatello, Sandra
Bountrogianni, Marie	Marsales, Judy	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Matthews, Deborah	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Mauro, Bill	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	McMeekin, Ted	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Colle, Mike	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Crozier, Bruce	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	Patten, Richard	
Duncan, Dwight	Peters, Steve	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Martel, Shelley	Runciman, Robert W.
DiNovo, Cheri	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tabuns, Peter
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John	Yakubuski, John

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 34; the nays are 21.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

1400

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): I am pleased to rise and share with all members of this House the McGuinty government's progress in creating a culture of conservation in Ontario. Today, conservation leaders from across Ontario are participating in a con-

ervation showcase that is being hosted by the Ministry of Energy and the Electricity Distributors Association. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members to attend. In a moment, I will recognize some of Ontario's conservation leaders who are with us today, but first let me spend a moment highlighting the progress Ontario has made in conservation over the past 36 months.

The McGuinty government has made energy conservation a cornerstone of its policy. For an entire generation, conservation was considered an afterthought, thanks to the neglect and misguided policies of previous governments. It's clear that the Tories had virtually no conservation policy when they were in office, but it was the third party that actually cancelled, in the early 1990s, every single electricity conservation program Ontario ever had. That set Ontario way back when it comes to energy conservation and energy efficiency. Just think of the progress we would have made if Ontario Hydro or its successor companies had continued with the target of achieving 5,200 megawatts by 2000. All of that was lost when those programs were cancelled. Between 1996 and 2004, total electricity use in Ontario increased by more than 10%. That's enough energy to power 1.5 million homes. In fact, thanks to these misguided policies, Ontarians consume more electricity per capita than any other place in the world with the exception of Quebec. We lost a lot of ground over the '90s.

Since day one, our government has been committed to rebuilding Ontario's conservation culture. Our goals are bold and our vision is clear: to make Ontario a leader in energy conservation and efficiency not only in Canada but in North America. To achieve this vision, we are working with a number of organizations, including non-profit organizations, Ontario's electric gas utilities, as well as innovative businesses that are all helping to create a culture of conservation in every corner of our province.

We know that leadership means we need to put our money where our mouth is by ensuring that we get our house in order when it comes to the government's energy consumption. We set a target of reducing our electricity consumption by 10% by the end of 2007. I'm pleased to report that as of today, we are more than 88% of the way to reaching our goal. We've gone further: Earlier this year, the House passed the energy conservation leadership act, the first law of its kind in Canada, which enables us to make the broader public sector accountable for energy conservation. We made amendments to increase energy efficiency in the Ontario building code and have used Ontario's Energy Efficiency Act to make Ontario one of the leaders when it comes to energy-efficient consumer products. In fact, Ontario now stands shoulder to shoulder with California, the leading jurisdiction in energy efficiency standards in North America, as 90% of our standards now meet or exceed California levels. In addition to measures such as these, we are working hard to make it easier for all Ontarians to conserve energy and save money. We have long recognized the important role local utilities can play through their relationship with customers. In 2004, we enabled a three-year program that

made \$163 million available to LDCs to develop local conservation and energy efficiency programs. This past summer, we announced another \$400 million in conservation funding through the Conservation Bureau to assist local utilities in their efforts to encourage energy conservation. As a result of this leadership, Ontario's local utilities are planning and/or delivering over 500 conservation programs to their customers. They are on the front lines when it comes to building a culture of conservation.

This includes leaders such as Michael Angemeer and David Collie of the Electricity Distributors Association, who are with us in the gallery today. Mike and Dave, thank you for all your hard work. Thank you for your commitment. Thank you for helping to build a conservation culture in Ontario.

The conservation efforts of EDA members have yielded a saving of over 16 million kilowatt hours so far. From Thunder Bay to Fort Frances, from Sault Ste. Marie to Ottawa, from Windsor to Kingston, LDCs are delivering conservation programs that are making a difference.

In addition to these LDC leaders, the non-profit sector has also been on the front lines when it comes to building a culture of conservation in Ontario. This includes leaders such as Chris Winter, the chair of the Conservation Council of Ontario, who has been an outstanding proponent for conservation in the province through programs such as Lighten Up, Ontario! and Doors Closed. Chris, please stand up and be recognized. Thank you for all that you have done.

I would also like to recognize Stuart Hickox of Project Porchlight, who is delivering change across Ottawa and soon in other communities across our province. Stuart, thank you for your hard work and the hard work of Project Porchlight. You are an inspiration to everybody in this province.

While local distribution companies and NGOs are delivering diverse programs across the province, we've also launched a number of province-wide initiatives to ensure Ontarians have the opportunity to participate, no matter where they live. The Conservation Bureau, an organization created by this government, has undertaken initiatives across the province to help individuals and businesses realize the tangible benefits of conservation. The bureau's Every Kilowatt Counts program is working with over 3,000 retailers across the province, providing rebates and incentives to Ontarians for energy-efficient products.

This fall, the Premier and I announced that we are taking three programs province-wide following successful pilots. By next summer, Ontarians will be able to take advantage of three new innovative powerWISE programs, including: a beer fridge bounty that will encourage Ontarians to get rid of energy-inefficient appliances; a 10-10 summer rewards program that will reward consumers who reduce their energy bills by 10% with an additional 10% discount; and an initiative to reduce peak energy demand which allows utilities to work with consumers to reduce electricity use by air conditioners and other major appliances at peak times.

We are building public awareness through our power-WISE public education campaign and are working to build a conservation culture in other ways. We are on track to having 800,000 smart meters installed in Ontario homes by the end of 2007 and for every consumer by 2010.

Creating a conservation culture is about more than just turning off the lights; it's about opportunity and innovation. It's about investing in change and investing in our future. That's why our government is investing up to \$2 billion for conservation initiatives.

Our efforts are starting to pay off. Just last month, the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance upgraded its rating of Ontario's conservation efforts to a B+, the largest one-year increase the alliance has ever given to a province and the highest grade in this province's history.

Interjection: Well done.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Yeah. You know, B+ is a good mark, but we will not rest until Ontario gets an A. We have set an ambitious target for conservation over the longer term. We want to achieve 6,300 megawatts of conservation by 2025, and we are taking real steps to achieve our goal.

From an almost exponential growth in the use of compact fluorescent bulbs to conservation programs delivered by NGOs and local utilities in every corner of Ontario, this government—the McGuinty government—is committed to creating a culture of conservation that is the envy of our peers in Canada and North America.

I would like to thank all of the organizations that are participating in Ontario's conservation showcase, and I encourage all members of the House to see what Ontarians are doing across the province. Working together, we can ensure a bright energy future for our province and indeed a greener and healthier future across our province.

1410

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

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Energy on his announcement today, or should I say re-announcement. What we get from the McGuinty government is a lot of talk and a lot less action, but a lot of re-announcements, over and over again, about programs they're proposing to do.

There's no question about it: Conservation is absolutely paramount if we're going to solve the energy situation in the province of Ontario, much of which is a result of their bungling and flip-flopping on key issues in the energy sector. We've heard all about that with regard to the on-again, off-again coal shutdown policy from the McGuinty government.

The minister talked about being 88% of the way to reaching the conservation goal within the government of Ontario. When you set the bar at that level, it should be doable. I might point out to the minister that, in our house alone, we've reduced our energy consumption by over 30% in that same period. So I think there's a long way to go, Minister. I wouldn't be bragging about 88% of 10%.

I think the minister should be talking a little about what's really happening in the energy sector. What's hap-

pening with their wind projects? They're telling people, "Shut her down, boys. We won't be taking that project." We don't have the transmission for it. We haven't thought far enough ahead to ensure that the transmission infrastructure would be in place so that we can bring the power that is produced at a wind farm to where it's actually needed. So maybe they should be talking to the people of the province about what they're failing to do, instead of always telling them what they plan to do or what they think they may have done. Most of it is just talk.

What about the ability to bring power to places where it's needed from upgrades that are happening at places like Bruce and new power generation that's supposed to be coming online from either gas plants or otherwise? What about getting that power to where it's needed?

I've got to tell you what Tom Adams had to say. He doesn't have a whole lot of faith in this government. He says, "Yet again, the Ontario government finds itself with the consequences of an ill-considered policy. What [makes energy minister Dwight Duncan] think he knows anything more about conservation, about wind power, about gas than he knows about coal?" That's what Tom Adams had to say. There's no faith out there in what these people are doing. Every day there's a new story.

At estimates committee, the minister said, when asked about the names of the people who gave them that advice on coal, "I'll get you that." Further on, he started to say that one of those people was Jack Gibbons. Jack Gibbons has vehemently denied that he ever gave that kind of advice to this government.

You're going to have to decide what your story on energy is going to be and quit trying to hornswoggle the people of the province of Ontario.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): I am pleased to respond to yet another attempt by the McGuinty government to convince people that they actually have a conservation strategy rather than a conservation public relations strategy, to convince people that there's actually a culture of conservation rather a culture of conversation.

All you have to do is look at some of the government's own sources to see that much of what the minister said today is false. The minister wants people to believe that electricity consumption is going down. The Independent Electricity System Operator says, "Ontario set a new record of 27,005 megawatts for peak demand on August 1, 2006." So much for the McGuinty government's claim that electricity consumption is going down.

If you actually read all of the IESO report which came out just a short while ago, in October 2006, what they're predicting is that if Ontario gets another hot weather summer in 2007, we'll set another peak consumption of 27,513 megawatts. If you compare what they're looking at for winter consumption, they predict that the winter of 2006-07 will set a normal weather winter peak of 24,881, but in the winter of 2007-08 they predict a winter peak of 25,114.

So I'm left to ask, when the IESO says, "Look at the numbers. Consumption is going up," how does the

McGuinty government expect people across Ontario to swallow their argument that consumption is going down?

In fact, the IESO report is even more enlightening, because it says that to the extent that there was some reduction in consumption this year, it wasn't as a result of energy efficiency or conservation. They say that reduced energy-intensive industrial load has led to lower energy demand. What does that mean? It means literally dozens of pulp and paper mills shut down. It means 45,000 hard-working people are out of work. It's the first time, I think, in the history of Ontario that a government—the McGuinty government—says that putting 45,000 people out of work is a good thing and should be celebrated. I can't imagine any government ever trying to say that, but that is what the McGuinty government is pushing here today.

When I look at some of the other things that the minister had to say today, he talks about how there are incentives for conservation. There's a lot of advertising on buses, there's a lot of billboard advertising, there's a lot of television advertising, all of which is meant to convince people that some conservation is really happening. But do you know what? It's very hard to actually find financial incentives, especially for low- and modest- and fixed-income Ontarians, that would help them move toward energy efficiency and help them consume less.

Is there a low-interest loan so that someone existing on a low or modest income could buy an energy-efficient fridge in Ontario? No. Is there a low-interest loan or some financial incentive so that they could buy other energy-efficient appliances in Ontario under the McGuinty government? No. If somebody wants to retrofit their home and put in, say, high-efficiency natural gas heat and move off electric heat, or if they want to put in new windows and doors, is there a program available under this government that would provide that? No. Yet, incredibly, if I look to the province of Quebec, to the east, and the province of Manitoba, to the west, these things exist. Manitoba provides a financial incentive so people can purchase energy-efficient refrigerators and appliances, but not in Ontario—

The Speaker: Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): My question is for the Premier. In 2003, you promised to provide colorectal cancer screening to adults over the age of 50. You said that this would save hundreds of lives—and it would—and millions of dollars by keeping Ontarians healthy.

It is estimated today that about 3,000 Ontarians will die of colorectal cancer in this year, 2006, alone.

Premier, three years ago you made the promise. For three years, Ontarians have been waiting for you to keep your promise. On behalf of these Ontarians who are wait-

ing, I ask you today, when will you keep this promise and announce a program?

1420

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I appreciate the question, and I appreciate the genuine interest reflected in the question, and on the part of so many Ontarians who have raised this question with our government.

We have done much in the field of health care, whether you're talking about wait times, more doctors, more nurses or moving towards a local health integration network strategy to bring better focus to efforts on the ground, and we have yet to move forward in this area. I can assure the member opposite that we certainly intend to do so before the election.

Mrs. Witmer: The Premier made this promise three years ago. Because of the inaction, the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada issued a press release on November 21 of this year. They called on the McGuinty Liberals "to urgently and without further delay"—which means not before the next election, because how could they even be confident you would keep your word; you haven't kept your word so far—keep your promise to introduce a colorectal screening program and to increase access to PET scans.

In June of this year, your Minister of Health told us at estimates, twice, that he is going to move forward with the program this year. He said it two times. Premier, there are 32 days left in this year. What day this year will your government be making the announcement?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The member may not know that the minister has said that he has received a first proposal that didn't include family doctors enough. He has indicated that he wants to get it right. Of course, the previous government did not move on this front. We think it's important that we move on this front. By the way, when we do move on this front we will be the first government in Canada to do so.

Mrs. Witmer: Premier, I would remind you that you made the promise. People are waiting. It is more than three years. In fact, people will think that they are hearing the sound of yet another promise being broken. Your minister said he was going to make the announcement this year.

I want to ask you about PET scans because, again, we couldn't get an answer from the minister yesterday. As you know, Ontarians today cannot get access to PET scans, despite the fact that the rest of Canada does. The Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada says, "The refusal of Ontario to increase access to PET scans means patients are denied an essential tool in the treatment of the disease." Yesterday, I raised the issue of Janet Franks of Barrie. Her oncologist requested a PET scan. She was turned down for the clinical trials.

My question for you, Premier, is this: When will the trials end? They have been going on for almost five years. When will all Ontarians get access to PET scans like—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question has been asked.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Maybe the best thing I can do is quote Dr. Bill Evans, who is chair of the Ontario PET steering committee. He's an oncologist and president of Hamilton's Juravinski Cancer Centre. He said just recently in the *Globe and Mail*:

“There's been criticism in Ontario in its seeming tardiness to adopt. But it's a decision taken by cancer specialists of the province, various surgeons and medical and radiation oncologists.... In cancer, we have to figure out how best to use it.' When the clinical trials are completed, 'there will be a lot of people who will thank us.'”

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): For the past several months, it seems every time we turn around in Ottawa there's more bad news about health care. First, it was Ottawa's seniors, who we've learned have the second-highest wait-list in the province when it comes to trying to find a long-term-care bed.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): We need to know to whom the question is addressed.

And I need quiet.

Ms. MacLeod: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. It's to the Premier.

Then it was Ottawa's children, who have to wait longer than any other children in the province for pediatric surgeries. Yesterday, we learned that Ottawa has the absolute worst wait times for radiation treatments in all of Ontario.

The Premier promised to reduce wait times and he is breaking that promise to the very people who elected him. Will the Premier please stand up and tell us why his government is neglecting Ottawa when it comes to improving health care?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I know that the member opposite is relatively newly elected, but she cannot be so unfamiliar with what has happened in Ottawa with respect to new investments in health care.

I'll just list some of these things. We have a newly expanded cancer centre, with sites at the Ottawa Hospital and the Queensway Carleton Hospital, reducing our wait times to about three weeks. There is a new Royal Ottawa Hospital. There is an expanded Montfort Hospital in the works. It's going to nearly double its current size. There is an expanded Queensway Carleton Hospital, with a new emergency wing expansion at the civic site of the Ottawa Hospital. There's a new critical care wing at the Ottawa Hospital general site. There are expansions at CHEO, including a new ICU wing with oncology and ambulatory care.

It's pretty hard to walk by any hospital or health institution in the city of Ottawa and not find some kind of construction activity taking place there. The member opposite is sadly mistaken in terms of her assessment.

Ms. MacLeod: The Premier can talk about all the fancy phony photo ops he wants to, but the fact is that

under his government, the people of Ottawa are not getting the health care they need when they need it.

This government promised to reduce wait times, but all across Ottawa that promise has been broken. According to latest round of data, the Montfort has seen cancer surgery wait times up by a whopping 323%. Hip replacement wait times are up 87%. At the U of O Heart Institute, bypass surgery wait times are up 12%. Overall in Ottawa, knee replacement and CT scan wait times are up. No matter where you look in Ottawa, wait times are up.

This government is short-changing the people of Ottawa when it comes to timely access to health care. Why aren't the Premier and his government taking the steps to address these growing wait times seriously and take real steps to address them in our city?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I think a brief history lesson would be in order. The former Conservative government tried to shut down the Montfort Hospital; the former Conservative government tried to shut down the cardiac centre at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. The former Conservative government did succeed in shutting down the Riverside hospital; the former Conservative government did succeed in shutting down the Grace Hospital.

We are undergoing a virtual renaissance in Ottawa when it comes to investment in our health care institutions. We've got more nurses, more doctors, more ability and more capacity to deal with more patients and continue to get our wait times down.

Ms. MacLeod: Again, the Premier can try to hide from his record by bringing up the previous government all he likes. He can talk about his announcements and province-wide statistics, he can even talk about the few areas where we have seen marginal improvements, but the fact of the matter is that Ottawa is suffering under his leadership.

A report in the *Ottawa Citizen* last month said, “The region has ... wait times that are higher than the provincial [numbers],” and the government's wait times website confirms this. Cancer surgeries, bypass surgeries, cataracts, hip replacements, knee replacements, MRIs and CTs: In all five priority areas, with very, very few exceptions, the wait times at Ottawa hospitals are higher than the provincial numbers.

Either Ottawa is being terribly neglected or chronically underfunded—or both. When is this Premier going to turn this around? When is he going to address the health care crisis in his own hometown? Does he even have a plan?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: We've been working very hard to clean up the mess left by the previous government and to restore to some significant capacity our ability to help our families in Ottawa when it comes to their health issues.

When it comes to wait time results, first of all we're very proud of the fact that we're collecting this information for the first time, and secondly, we're making it publicly available. Armed with that information, we can then focus our resources and our initiatives.

Overall in Ontario, angiography is down by 39%; angioplasty waits are down by 17.9%; cataract surgery is down by 27%; hip replacement wait times are down by 19.9%; knee replacement wait times are down by 19.8%; MRIs are down by 13.3%; and CT scans are down by 2.5%.

We have been very successful in driving these wait times down and we will continue to do more in the days, weeks, months and years ahead.

1430

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the Premier: Premier, 136,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs have been destroyed in Ontario under the McGuinty government. In October alone, 18,000 manufacturing jobs were destroyed. In September alone, Ontario's manufacturing shipments fell an astonishing 5%.

The evidence grows every day and Ontario needs a new economic policy toolbox to sustain and create good-paying manufacturing jobs. Premier, as Ontario loses thousands of good-paying manufacturing jobs virtually every week, what is the McGuinty government's plan to sustain our manufacturing jobs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): The leader of the NDP cannot have noticed, obviously, what we've been doing, together with the private sector, to ensure that we experience more growth and more prosperity, whether it's our advanced manufacturing plan, our auto sector strategy, our forestry sector strategy or the work we've been doing with the agriculture sector.

Let me just take the opportunity today to welcome a delegation in the gallery here from Shell. This is a group of people from a company which has now committed to a \$50-million viability study for a new refinery near Sarnia. This company has already secured 5,000 acres of land slated for industrial development. This will be the first new refinery in Canada in over 20 years. This is not just any feasibility study; this is a \$50-million feasibility study, involving 40 full-time people on the job to ensure that we make of this success. I think that speaks volumes to the sense of confidence in our economy.

Mr. Hampton: Well, I hope that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Stop the clock. Order.

The leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, I hope that this promise on your part actually turns out, unlike all the other promises you've made on jobs. Because what's happened in the forest sector is 45,000 jobs destroyed. What's happened in Sarnia is thousands of jobs destroyed in the chemical industry. And what's happened in the auto parts picture is not any better. For example, in the Niagara region, virtually every day the local papers carry stories of more jobs lost in the auto sector. As we speak, Dana Canada in Thorold has begun to lay off 537 long-time workers.

Premier, maybe you can tell us, since you don't seem to have a strategy for your government to sustain manufacturing jobs, why did you vote against my proposal to create a jobs commissioner, something that has a lot of support among labour leaders, among business leaders and among a lot of community leaders? Why wouldn't you at least support that initiative?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: We're going to focus our energy on working with the private sector, management and labour alike, in order to help grow this economy. That's what we've been doing in the past, and that's what we will continue to do in the future.

One more piece of good news—and I know this comes as anathema to the leader of the NDP, but it's something the rest of us like to hear from time to time: The auto sector in Ontario has received the recent distinction of being, for the third year in a row, and for the first time since the invention of the car, number one in North America when it comes to auto production. Again, that speaks to the sense of confidence that the private sector has in the Ontario economy.

Mr. Hampton: The Premier wants to celebrate the collapse of the auto manufacturing sector in Michigan and say that this is wonderful news.

Today, Ford announced a further 215 workers laid off at the Oakville assembly plant. Manufacturing jobs are being lost virtually everywhere across this province. And despite widespread support for the idea of a jobs commissioner to bring some focus, to bring some resources to sustaining manufacturing jobs, your government has voted against it.

Premier, if you don't think a jobs commissioner would help put some focus on this jobs crisis, what is your plan, other than talking about the misery of Michigan?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I want to remind the leader of the NDP that he and his party voted against every single initiative within our budgets that would lend additional support, additional strength, additional effort to Ontario's manufacturing sector, whether it's the half-billion-dollar investment in our auto sector strategy—they're against that; whether it's our \$500-million advanced manufacturing investment strategy—they're against that; whether it's our agri-food sector supports of \$910 million—they're against that; whether it's our forest sector policy of over \$1 billion—they're against that; whether it's our TV and film sector proposal and initiative of increased tax credits of \$10 million—they're against that as well. Every time we put forward a positive proposal that is well received by the people of Ontario, the manufacturing sector, the private sector, the economy in general, they stand opposed to that. We've got a different approach.

Mr. Hampton: Yes, Premier, I am opposed to a McGuinty government strategy that destroys 45,000 forest sector jobs in less than two years.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the Premier: Hard-working Ontario families know the

economic and social benefits that come when their children receive a good education. But today, under the McGuinty government, one out of three high school students drops out of high school without graduating. The solution is to increase supports for students, not lower standards for graduation.

My question is this: Why is the McGuinty government intent on granting high school credits without the requisite curriculum elements and skills components? Why does the McGuinty government favour McCredits?

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): It is absolutely the intention of this government, with every policy that we put in place, with every dollar that we invest in public education in this province, to improve the achievement of students. In fact, last year 6,000 more students graduated from high school than the year before. So Bill 52, which is the legislation that is sort of the tip of the iceberg in our learning-to-18 strategy, what it indicates is that we are providing new programming for students, new opportunities for students who might not otherwise stay in high school. That's what this is about, getting the students who are at risk to become re-engaged in the education process, whether that's in a mainstream classroom or in an alternative setting, so that they will stay in school, graduate and be able to be fully participating citizens.

Mr. Hampton: It's incredible. I simply asked the McGuinty government to rule out the granting of McCredits, and you can't even do that. Teachers, school boards and educators agree that reducing the quality of education, reducing the standards, is the wrong way to go.

Here's what a school board in Hamilton has written: "[Bill 52 could] significantly devalue [a high school graduation] certificate." The school board in Hamilton calls it "outsourcing education."

You've already admitted now that McCredits won't be taught by teachers and will take money out of the classroom. My question is this: Why are you pushing ahead with a bill that may help your graduation statistics but won't do anything for graduating students because the standards indeed are going to be lower?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: It's very interesting that a member of a party that, when it was in office, did absolutely nothing to address the dropout rate—in fact, when the member opposite was in office of as part of the government, they didn't even know what the dropout rate was. They weren't tracking the dropout rate.

What we've done is specify that every high school credit that is attributed in this province is going to be issued by the principal of a high school. That is enshrined in the legislation.

I want to read a quote: "The SWAC program allows students to explore the 'trades' while being treated as adults." This is a student from Brantford speaking. "I love the college setting and find it less distracting than high school. I like working at my own pace to make up

credits and find that I try harder than ever to complete work. Students are able to recover credits in order to graduate and now they feel like they have a future."

That is what this is about: more students in high school, more teachers in our high schools, more students graduating and more students being able to go—

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

1440

Mr. Hampton: I think everyone recognizes that our high school students need more support in the classroom, but here's the McGuinty government record: You cut grants for inner-city schools and students at risk by \$120 million; more than half of Toronto schools with students learning English don't have an ESL teacher; there are 60,000 students on the waiting list for special education under the McGuinty government.

You could—you should—tackle these problems and do it in the classroom. Instead, what's the McGuinty government going to do? You're going to take money out of the classroom, you're going to take resources out of the classroom, and you're going to use people who are not professional teachers. This amounts to transferring resources out of the schools and transferring activity away from professional teachers into McCredits, doesn't it, Minister?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: Just to the first two points the member opposite talked about: In terms of funding for inner-city schools or students who are struggling, the learning opportunities grant has gone up \$160 million since we've been in office. The funding for assessments: Last year alone we put \$20 million in the hands of the Ontario Psychological Association to deal with the backlog in assessments.

In terms of the dollars being invested, that \$2.75 billion is real money that's gone into the system that has alleviated the stresses. The bottom line on this issue is, we will not give up on the students who are not completing high school in this province. We will not relegate those kids to a future without access to opportunity because the member opposite thinks that we shouldn't be looking for alternatives that are being developed in the system by teachers. That's where our pilots began, and that's what we're going to build on.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): To the Premier: Yesterday, your trained acolytes voted against the John Tory motion that would require the government to keep track of the number of people committing crimes while out on bail. The government currently keeps track of the number of cows and pigs on the province's farms, the number of eggs laid by poultry, the number of fishing and hunting infractions and on and on. We know the Toronto police believe that at least 40% of the gun crimes committed in this city in the past year have been committed by people out on bail, yet somehow you and your Liberal colleagues don't think it's appro-

priate for the people of the province to know how many people are committing crimes while out on bail. Can you explain why that position is being taken by you and your members?

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

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General): There's a little bit of confusion with respect to what the position of the official opposition is. We heard the Premier say to Mr. Tory that in fact it would be inappropriate, and everybody, I would have thought, would agree that it would be totally inappropriate, for the Legislature to interfere with the judiciary. Mr. Tory said, "Not at all. I'd just like to see the aggregate numbers." But then later on, after Mr. Tory left the chamber, Mr. Runciman said this: "I would ... go a little further than our leader with respect to the reporting that is required.... I think there is a significant need to know what's going on.... That's my view, not necessarily the party's view."

The government's view is in fact that what we are going to do is work with the federal government, work with police officers and work with crown attorneys to do everything we can to fight to lower gun crime in every single way possible, and we will continue to, in any way, shape or form, work with members in this House and in the federal Parliament to continue to do that, and that makes our streets safer.

Mr. Runciman: I think the Liberals and the Attorney General are more interested in protecting judges from potential embarrassment than shining a light on the real problems in this justice system. That's the reality. We know we have real problems. We're talking about bail statistics here. We've had some horrific crimes committed by people out on bail, yet you do not want to release that information to the public. We have to know what the problems are in the system. This is not in any way, shape or form interfering with judicial independence, but you always want to hide behind that skirt. That is not a valid argument. This is important information for the public to know, for you to know, for members of this assembly to know: How well is the system performing or not performing? Why will you not release that kind of information?

Hon. Mr. Bryant: Again, I think the goal here is to increase public safety, is it not? The goal here is to lower the incidence of gun violence, is it not? The goal here is to have the toughest bail laws that we can have. Thanks to the leadership of the Premier, we have finally a bill before the federal Parliament and we're able to move forward with reverse onus on bail when it comes to gun crime. It is not to engage in the kind of demonization that the member is referring to of the independent judiciary that is going to make our streets safer; it's rather that we are going to move forward with concrete changes—not the kind of tactics that the member's referring to, but concrete changes and concrete investments, working with chiefs of police, ensuring that prosecutors have the tools they need to make our streets safer. And we will continue to do just that.

WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): My question is for the Premier. A report released today reveals that millions of litres of raw sewage are dumped into the Great Lakes every year. This means closed public beaches; it means degraded water quality for Ontarians.

Your government is very fond of talking about how much it's investing to protect water sources, yet raw sewage continues to flow into our rivers and lakes. I have a very simple question, Mr. Premier: How much money will ReNew Ontario spend on renewing that water and sewage infrastructure by the end of October 2007?

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

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): I'm very pleased to have a chance to thank Sierra for the report that they issued today with respect to water quality in the Great Lakes—and the work that we continue to do in this province to rebuild infrastructure that has languished for so many years. But let me tell you what else we're doing. We've passed the Clean Water Act, which for the first time has given tools to the municipalities along the Great Lakes to examine their sources of drinking water and undertake scientific analysis together. We have provided them with funding in order to be able to do that. You, sir, and your party and the party opposite voted against that.

We've also been rolling up our sleeves to work hard with the federal government—the Minister of Natural Resources, last year, a historic agreement to see no diversions of water from the Great Lakes. There are many, many bodies, whether they're municipal, whether they're federal, whether they're provincial or stateside, on both sides of the border, that need to do a great deal of work with respect to the Great Lakes. Let me tell you, we have our sleeves rolled up and we are doing that work.

Mr. Tabuns: Premier, in the cabinet meetings—I know, Mr. Premier, but I'm going to come back to you because I asked a question about how much is going to be spent, and the minister clearly has no idea. There's none listed on the website, so she has no idea.

I have a question from a different angle for you, Mr. Premier. The Great Lakes Sewage Report Card says that Ontarians are unable to determine the magnitude of sewage flowing into their lakes and rivers because in fact the data isn't available to them.

That information is made available to you, Premier. That information is made available to the government, but you don't make it available to the public. So I'm going to ask you: Will you commit to doing something that doesn't require legislation? It's very simple. Will you let the public know the volume of combined sewer overflow, sewer system overflow, sewage bypass and sewage spills? Will you make that information available to the public?

Hon. Ms. Broten: I know that the Minister of Public Infrastructural Renewal is anxious to answer this question.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I'm very eager because I had the chance at estimates committee to take the member through the figures in ReNew Ontario and about all of the investments, and I'm very happy to share that again here.

In the Ontario small town and rural program: over a period of time, over \$3 million invested in 213 municipalities. Millennium Partnerships: \$28 million—

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): Boring.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: The member opposite says, "Boring," but the people of London, Waterloo region, Niagara, Hamilton, Windsor and Sudbury don't think their water quality is boring, my friend. Canada strategic infrastructure fund: \$35 million in Hamilton; \$25 million in Kingston. COMRIF, intakes 1 and 2: \$81.4 million and \$77.5 million, respectively. The Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority: over \$1.3 billion in low-cost financing for municipalities right across the province.

There is much more work to do, but this government takes a back seat to no one when it comes to investing in our precious water and waste water resources, and I'm not taking any lectures from this member.

1450

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, today is Principals' Day here at Queen's Park. I had the opportunity to meet with members of the Ontario Principals' Council. I want to thank Henry Mick and Lisa Vincent for taking time out of their busy schedules to meet with me today.

The McGuinty government recognizes the key leadership role of principals and vice-principals in our schools. They're our curriculum leaders, facilitators and team builders.

Our government has always recognized that principals and vice-principals are vital to the success of our students. They've helped to ensure that we reduce primary class sizes in the early years, implement initiatives that are helping students graduate, work with the community to ensure that our students are learning in safe environments, and reach every student to unlock their full potential.

We value the leadership and guidance that principals and vice-principals demonstrate to teachers, staff and students, and we also appreciate the work they do with the boards and the ministry.

Minister, can you tell us what the McGuinty government has done over three years to foster a strong relationship with principals and vice-principals in this great province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): Thank you to the member for Peterborough for his question.

I want to thank all the vice-principals and principals who are here today. I met with Blair Hiltz and Mike Benson of the OPC, who are in the gallery with us. I want the members to know that I am in regular contact with all the principals' groups. I think I've met with the OPC three times.

Almost a year ago, Minister Kennedy released a discussion paper, *Leading Education: New Supports for Principals and Vice-Principals in Ontario Publicly Funded Schools*, and that lays out some specific proposals.

What we've done already is we have started to address the workload issues. We have set up a new teacher performance appraisal process for new teachers and also are working on a performance appraisal process for experienced teachers. There's a pilot going looking at alternative management models.

The bottom line is that we are very aware of some of the workload issues that the principals have brought to us, and we're putting in place some structures to deal with those.

Mr. Leal: We certainly have been working tirelessly to correct what we inherited from the previous government, including our relationship with principals and vice-principals in the education sector.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the member for Peterborough. I will remind the members that when one member is speaking, the other members are quiet.

The member for Peterborough.

Mr. Leal: One accomplishment that we're particularly proud of and one that's shared by the Ontario Principals' Council is ensuring that we have peace and stability in the classroom. We'll not forget that between 1996 and 2003, our students lost more than 26.5 million days due to strikes. Teachers, principals and vice-principals were distracted then and did their best to educate our students under very demoralizing circumstances.

When I met with members of the Ontario Principals' Council today, they expressed how pleased they are with the initiatives that are happening to boost student achievement.

Minister, can you outline some of the concerns outlined by the principals today and share with this House how the McGuinty government is addressing their concerns?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: The advice that I'm going to receive from the minister's principal reference group is going to be very important to me as we move forward on this.

One of the issues that has been raised is the issue of supervision. That's the time that a teacher is assigned to supervise students outside the instructional day. I know that we're going to be having an ongoing conversation with the principals. The Provincial Stability Commission was set up to actually facilitate a discussion about specific instances where there was a conflict, where there were issues between teachers and a board.

I think what's really important is that we recognize that during the previous regime—and the member from

Peterborough has mentioned this—the relationships were frayed by the previous government. The relationships between teachers, principals and boards were undermined, and what we're doing by having the reference group, by having the Provincial Stability Commission, by our attempts with the ministry to have ongoing conversations with the principals and move forward in concrete ways, is we're re-establishing those relationships.

WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Today, a sewage report card was released by Sierra Legal. The report states that the city of Toronto spews over 9.9 billion litres of raw sewage into Lake Ontario; Hamilton spews over four billion litres; and Windsor spews nearly two billion litres. London, Sarnia, Sudbury and Kingston are also in the report.

Minister, those are disgraceful numbers. But what is even more appalling is that these are the same cities that are in desperate need of water and waste-water infrastructure repair and have been asking for you to respond to your own Watertight report, which is over 15 months old.

You continue to break your promises, you've refused to answer questions on this important matter and you force the ongoing pollution of our Great Lakes. When will you get to work and respond to the report and begin consultations on regulations with respect to the Water and Sewer Systems Act?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): It's always rich to hear from my friends opposite, who not only left this province in financial ruin but in an infrastructure deficit and ruin. I always look forward to working with groups like Sierra Legal, which has put this information out. I would say to my friend opposite that on many fronts we are working to ensure the protection of the Great Lakes, because that is a source of drinking water, of economic renewal, of importance to all of us right across the province and certainly to me at home. My own riding, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, is right on Lake Ontario. I look at that lake every single day.

We are doing, on a number of fronts, initiatives to ensure that the Great Lakes are clean and continue to be a source of drinking water. Many of the communities that are mentioned that have not received stellar grades in the Sierra Legal report have been indicated to be upgrading their sewage treatment facilities. I know that the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal will look forward to talking about some of those sewage treatment facilities that have been upgraded, because we have put real and significant dollars—

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

Ms. Scott: Do you know what's really rich? It's the minister's lack of commitment for the environment. She says she shares the concerns of municipalities.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Order. Government House leader. The Minister of Energy. Order. I can wait. The member for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock.

Ms. Scott: It is the minister's lack of commitment for the environment. She says in this quote that she "shares the concerns of municipalities," but the minister and her government have proven time and time again that they are nothing more than paper environmentalists.

Minister, you know it. You will say anything to get elected. You continue to attack Ontarians in rural municipalities by implementing the avoidance of responsibility legislation like the spills bill, like the Clean Water Act, yet you refuse to address the desperate issue of aging infrastructure spewing billions of litres of waste into the Great Lakes—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs will come to order. I'm going to have to remind the government that I need to be able to hear the question. That can't happen if other people are talking or, even worse, loudly interjecting. So I need you to be quiet. The next government member who makes a comment, I will name. The member for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock.

1500

Ms. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the third time, I'll try.

Minister, the Environmental Commissioner's report recommends that you ensure transparency and accountability in the Canada-Ontario agreement, at which you are failing. Are you willing to do that? Will you call for an independent review of your ministry's involvement into the Canada-Ontario agreement?

Hon. Ms. Broten: I think my friends opposite need a research budget that's a little bit bigger so that they understand what the Canada-Ontario agreement is and can pay attention to the historic things this government has undertaken.

On December 13, 2005, our Premier signed the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement—a virtual ban on diversions, a basin-wide environmental standard, with better conservation measures and increased science standards with respect to decision-making. We have followed that up with the passing of the Clean Water Act, which provides us with the largest scientific exercise—\$120 million, with \$7 million for immediate work being done, much of it with respect to the Great Lakes. Your party and your leader voted against that historic piece of legislation.

The Canada-Ontario agreement expires in March 2007. We are actively engaged in the renewal and re-examination of that, but you could assist us in placing a call to the federal government. Get the federal government engaged. It is an international agreement, after all.

BY-ELECTIONS

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question is to the Premier. The citizens in Markham, Burling-

ton and York South–Weston are currently without representation in this Legislature.

In the past—not now, but in the past—you have spoken about the importance of respecting democracy and local members of provincial Parliament. But yesterday, after the media got wind of your secret caucus meeting held outside the confines of this building, your finance minister and campaign chair hinted to them that by-elections won't be called this winter. He further went on to say that you might not even deign to call them in the spring.

Residents of these three ridings have been without representation for over 70 days, over two months. When are you, Mr. Premier—it's your responsibility; don't fluff this off—going to call the by-election?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): My friend opposite made reference to the secret meeting where I scrummed outside with the media.

Let me just take the opportunity to say that I enjoyed campaigning recently with our nominated candidate in the riding of Markham, Michael Chan. I am very, very proud of the fact that he's chosen to run under a Liberal ticket. He is very eager, obviously, to embrace the confines of a provincial by-election. We look forward to giving this more thought and more energy, and we'll provide the necessary intentions in due course.

Mr. Prue: Again, to the Premier: When residents of York South–Weston phone their MPP's constituency office looking for help, what do they get? They get a message from Bell Canada saying that the line has been disconnected.

Not too long ago, an MPP stood in this Legislature and introduced a bill that would “end the century-old practice of allowing the Premier of the province to determine the timing of a by-election,” and ensure that, 70 days after the death or resignation of a member, a by-election would be held. That MPP was your own seat-mate, Greg Sorbara.

It's been more than 70 days since the residents of York South–Weston and Markham lost their MPPs. Will you support the spirit of Mr. Sorbara's legislation and set a date for these by-elections?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, I appreciate the member's interest in a date for these by-elections. I know that all three parties, of course, have a tremendous interest in the by-elections and their outcome. All I can say is that in the fullness of time, I'll be making the appropriate announcement.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): My question is to the Minister of Energy. The McGuinty government is committed to conservation. The initiatives, partnerships and leadership in the conservation showcase that we are celebrating today are a testament to that. This includes the good work done by Veridian Connections, the LDC in my riding, which has a number of programs to help

their customers conserve energy, like their Tune up and Save program for electric water heaters.

As your statement highlighted, the collective efforts of all Ontarians, from energy experts to our youngest energy consumers, are starting to move this province forward by changing for the better our energy awareness, energy consumption and ultimately our environment.

Minister, you can please share with us how these accomplishments advance your larger energy plan for Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): First of all, I would like to thank the member, Mr. Rinaldi, his constituents and Veridian Connections for their contribution to our conservation success.

Our government has a balanced, responsible plan for Ontario's energy future, and building a culture of conservation is central to that plan. Ontarians have told us that they want to conserve electricity and that they want to save money on their energy bills, and we're giving them the tools they need to conserve energy.

The fact is that we're now conserving about 2% of our total power supply; that's around 675 megawatts. I think that we on this side of the House know we can do better. That's why the Ontario Power Authority recommended we set a target of 3,150 megawatts of energy conservation by 2025, and we told them that that wasn't enough. We asked them to double it to 6,300 megawatts. It's an aggressive target, and one we can achieve. That, I think, is one of the reasons the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance has given us a B+ on all of our conservation efforts. We look forward to working with the member—

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

Mr. Rinaldi: Minister, it's clear that this government and Ontario's energy conservation leaders are making energy conservation part of our daily lives at home and at work.

It's unfortunate that the Tories and the NDP didn't understand the importance of conservation when they were in government and cut programs instead of bringing them online. It's even more unfortunate that they voted against our energy conservation legislation, the first of its kind in Canada.

Minister, you told the OPA that we could do more when it comes to energy conservation. What are your plans to continue fostering a culture of conservation in the next few years and beyond, and what kinds of benefits can the people of Ontario continue to expect?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Our government is leading by example. We set a target of 10% for our own electricity consumption. We are 88% of the way there and will achieve the 10% by this time next year.

We have legislated improvements to the Energy Efficiency Act and the Ontario building code that will bring Ontario in line with or exceed the standards set in California, which is regarded as one of the leading jurisdictions in the world.

We are also investing in a broader conservation culture. We have made up to \$2 billion available to local distribution companies as well as to the power authority to bring these programs province-wide. The province-wide programs include a beer fridge bounty, a peak reduction program and a summer savings 10-10 program. All these programs will boost the amount of electricity we conserve while helping Ontario families save money. That's what our plan is all about.

Building this culture takes time. It's a slow process; it's a challenging one. But we're seeing success already, and I believe that with the assistance of the people of this province we will become the leader in energy conservation and energy efficiency.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a question for the Premier. Newspapers across the province have harsh words for your handling of the Caledonia occupation. Let me refresh your memory.

The Simcoe Reformer calls the McGuinty approach to Caledonia “impotence at its worst,” and says that every man and woman in your caucus should be ashamed.

The Hamilton Spectator noted that there was “precious little evidence of progress.”

The Sudbury Star and North Bay Nugget warn that “there is a dangerous precedent being set.”

Premier, you have proven time and time again that you are prepared to concede every position you've taken. You said there would be no further negotiations until there was co-operation from First Nations in apprehending individuals wanted by the police for violent acts, including attempted murder and assault. There is still a warrant out for a gentleman wanted for attempted murder.

Why have you reversed yourself and continued negotiations?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Speaker, to the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I'd say to the member that he should feel proud, being a member of this Legislative Assembly, of how Ontario has handled this very volatile situation, that we have lowered the temperature of this dispute. There has been no loss of life. While there have been minor incidents over the duration of this occupation, there has been no serious injury to people.

1510

This government has responded not only to the concern of the Six Nations, which basically is a problem between them and the federal government, but we have reminded the federal government of that. We were the ones who did step in and got this onto a table of discussion, away from the heat of an occupation. It is very quiet now and we are working towards a solution at that table that we designed.

Mr. Miller: Premier, proud? Almost 300 days that this occupation has been going on, millions of tax dollars spent. The community is still disrupted.

You and your minister responsible for aboriginal affairs have contradicted yourselves so often I can hardly keep track. Before your recent attempts to rewrite the facts, your government said that the occupied land in Caledonia did not constitute a land claim, but was rather an accounting dispute. Your handling of the Caledonia affair is another prime example of your “say anything” approach to government.

Let me remind you of something else you said. In August, you said that it would be unacceptable for the occupation to continue through the winter. Well, Premier, winter is almost here. Do you stand by your comments made this summer, or are you planning on contradicting yourself again?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I would very proudly stand in my place and say that we are very proud of our approach, compared to a past approach that cost a life in Ontario, the first time an aboriginal person has lost their life in this province. That was not the way we were going to proceed with this; it's not the way we are proceeding with this. We have cooled this down, and we've brought this to a negotiating table. That's the way we're dealing with this and that's the way we're going to continue to deal with this.

FOOD BANKS

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion. Yesterday the Ontario Association of Food Banks reported that food bank usage is up by 18.6% since 2001. More working Ontarians than ever are accessing them because they cannot purchase food.

You talk about healthy eating. You say, “We are on the side of Ontario families who care about their health.” Minister, disabled people, children living on social assistance and our working poor care about their health too. You are certainly not on their side.

When will you put your money where your mouth is and fully index the clawback of the national child tax benefit and increase the minimum wage to \$10 an hour so these people can purchase their own food?

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): Let me just comment on our healthy eating, active living strategy and perhaps in the supplementary, it may be more appropriate that it go to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Today, as a matter of fact, over 650 people from across the province of Ontario are gathering for the first-ever Healthy Eating, Active Living Conference down at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. I have to pass along to the Premier and to other members of cabinet the best wishes and the congratulations of the Honourable Roy Romanow, who praised this government for its progressive stand when it comes to the healthy eating, active living strategy, which was a \$10-million strategy

announced just a few months ago. This included a very successful pilot project in the Timmins area for fresh fruits and vegetables, because we understand there are certain determinants of health with respect to transportation costs to get fresh fruit and vegetables to the north.

I'm very proud of our record in the Ministry of Health Promotion, and I'm very proud—

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

Mr. Prue: I too would like to quote Roy Romanow, because he's your healthy eating conference's keynote speaker today. He told you point-blank, "Government policies and programs must"—and I underline "must"—"play a role in fostering social and economic conditions that support good health."

If you truly accept your mandate to promote good health, then I say help our poorest kids and give them a chance for a healthy start. End the clawback, raise the minimum wage, and then talk about healthy eating.

Minister, how will you help all of our families who deserve and need to eat a healthy diet when you yourself won't give them the money to do it?

Hon. Mr. Watson: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for franco-phone affairs): First of all, let me thank the Ontario Association of Food Banks, which did its report yesterday. I want to also thank all those volunteers involved who are helping to feed those who are in need of that service.

Yes, we've done a lot since we took power and there is a lot more to do and we're going to continue to do it. This problem of child poverty is very, very close to my heart. I think that it is a tragedy and we should all work together to make sure that we correct that. I'm proud to say that all my colleagues around this House, in their own way, with their own ministries, help to solve that problem. We are not there, but we're getting there. This government is the government to help those most vulnerable, especially the children and their parents, and we will continue to do it.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I am referencing standing order 23 and I would ask you to review today's Hansard, comments made by the Minister of Natural Resources, where he indicated with respect to a question from the member related to Caledonia that the policy of the former government resulted in the death of an individual.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): He said that.

Mr. Runciman: He did say that. I would ask you to review Hansard and determine if—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you for that. I will stop the clock. But I would first want to remind members that under standing order 36, oral question period includes points of order and is limited to 60 minutes, so that raising points of order within question period does take some time away from other members to ask questions.

Having said that, the member would also know that it isn't within the purview of the Speaker to review Hansard and make a ruling that he didn't hear at that point. So with that, we will move to the next question.

AIR QUALITY

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. We have been waiting for a very long time for a report on black soot that has been falling on neighbourhoods in Hamilton East. We have been waiting for that report for quite a long time. We understand that report was released today, and this comes just as a second episode—a more recent episode—is being investigated by your ministry. You know how seriously I take this issue. You are well aware of this issue because I have made you well aware of this issue.

What we want to know is, does this report give us the answers and the solutions the people in that neighbourhood need?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): First of all, I want to thank the member for Stoney Creek for the question, but more importantly, for her advocacy on behalf of the community.

As a mom, I absolutely understand the desire of this community to get at something that was a long-rooted problem that has existed for many years with respect to concerns around air quality in that community.

The report that was issued today and released—I said it would be out by the end of November and that document is out today—is the culmination of a great deal of work. Let me just tell you what we have been doing since July to answer the questions being posed by the ministry and by the community. We've been working with the Hamilton Air Monitoring Network, we've been working with McMaster University, we've been working with local industries, we've sampled homes, we've gone in and inspected companies, we've looked at operational logs and activity reports, and we've studied weather patterns. The report released today confirms that the substance is a mixture of carbon black, graphite and iron oxide.

Does it go far enough? No, it does not. I look forward to telling you what more work continues to be done in the Hamilton community to get to these needed answers.

1520

Ms. Mossop: It's nice that we now have a name for this, but that's not actually quite enough.

Interjection.

Ms. Mossop: I'm sorry that the member from Hamilton East finds this so amusing, because the people in her neighbourhood don't find this very funny at all. They're tired. For years and years this stuff has been piling down out of the sky on top of you. We're trying to get to the bottom of it, and I'm trying to get this minister to do her job.

Tell me, what are we doing on the ground for the children, for their parents, for their grandparents, to give

them some reassurance? What are we doing physically down there to help them with this situation?

Interjection.

Ms. Mossop: I need to know those specifics, without the laughter from my friend, my colleague from Hamilton East, who is showing very little concern today for this issue.

Hon. Ms. Broten: The report issued today provides us a pathway to look for more answers. Right now, as we speak—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The member for Hamilton East will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The member for Hamilton East will come to order.

The Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Broten: I can tell you, we will get to the bottom of this.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): When are you going to get to the bottom?

Hon. Ms. Broten: We have eight ministry staff inspecting the—

Interjection.

The Speaker: It's final warning to the member for Hamilton East. Minister.

Hon. Ms. Broten: We have eight ministry staff on the ground in Hamilton continuing to inspect the site and examine fallout from last weekend. We have an air monitoring bus on the site to collect data on the—

Interjection.

The Speaker: I name the member for Hamilton East, Ms. Horwath.

Ms. Horwath was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Minister.

Hon. Ms. Broten: I am pleased to answer this question, because it's an important question to the people of Hamilton. No doubt this question has been raised in this House before, and I've had the chance to talk about what we have been doing with respect to the Ministry of the Environment.

Let me tell you where we are taking today's report. We have eight ministry staff on the site inspecting the fallout. We have an air monitoring bus on the site to collect the data from air emissions, and this is the first time ever that a bus has been deployed to inspect the black particulate. We have sampling trays that residents can use to collect the samples from their homes, and I would ask the community and encourage them to connect with the ministry and ask for a sample tray. We will be having two meetings, one to discuss this report with the community on December 7, and one to bring industry to the table and to put in place a strategy to reduce particulate matter. That will happen on—

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

VISITOR

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I ask my colleagues here to welcome today Brian Graham from my riding. He's a member of the Ontario real estate agents' association, who are visiting with us today. I grew up with Brian and am glad to welcome him here today.

PETITIONS

PROSTATE CANCER

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:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas prostate specific antigen (PSA) tests are frequently used to screen patients for prostate conditions, including cancer; and

"Whereas there is currently a double standard because men usually pay to have a PSA test as part of a routine medical examination, while women have all cancer screening tests covered by OHIP;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, urge the" McGuinty government "to review its policy on funding" equitably the "PSA testing for men with a view to including this as a service wholly covered by" the OHIP schedule.

I'm pleased to endorse this on behalf of my constituents and present it to Simon.

TUITION

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I've got hundreds and hundreds of names here that I want to read by way of a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Liberal government cancelled the tuition fee freeze after only two years and approved fee increases of up to 36% over the next four years; and

"Whereas tuition fees in Ontario have increased by more than four times the rate of inflation over the past 15 years; and

"Whereas a majority of Ontarians oppose tuition fee increases and support greater public funding for colleges and universities; and

"Whereas improvements to student financial assistance are undermined by fee increases; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's recent increase to student loan limits is set to push student debt to approximately \$28,000 for a four-year program; and

"Whereas per-student investment in Ontario still lags significantly behind the vast majority of jurisdictions in North America;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students' call to stop tuition fee hikes and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"—reduce tuition fees to 2004 levels for all students in Ontario and implement an immediate tuition fee freeze;

“—increase public funding for post-secondary education to promote access and quality;

“—expand access to financial aid in Ontario, especially for part-time students; and

“—double the number of upfront, need-based grants for Ontario students.”

I support this petition and I’m signing it.

GRAVESITES OF FORMER PREMIERS

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): I have a petition signed by a number of members of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, 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.”

I certainly support this petition and add my signature.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): On behalf of the people of Nepean–Carleton, to petition the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas Longfields and Davidson Heights in south Nepean are some of the fastest-growing communities in Ottawa and Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board has voted to authorize the final design phases for a grade 7 to 12 school to serve the Longfields and Davidson Heights communities; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has lifted a three-year moratorium on school closings in order to make way for new educational facilities;

“We, residents of Nepean–Carleton, petition the Parliament of Ontario to ensure that the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board continues with its plans to build a new grade 7 to 12 school no later than autumn of 2008 to serve the Longfields and Davidson Heights communities.”

I’m so proud of this petition and the efforts of the students and parents in my community that I affix my signature and support it wholeheartedly and provide it to Arianne.

CANCER DE LA PROSTATE

M^{me} Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): J’ai une pétition signée par les électeurs dans la circonscription de Nickel Belt.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que le test de dépistage pour le cancer de la prostate n’est pas offert gratuitement aux hommes de la province de l’Ontario;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que le ministère de la Santé de la province de l’Ontario offre gratuitement le test de dépistage du cancer de la prostate. »

Je suis en accord avec les électeurs et j’ai signé ma signature aussi.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): “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’m proud to sign this and give this to page Colby.

1530

NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT SUPPLEMENT

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition sent to me from the Canadian Federation of University Women, Muskoka branch, and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the national child benefit supplement was created to reduce the depth of poverty across Canada for low-income families earning less than \$35,000;

"Whereas the government of Ontario claws back the supplement from families receiving income from Ontario Works or the Ontario disability support plan;

"Whereas Premier McGuinty decried the discriminatory nature of the NCBS clawback and vowed to end this practice in his first mandate;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has failed to end the clawback for those families on OW or ODSP;

"We, the undersigned from CFUW Ontario Council, petition the Legislative Assembly to end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement."

I give this petition to Eshan.

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): I have a petition from the Canadian Federation of University Women, Ontario Council, from Orillia, from Oshawa and district, and from Scarborough, and it reads:

"Whereas the national child benefit supplement was created to reduce the depth of poverty across Canada for low-income families earning less than \$35,000;

"Whereas the government of Ontario claws back the supplement from families receiving income from Ontario Works or the Ontario disability support plan;

"Whereas Premier McGuinty decried the discriminatory nature of the NCBS clawback and vowed to end this practice in his first mandate;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has failed to end the clawback for those families on OW or ODSP;

"We, the undersigned from CFUW Ontario Council, petition the Legislative Assembly to end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement."

I support these petitions.

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): This issue of the child care clawback must be a very important one, because I have two petitions to present, and I'll sign both, from the Canadian Federation of University Women in Welland and also one for Milton and district. They read the same:

"Whereas the national child benefit supplement was created to reduce the depth of poverty across Canada for low-income families earning less than \$35,000;

"Whereas the government of Ontario claws back the supplement from families receiving income from Ontario Works or the Ontario disability support plan;

"Whereas Premier McGuinty decried the discriminatory nature of the NCBS clawback and vowed to end this practice in his first mandate;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has" to date "failed to end the clawback for those families on OW or ODSP;

"We, the undersigned from CFUW Ontario Council, petition the Legislative Assembly to end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement."

I'll have young Simon, my good friend, take this up to you.

GASOLINE PRICES

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

"Whereas the price of gas is reaching historic price levels; and

"Whereas provincial and federal governments have done nothing to protect consumers from high gas prices; and

"Whereas provincial tax on gas is 14 cents per litre and federal tax is 10 cents per litre, plus 8% GST; and

"Whereas taxes have a detrimental impact on the economy and are unfair to commuters who rely on vehicles to travel to work" every day; and

"Whereas the province has the power to set the price of gas and has taken responsibility for energy prices in other areas, such as hydro and natural gas; and

"Whereas we call on the province to remove the 14.7-cents-per-litre ... tax and on the federal government to eliminate the 10-cent gas tax, plus 8% GST, which amounts to 30% or more."

This is sent to the Premier of the province of Ontario.

I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

HIGHWAY 417

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas modern highways are the economic lifelines to communities across Ontario and crucial to the growth of Ontario's economy; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has been dealing with the planning and design of the extension of Highway 417 for several years; and

"Whereas the previous Conservative government followed through with their commitment to extend Highway 417 to Arnprior; and

"Whereas Highway 417/17 is part of the Trans-Canada Highway system; and

"Whereas local municipal governments, the county of Renfrew and MPP John Yakabuski have continued to press the Liberal government on this issue;

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

"That the Liberal government move as swiftly as possible to approve the extension of Highway 417 through Arnprior to Renfrew and beyond and that this be included in their next five-year plan."

I support this petition and affix my name to it and send it down with Daniel.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by friends and relatives and residents of the Golden Years Nursing Home.

"Whereas the proposed Long-Term Care Homes Act is extremely lengthy and complex and requires full and

extensive parliamentary and public debate and committee hearings throughout the province; and

“Whereas the rigid, pervasive and detailed framework proposed is excessive and will stifle innovation and flexibility in the long-term-care sector; and

“Whereas the additional burden, red tape and punitive measures imposed by the proposed legislation will aggravate and exacerbate the chronic underfunding of the sector, to the detriment of residents of the homes; and

“Whereas the proposed legislation will have serious implications for the viability of the for-profit and not-for-profit, charitable and municipal long-term-care sectors;

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

“We demand that the McGuinty government withdraw the proposed act, or remove the offending sections, and fulfill its commitment by a substantial increase in funding on a multi-year basis in the order of the promised \$6,000 per resident, per year.”

I agree with this petition and affix my name thereto.

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

“Whereas the proposed Long-Term Care Homes Act is extremely lengthy and complex and requires full and extensive parliamentary and public debate and committee hearings throughout the province; and

“Whereas the rigid, pervasive and detailed framework proposed is excessive and will stifle innovation and flexibility in the long-term-care sector; and

“Whereas the additional burden, red tape and punitive measures imposed by the proposed legislation will aggravate and exacerbate the chronic underfunding of the sector, to the detriment of residents of the homes; and

“Whereas the proposed legislation will have serious implications for the viability of the for-profit and not-for-profit, charitable and municipal long-term-care sectors;

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

“We demand that the McGuinty government withdraw the proposed act, or remove the offending sections, and fulfill its commitment by a substantial increase in funding on a multi-year basis in the order of the promised \$6,000 per resident, per year.”

And as I’m in agreement, I have affixed my signature.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (LEARNING TO AGE 18), 2006 LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L’ÉDUCATION (APPRENTISSAGE JUSQU’À L’ÂGE DE 18 ANS)

Ms. Wynne moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to amend the Education Act respecting pupil learning to the age of 18 and equivalent learning /

Projet de loi 52, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l’éducation concernant l’apprentissage des élèves jusqu’à l’âge de 18 ans et l’apprentissage équivalent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): I rise in the House today on third reading of legislation that, if passed, would help more students graduate from high school in Ontario, a goal that everyone in this House can agree to support, don’t you think? Absolutely.

1540

If passed, the bill would require students to continue learning until the age of 18 or graduation. I think it is notable that 1954 was the last time the school leaving age was adjusted. That’s a long time ago. The reason for this action is clear, I think. There are too many students dropping out of school and starting their adult lives with significant financial and social barriers. In fact, the statistics are really heart-wrenching. Studies show us that if a student leaves school before graduation, that person will be four times more likely to spend time in jail, twice as likely to be unemployed, and five times more likely to need income assistance. So I think the argument for putting in place structures, legislation and programs that would help students to stay in school and graduate is absolutely indisputable.

In total, there are about 30,000 16- and 17-year-old students who leave high school each year before they graduate, and unfortunately they put themselves in a deep hole that they then have to climb out of, rather than on a level playing field with the graduates of high school.

The graduation rate stood at 68% in 2003-04 when we were elected, and that is unacceptable. We need to stop presuming it’s okay for our students to drop out of school and that there is nothing we can do to motivate them. In short, we are not going to give up on these students. We need them in our schools. Instead, what we need to do is to insist that our students are as well-prepared as possible, and with 21st-century high schools that provide the kinds of programs and incentives that are relevant to students.

Dans l’économie du savoir d’aujourd’hui, il est plus que jamais primordial que les élèves du secondaire reçoivent une éducation de haute qualité et enrichissante qui les préparera pour diverses destinations postsecondaires. De plus en plus, les employeurs recherchent des personnes ayant une formation avancée pour combler des postes de débutant.

Young adults entering this kind of job market without a high school diploma are at a serious disadvantage. In order to turn things around, we took a serious look at the high school system. We sought out top educators in the province and across the country and we looked around the world. We even hired a few of them. This is important, because it is important to note that the ideas we are putting in place come from people who have huge experience—people in academia and people on the front lines. Many of the ideas that we’re putting in place come from the teachers in this province who are working in our

schools, know the kinds of programs that work and have been working with students for many years.

What they told us boiled down to this: Respect students as individuals; students do not benefit from a one-size-fits-all education. That's where the phrase "We need to reach every student" has come into play, because we know that every student does not learn like every other student. Students who find value in their high school education are much more focused than students who question the value of what they are learning. They also feel more engaged in learning if they are allowed to match their education with their planned career path.

One of the things I know about young people today is that they are much more aware of their options. One of the things the Internet and the information age have done is allowed young people to have a vastly broader understanding of what goes on in the world and what their options are. They may not know how to get to where they want to go, but they have an idea of where they want to go to.

To quote William Butler Yeats, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." And Plato said, "Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that they may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each." In other words, we do not ascribe to the empty pail, the empty vessel, philosophy of education. We believe that children bring qualities, affinities and interests with them on which we and the education system must capitalize. That underpins everything we are doing.

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I don't believe we have quorum.

The Acting Speaker: Please check if quorum is present.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker): Quorum is present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Quorum is present. I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Wynne: Our proposed legislation would do exactly that: It would allow us to further capitalize on the gifts, affinities and attributes that students bring with them. It's that issue of allowing students to mould their educational journey to their own interests, and it would help students to discover for themselves where their passion in life, natural skills and career goals collide.

We're confident that by doing this, we'll raise the graduation rate to 85% by 2010-11. We think, again, that that is a goal, to have 85% of students graduating from high school, that everyone in this House could agree with. Introduced in December 2005, the learning-to-18 bill, Bill 52, if passed, contains several amendments to the Education Act that would help us get there. If passed, the bill would change the school-leaving age to 18 or graduation. As I said before, that hasn't happened in more than 50 years.

The rest of the world certainly has moved on from where we were 50 years ago. I know there are examples of people, such as Albert Einstein, Ed Mirvish and

others, who never finished high school. But that was before the moon landing, before the first home computer and decades before the Internet, e-mail and globalization. So I think it's safe to say that things have changed. The world has sped up. We need our youth not just to maintain the pace but to cross the finish line in front of the pack. We need them to be critical thinkers. We need them to have opportunities that will enrich them and allow them to be fully participating citizens. We would also, in doing this, be among the Canadian pioneers to make the move to age 18 for school leaving. New Brunswick is the only other province that has been bold enough to take this route.

Most importantly, the bill, if passed, would create a framework for more opportunities for learning that takes place outside of the classroom. On that issue, I want to be clear that we understand the central and pivotal nature of classroom learning in our education system. It is where the bulk of the formal learning takes place. This bill would, as I said, provide a framework that would allow for other opportunities that would be referenced to the classroom where the high school teachers are doing their work. At the same time, it would require that these opportunities be approved. Whatever those alternatives, whatever those other opportunities outside the classroom, they would have to be approved by the Minister of Education to ensure quality and relevance.

The proposed bill is about learning to 18. We want to give struggling students a high-quality education in a learning environment that works best for them. We're providing hands-on instruction, we're providing more opportunities for hands-on learning, so that students can discover for themselves the exciting links between classroom learning and the work environment. That cry of, "We need education to be relevant" has been around for many years, but we're actually making that link real. We're actually saying, "We're going to do something about making learning relevant to the students in our high schools."

We heard from one student last year who said, "In my regular high school classes, there were too many students, noise and other distractions for me to focus on my studies, so I ended up dropping out several times. My school then offered me a chance to recover and complete my remaining grade 12 credits through some opportunities at my local college. It was self-directed with more one-on-one help available and now I'm a full-time college student with a high school diploma." That's an example of a student who was able to complete his high school credits and, at the same time, get a taste of what it might be like to go on to college and, in fact, he has been able to do that.

Of course, we'll set out policies and standards for any of these new programs and partnerships. We continue right now to work with the education sector and other partners to ensure that the expanded menu of programs meets our highest standards.

The quality of education would also be maintained through the bill, especially by only allowing principals to

issue credits for learning outside of the classroom. So that link between the school and the learning environment is not being cut. It is principals who will issue the high school credits. That's a key point, and certainly in conversations with the teachers' federations, it's one that we've emphasized. It's a concern they brought to us, and we were very happy that in the amendments we were able to make it clear that that was the intention and that that's what will happen.

1550

Ontario publicly funded education will remain in public hands for the public good. Principals and teachers will remain the backbone of the education system in this province. I think that is certainly what underpins everything we do in this House.

Down the road, the proposed bill would give judges the power to suspend driver's licences of students convicted of truancy, and this would add one more penalty available to the courts. But I think it's important to say—because there's been a lot of discussion about the driver's licence provision, which has been significantly altered—that as it stands now, this would be only a last resort and would only be put into force when high school students have access to a full array of new learning opportunities. So even that last resort that a court would have to remove a driver's licence will only be put into place when there's a full array of learning opportunities around the province.

In addition, the maximum fines for parents and employers would rise to the same level as the fines for students. What this does is it recognizes that adults have an important role to play in supporting young people's continuing learning. Over the years that I've been a parent activist and a trustee and then an MPP, I have heard countless times in meetings on education how it takes a village to raise a child. And so what this provision does is acknowledge that reality, that indeed it does take a village to raise a child and it does take a village to educate a child, and so the adults who are involved need to take some responsibility for the continued learning and keeping those kids in school. However, those penalties will also be delayed until a future date decided by the government.

Of course, those are the formal penalties, but the real penalty to struggling students will not come from any of those proposed new measures but in fact by permitting the continuation of the "can't do any better" attitude, that mentality that says, "That child can't do any better. That child can't graduate from high school." That's what really is the penalty, and we can't accept that.

Ontario expects the government to lead, and this is exactly what we're doing. We would be the second province in the country to raise the school leaving age to 18, and we would be the first Ontario government in over a decade to respect students as individuals and give them an education that matches their personal needs and goals. This proposed bill would be a vital piece in our student success strategy to ensure all high school students can reach their full potential. It would also be a bill created through partnerships with so many individuals and

organizations in the education community, and I want to thank them for their support in helping us to craft this legislation and helping us to craft the programs that we're putting in place.

I'm really very excited about the impact of this bill, the impact that it would have in the lives of countless students across the province. What we're doing is building a stronger, smarter society, and this bill would help us to do that by graduating more students who are prepared to lead in our communities.

Our focus on helping more students graduate is one of the top three priorities, and I've spoken about these many times in the House. We're also focused on helping 75% of grade 6 students achieve the provincial standard in reading, writing and math by 2008, and we're focused on reducing primary class sizes to 20 students or fewer. We're committed to these goals because we know that they will help us reach every student, they will help every student succeed, and they will help this province move forward. All of these goals will stretch the minds of a whole new generation of people in this province.

I'd like to close by quoting Horace Mann. He said, "Education is the great equalizer of the conditions of man"—and I'm sure he would have said "women"—"the balance wheel of the social machinery."

Je suis convaincue qu'en modernisant le système d'éducation publique, nous donnons à chaque enfant la possibilité de grandir, de s'instruire et de se développer pour devenir l'individu qu'il veut être.

That must be our goal, to allow every student to become the person that he or she can to fulfill his or her potential.

Our Premier and I and our caucus share the same vision. We see a publicly funded education system that respects students for who they are and respects them for where they want to go. I strongly believe that this legislation, Bill 52, is going to help us to get to where we need to be to be the strongest province in the country, and with the most educated and most prepared citizenry that we can have.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I was pleased to listen to the minister's remarks and noted, obviously, that they have substantive amendments, some of which will soften the blow of some of the additional language in the bill on the licence suspension and the role of non-certified teachers in the children's learning after the age of 18 in other environments. They've sort of skated around the issues, some of which won't come into force until after the bill is proclaimed and certainly after that period as well. I think that some of the ideas I'm hearing in my riding and probably from Durham College, wishing to form working relationships with the boards of education and then exactly how the money flows, becomes the issue. I know the new president of Durham College, Leah Myers, knows of what she speaks, having worked in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. I hope the consultations are fruitful there, because it's sort of the bureaucracy of education itself, not to fault the minister

on this, that has been the issue. In fact, I met with the principals' council representatives at Queen's Park today and they had some really troubling concerns about the responsibilities—but with no resources—that are going to be imposed for them to be the guiding hand in these working partnerships with the co-op working experience for creditworthiness.

So I'll be watching carefully as they skate around the very touchy issue that providing dumbed-down credits is not what anyone wants. I know the minister doesn't want them, but certainly quality is the measurement of the success of this, and that is yet to be seen. We need to make sure the children and the young people have the skills to contribute to their own life, indeed to the economy, in their own particular way.

The bill itself is sort of the McGuinty promise, but the deliverables will occur some time after the next election, I suspect.

Hon. Ms. Wynne: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I need to beg indulgence of the House and I'm going to plead newness of my role. I neglected to indicate that I was going to share my time in the leadoff with my parliamentary assistant. I am asking the indulgence of the House to allow that to happen and then we would revert to questions and comments.

The Acting Speaker: The minister is requesting unanimous consent to—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed.

Hon. Ms. Wynne: I appreciate that.

The Acting Speaker: I recognize the member for Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot.

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I was poring through volume 1 of the historic documents here; so thank you, Minister, for your remarks.

I rise in the House today to basically echo the remarks of our wonderful Minister of Education and her reference to the importance of the proposed “learning to age 18” bill. I would like to take some time this afternoon to explain just how it fits within our overall strategy to help more high school students succeed and indeed work towards their graduation.

Our government is confident that this proposed legislation, along with many other student success initiatives, will move Ontario closer to our graduation rate target of 85% by 2010-11. That would be a significant increase from the 68% figure we saw in 2003-04. So when this target is achieved, 20,000 more students will graduate every year compared to that 2003-04 base.

I'm proud to say that early results show that Ontario schools are getting back on track to make this target, with 71% of students graduating in 2004-05.

Other recent results also demonstrate student achievement is on the rise. The pass rate on the grade 10 literacy test increased from 72% to 84% for English-language students and from 78% to 81% for French-language students between 2002-03 and 2005-06.

1600

Some 22% more students took co-operative education in 2005-06 compared to 2004-05. That's important. I come from a small place known as Waterdown. My daughter is a recent graduate there; she's at Ryerson now. I could name—I won't, because I can't do that legally here—at least 20 students off the top of my head who are staying in school because of the co-operative education options that are available. That's very good news for all of us, as it demonstrates to us that we are making significant forward progress to reach every student in high school.

A few moments ago, our Minister of Education mentioned that there are initiatives already under way in Ontario's high schools that would complement this proposed legislation. I'd like to highlight six ways our government is helping our teens to graduate.

Our specialist high-skills major programs are currently being piloted across the province. This acknowledges in a very pointed way that not all students learn the same way. This program allows some students to focus their studies on an industry sector, such as agriculture, manufacturing or hospitality. By earning a major, students will be more focused on a career path, and hence better prepared to continue learning to become a leader in their chosen field.

For example, at the district school board of Niagara, 20 students are currently enrolled in the new construction major. One component of the program is building homes with Habitat for Humanity for low-income families. These students are not only doing something tremendously important socially, but they're bringing their classroom knowledge to the construction site and making a real difference in their community. I'm sure members from the Niagara area have seen this and would bear witness to this incredible opportunity and initiative.

At the same time, high school students in Clinton are majoring in agriculture and preparing for agricultural careers, apprenticeships or college technology programs—agriculture, the second-leading industry in Ontario.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): First in Huron–Bruce.

Mr. McMeekin: Especially in Huron–Bruce.

One student from that program told us, “I hope to take over our family farm and I figured that the more information I could learn about the equipment involved, the better.”

Another big initiative we have undertaken is creating student success teams in every single high school in Ontario. These teams include a student success teacher, the principal, the guidance department head, the special education department head and certain other appointed staff. This was made possible through a government investment of \$110 million this year to fund 1,600 new high school teachers, and the plan is to fund 300 more next year. In addition, we are funding a student success leader in every school board to help coordinate these efforts. Together, these teams identify and support

students who need extra help to succeed, provide more options for learning and monitor student progress.

The dual credit program is the third way I would like to spotlight. An estimated 2,300 students are now enrolled in 50 pilot programs this year, up from the 14 dual credit programs that ran in 2005-06 for some 361 students. These pilot programs allow high school students to earn a number of credits by participating in apprenticeship training and college courses that count towards their high school diploma, college diploma, college certificate or apprenticeship certification. A student from South Porcupine who took a dual credit last year wrote me these words: "This program has me thinking of my future now, whereas a year ago I didn't know what I wanted to do or where I wanted to go in life.... I feel as if I have more confidence in myself and can accomplish virtually anything that I put my mind to."

Another student said, "When I got picked for the program, I felt special. I was getting attention, not detentions."

Students at risk of dropping out during the move from elementary to secondary school also have the support they need. Earlier this year, we introduced a transition plan that includes more teachers, intensive professional development and improved tracking of struggling students and their progress. It is estimated the plan is already helping some 20,000 students build momentum towards their eventual high school graduation.

Student success lighthouse projects like the one at Waterdown District High School are helping more than 10,000 struggling high school students through increased support, extra guidance or the creation of a different learning environment.

The Ministry of Education has funded 159 projects in 2006-07 through a \$12-million investment. These projects were developed by individual boards to meet the unique challenges faced by their students, schools and communities. Some of these projects provide students with the opportunity to return to a classroom course they failed and receive the additional support they need to complete the remaining work required for the credit. Other projects create links to colleges and workplaces for struggling students who are more engaged in those types of learning environments.

I heard from a principal in northern Ontario who is running a successful lighthouse pilot project for aboriginal students.

By the way, do you know that some 71% of our First Nations or aboriginal young people never finish high school? It's a tragedy. Unless and until we can find ways to correct that terrible situation, what a wasted opportunity. Sorry about that. That's a little off script, but I wanted to share that.

Through our funding and guidance, she, the principal, has built an alternative learning centre featuring more aboriginal literature, music and art. The centre has built self-esteem amongst aboriginal students by honouring and acknowledging their rich culture, bringing it into the school and giving them a real sense of belonging. More

aboriginal students are attending school now and participating in the classroom because they feel the educational system is directly tailored to them.

Finally, I want to mention that two co-op credits earned after September 2005 can now be applied to a student's 18 compulsory credits required for graduation. Previously, students earning co-op credits could only count them towards the 12 non-compulsory credits to complete their 30-credit requirement for the Ontario secondary school diploma.

More students now have access to co-op placements with strong links to classroom subject areas, while benefiting from the knowledge and skills gained through the real-life work environment. This also gives more students a chance to start working and to test-drive their career options.

In total, we will invest \$1.3 billion in our new student success strategy to ensure that we reach every student and help them, in turn, to reach their full potential. I'm very, very proud of these initiatives and our proposed learning-to-18 legislation. They are based on choice and respect. They are also built on partnership and a shared vision.

1610

Before I finish, I want to take a moment to thank our partners in the education community for working with us to shape the proposed learning-to-18 legislation. In particular, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens have been instrumental in partnering with us to find solutions that work.

Last week, Donna Marie Kennedy, president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, had some very kind words for us, and we like kind words from time to time. We hear a few of them in the House; not as many as we deserve, but from time to time we hear a few kinds words. She said, "This government heard teachers' concerns about maintaining the integrity of the secondary school diploma." The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation thanked us for amending the bill to ensure that "the quality of Ontario's publicly funded education system will be maintained."

Home-schooling parents, who were out in droves at the public hearings, also contributed a great deal of energy to the process, and we thank all of them for that. We believe sincerely that we met the concerns they raised.

I also want to thank the thousands of parents, teachers, principals and other education advocates who have shared their thoughts with us on this proposed bill. Whether it was a comment from a student in Leamington or a teacher in Toronto during these public consultations, everyone made their mark on this proposed legislation. This was certainly a bill created through co-operation, not isolation.

Together, we will make Ontario's publicly funded high school system the very best in the world. Thousands more students will graduate with a more promising future

ahead of them because of this legislation. These young adults will drive our economy for many decades to come.

John F. Kennedy, one of my boyhood heroes, once said, "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource." Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." A favourite poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson, added, "Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation."

As you might imagine, I agree with all of these great people.

Hon. Ms. Wynne: Great choices.

Mr. McMeekin: Great choices.

More students earning their high school diploma means more young adults bringing innovation, leadership and motivation to the workplace. They will help us compete on the world stage and they will help this wonderful province of Ontario prosper.

No initiative is more essential to Ontario's economic advantage than this government's plan to ensure our young people keep learning in a classroom, apprenticeship or workplace training program until at least age 18. Ontario won't give up on its youth. Instead, our government will challenge and engage young Ontarians by making their learning more relevant.

I am proud of the hard work our government and our education partners have put into this place and into this bill to ensure that each and every one of our students achieves and becomes all that they can be. Ontario's best investment portfolio is indeed a strong public education system. I'm honoured, in some small way as the parliamentary assistant to a wonderful Minister of Education, to work with a government that gets it and to have the opportunity every single day to try to advance the cause of student success in this great province of ours.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. O'Toole: It was a pleasure to listen to Mr. McMeekin, the member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot, and his comments this afternoon. I hope those aren't his last remarks here, because he did bring some wisdom to the debate. I think he did speak with a great deal of passion and commitment, as all members do.

No student should be left behind; that should certainly be well known. I guess you have to look at the broad horizon in education and education reform. There's an ongoing case study in education and education strategies.

Most people here have served outside prior to their role as an MPP. I personally was on the provincial parent-teacher association, I was a school trustee, and I am a parent of five children. Education is the only vertical mobility tool that we can offer children, so no child should be left behind without opportunity. Without hope, a person might be defined as being dead. So this is a very important bill to get right. That's what's most troubling here: I'm just not sure if they have it right.

I would go back and say that what's important is his quote—I was waiting for the quote from Machiavelli's *The Prince*, because most of what he was saying was written by the scribes in the back room. The few times he was off-script he was very good. The John Kennedy thing was excellent.

Now, being a University of Toronto alumnus, I'm lucky to get a copy of some of their distributions in the mail. This is one that I was reading, on leaders in education: "Carol Rolheiser Reforms Education by Getting Inside of It." It's an excellent article about leaders in education today. She went on to say in this article that one of the places where she's doing a lot of work is the York Region District School Board, where over the past five years she's been talking about making teaching a science. She mentions co-operative learning and co-operative education, which are extremely important—

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I just want to say to the citizens watching that it's Wednesday, it's 4:16—4:17 in 30 seconds. At about 4:25, the Conservatives will speak for 20 minutes plus questions, so a half an hour. After that, I have a whole hour to attack the government as vigorously and as passionately as I can, and I will. I want to demolish the elements of this bill. There isn't much, actually, because they took out all the other stuff that—

Hon. Ms. Wynne: Support what you can.

Mr. Marchese: There isn't anything I can support, and that's the problemo.

I want people to tune in at approximately quarter to 5 and listen to what I have to say about this bad bill, because I believe it to be one of the worst things the Liberals have done here; I really do. I have to say that this is something I expected from the Tories, the Conservatives, and when you introduced this before the election and then introduced it as a bill, I was so amazed, shocked and surprised. Six months ago, I even believed that you were not going to introduce this bill. I really did, because the polling showed that they don't agree with what you're doing, by and large. They really believe you should change the programming that we offer in our high school system, our elementary system, as a way to solve some of these educational problems, these social problems, but not this. So tune in in approximately half an hour and you'll hear what I have to say.

1620

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): I was listening to the Minister of Education speaking about this bill. As well, I was listening to the parliamentary assistant. I know that we have wonderful members: We have a minister and a PA who speak from their hearts, and they believe in this issue. They're not doing it for political reasons but because they believe in student success and they believe in public education, and they believe in this province. The only way we can prosper in this province is by paying attention to our students and investing in our

youth. This is a very important step towards having a prosperous province.

Despite all the negativity, despite all the opposition's talk about this bill, it's a very important step towards increasing the success rate in the province of Ontario. I believe that this measure, which has been taken by our government since we got elected, has proven its success. This step is a great step in the right direction in order to achieve our goal, which is 85% success by 2010-11. It's a very important investment in education. It's a very important investment in public education.

I had the chance to sit in the committee where we were listening to many different stakeholders. Teachers, principals, many people came before us and said many different things. I'm very pleased to see the Minister of Education and our government listening to them and amending the bill in a fashion to address their concerns, because we have one goal, only one goal: to see the success rate go up. We have no desire to cripple our movement, because I believe we're going in the right direction. We're going to do whatever is possible to assist our students, to assist their educations, and to maintain all students in public education.

I want to tell you something: It's a very important bill. That's why I'm going to support it.

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I was pleased to hear the presentation or part of the presentation this afternoon from the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot. This is an important education matter. I was pleased today to have an opportunity to meet with the Ontario Principals' Council along with my colleague the member from York North, in her office. I would commend to every member of this Legislature, including the minister, who is here, this brief that they presented to people today. I thought it was very, very thoughtful. They brought forward many concerns and ideas that certainly appear to be based on putting the interests of students first, which we all would like to see undertaken as an objective of the government, certainly, and of everybody else in the education system.

I think, when they made reference to the issue of loss of instructional time for every student, that's something that the minister would want to take very seriously and consider; when they raise the issue of student safety in elementary schools and secondary schools; the role of the principal as an instructional leader; the issue of class caps in secondary schools and their effect on programming; class caps in elementary schools, where they took issue with the way the government has attempted to cap class sizes. Even though the government promised a hard cap, they have delivered something quite different. They raised the issues of peer review at the Ontario College of Teachers' hearings, private school funding and provincial bargaining—some very interesting ideas that I think ought to be given serious consideration by the government.

The principals play a very important role in our education system as leaders in the schools across the province. I certainly believe that every excellent principal

is worth their weight in gold, because they can create the kind of learning environment that will create the kind of schools that we want and we need and we expect.

So I would like to offer that suggestion to members of the House. I know our member for Oak Ridges was quite pleased with the work that he did on committee on this bill and the effort that he brought forward to seek amendments. I want to congratulate the member for Oak Ridges for the work he does as our critic.

The Acting Speaker: The Minister of Education has two minutes to respond.

Hon. Ms. Wynne: Thanks for the comments from the members who have spoken. I want to just first of all acknowledge the work of my parliamentary assistant, the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot. He carried this bill on the committee, and he has done terrific work in terms of working with the opposition members, listening to all the delegates who came forward, synthesizing their ideas and bringing forth amendments that have really made this bill stronger. I want to thank him for that. He's a good listener and a wise man, so thank you very much.

The member for Trinity-Spadina, on the other hand, needs to go out and talk to some of the people in our schools. He needs to talk to the folks at Central Tech, which I think is in his riding. He needs to talk to the folks who know that we've had an uptake in co-op programs because students can now count two co-op credits as mandatory credits. He needs to talk to the people in the schools who understand that the programs we're putting in place are indeed the substance of this student success initiative. He needs to talk to the teachers who are very happy that we're putting student success teachers in every one of our high schools so that there are more human resources to help those students at risk to recover credits, to design their programs going forward and to look at the options. He needs to talk to the people who have been engaged in articulation agreements with colleges—I believe there's been one at Central Tech for many years. That is exactly the kind of arrangement we are trying to encourage across the province.

If he talks to those people, he will learn that this is a very popular idea. It resonates with people in our communities who know that students need to graduate from high school. We need to make sure they have the programs that will keep them interested so that we can have every student in this province with a high school diploma going on to the workforce.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Before I begin, I would like to seek unanimous consent to stand down the lead by my colleague Mr. Klees from Oak Ridges.

The Acting Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you. I appreciate that kind gesture by my colleagues. Mr. Klees looks forward to engaging with his full time on third reading debate as our critic for education. I know Mr. Klees has some very serious

concerns about Bill 52 that he looks forward to bringing to the floor of the assembly.

It's important, as I begin discussion about Bill 52, to describe the environment we find ourselves in in the Legislative Assembly today. As the Speaker knows, today, November 29, 2006, was to be a day of committee hearings on Bill 107. Bill 52 has had committee hearings—we're back at third reading—and I think the committee hearings were quite helpful. I know from listening to my colleague from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot and to the minister herself that they would say the bill was improved through the committee process after second reading.

The concern we have today is that Bill 107, unlike Bill 52, is facing a guillotine motion; that debate has effectively been cut off on a very important piece of legislation impacting on the Human Rights Tribunal. It was rather shocking when we found the Attorney General breaking his word that hearings would continue by abruptly ending them, with very important stakeholders and individuals with a lot to say about the bill completely cut off.

Mr. McMeekin: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm so looking forward to the member's comments on this bill. I wonder if he would like to comment on this bill, because it really is important. I know he appreciates the importance of this bill, but I'm in your hands, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: I remind the member for Erie–Lincoln that we are not debating Bill 107 today. He should address his comments to the bill under discussion.

Mr. Hudak: I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. I was speaking to Bill 107 in the context of Bill 52, which had committee hearings. Colleagues in all three parties would say that Bill 52 was improved because of the committee process. There are a number of provisions which Mr. Klees, our critic, and other members of the Progressive Conservative caucus objected to in Bill 52. I know that my colleague from Trinity–Spadina brought forward his concerns on Bill 52. We did see some changes. I know Mr. Marchese will be speaking a bit later this afternoon.

Mr. Klees and other members of the assembly will have ongoing concerns about Bill 52, but at the very least, committee allowed us to see some improvements from the original version; no one is arguing about that. All I am saying, my colleague, is that I wish Bill 107, a weighty bill itself, had had the same opportunity for extensive committee hearings. I think it would have been improved substantially. Certainly, when you see the former commissioner, Mr. Norton, and the current commissioner, Ms. Hall, and well-known advocates like Mr. Lepofsky criticizing the government's approach on Bill 107, I say, with great regret, that it would have been much better to see—

1630

The Acting Speaker: Member for Erie–Lincoln, standing order 23(b) directs you to address the topic under discussion in your remarks. I'll remind you again.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your advice. I was merely commenting that I think Bill 52 has seen improvements. There's still a ways to go through the committee process, and it's a pity the same process wasn't followed for another weighty piece of legislation, Bill 107. But I'll get to that more later on.

I do want to note as well that I plan on bringing some comments from a number of sources. Today I had the pleasure of meeting with representatives from the Ontario Principals' Council who have some very important concerns about the handling of education by this minister, I think caused, really, by the actions of the previous minister in an unprecedented intervention in local bargaining.

Mr. O'Toole: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Speaker to determine if a quorum is present, please.

The Acting Speaker: I ask the table to see if a quorum is present.

The Clerk-at-the-Table: A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: I recognize the member for Erie–Lincoln.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know my colleague from Durham wanted to make sure that a quorum was present. I'm not sure if that's the case, so I would ask you to verify if a quorum is present.

The Acting Speaker: I ask the table again to determine whether a quorum is present.

The Clerk-at-the-Table: A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: I remind the member for Erie–Lincoln that a quorum is present. You may continue.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must have miscounted.

My colleague from Peterborough said that he asked a question on behalf of the principals' council. We would call that question today a softball of beach ball proportions. It's important, I guess, and I appreciate the member from Peterborough bringing forward questions, but I had certainly hoped they would actually get to the true matters at hand from the principals, as opposed—and I don't think the member from Peterborough wrote that. I think somebody from the minister's office asked him to read that. Did you write it?

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: You had input into it.

Let me relate some of the concerns of the principals' council, because I know they met with a number of members today who are here in the Assembly. We will recall that Minister Kennedy, at the time, had an extraordinary intervention into the public bargaining process.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): He straightened it out.

Mr. Hudak: My colleague from Peterborough said that he straightened it out. But I think my colleague would admit there have been some significant repercussions because of the minister's intervention.

For example, as my colleague well knows, as part of the standard agreement, the minister, for the first time, has imposed caps on supervisory time for teachers on the

elementary side. The caps initially were 120 minutes, I believe, for a six-day cycle and 100 minutes for a five-day cycle in the first year of the agreement, and then down to 80 minutes in the second year of the agreement. The minister did so without providing any additional funding to help cover the increased costs to the schools.

I know the principals' council would have related to my colleagues opposite on the government side the ramifications of that move. For example, they said that in many elementary schools now, playground equipment is off limits because of a lack of a supervisory presence of teachers or others in the school. It's hard for me to imagine that you would have elementary school children on recess who couldn't access playground equipment, much of which has been raised through some very challenging fundraising by parent councils and supporters of schools.

A second example that was even more disheartening to learn of was that many principals are forced to use educational assistants to cover lunchroom duty, because the caps on teacher supervisory time gives them no other alternative. So picture this: You have an educational assistant who is there to give additional help to special-needs children. The educational assistants are assigned to special-needs children to help them overcome the challenges they face. It's an individual relationship, and it's important to make sure that it's carried out throughout the school day. But when you take the educational assistant away from the child for something that's not really part of their job description, I would say, to supervise the cafeteria, for example, that special-needs child is left without the benefit of the educational assistant. The educational assistant would then have his or her lunch break, and again the special-needs child is left without the benefit of an educational assistant.

Now, I hate to think that the Minister of Education at the time, Mr. Kennedy, went through with this initiative for political purposes. I suggest he's an intelligent individual. He had the benefit of the Ministry of Education and the advice of boards, principals and teachers' unions, who would have told him that these are going to be the impacts of his extraordinary intervention in the collective bargaining system. The Minister of Education at the time, Mr. Kennedy, decided to ignore that advice. As a result, we've seen a significant reduction in supervisory time of students. When you hear about special-needs children not getting the assistance they deserve, paid for by taxpayers, it certainly causes great despair to principals, parents and the teachers in that particular school.

Similarly, on the secondary side we have seen classes that have had to be cancelled because of the cap on on-call and supervisory time. Often for grade 12 students, and perhaps grade 11 students as well, when the teacher is sick and the principal has no wherewithal, because of the caps on supervisory time, to call in a substitute or on-call teacher, the class is cancelled.

So basically what Gerard Kennedy, the then minister, did, I would suggest to raise his own profile as he made a platform to run for the federal Liberal leadership, has

given a very difficult situation to the new minister, Ms. Wynne, when she took over that portfolio. I know we all heard from the principals' council today about Mr. Kennedy effectively downloading on the principals, the individual school, the supervisory duties by capping supervisory time—very strict caps—without providing the resources to assist and to make amends for the lack of supervision or the stealing of educational assistants away from the special-needs children they are there to assist.

The principals' council had a number of other concerns related to the foundation grant, for example, because, as my colleague from Durham indicated, the vast majority of boards, or a significant number of boards at any rate, are in a deficit situation, barely holding on. Because of these unfunded mandates from the Minister of Education to purchase political popularity for himself, the boards are effectively taking from the foundation grant and therefore there are little or no resources available for principals, vice-principals, secretarial support etc.

I suggest that the previous Minister of Education never admitted, never stood in the House, in the assembly, and explained why he was doing this. In fact, I bet he denied that this was the case, though when it comes to somebody who's positioning himself to run for a leadership position versus the principals we heard today, I'm going to take the word of the principals. I hope the current minister is going to be able to solve the situation handed to her by the Minister of Education. Unfortunately, I do not see that solution in Bill 52.

In fact, at a meeting I had just on Friday with representatives of OSSTF from the Grand Erie District School Board, from the Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk area—I represent the Dunnville area in that board. Kelly Morin Currie and Noel Beach, the representatives on behalf of OSSTF Grand Erie board, had some serious concerns about the government's—how should I put it, Mr. Speaker?—jettisoning of the Rozanski report. Dr. Rozanski was hired, consulted broadly—an eminent individual—and gave some very solid recommendations for reinvestments in education and improvements to the funding formula. Mr. Rozanski's report was being initially implemented by Premier Eves. There was a change in government, and the Dalton McGuinty government effectively trashed the Rozanski report—not shelved it, but basically took it and threw it into the wastebasket. As a result—

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: My colleague from Kitchener disagrees, but I'm just repeating—

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): Rozanski found that you guys had underfunded the system by \$2 billion.

Mr. Hudak: I'm simply repeating to my colleague from Kitchener, who seems to be rather sensitive about this, that the OSSTF representatives had indicated that the government has not followed through with the Rozanski report's recommendations. Basically, they have said there is little or no flexibility in funding in the Grand

Erie board for exceptional circumstances. There is a variety in school sizes, from very small schools to large schools, in the Brantford area, and when it comes to building new schools and finding money in the repair envelope for older schools, sadly, the McGuinty government's failure, in fact its rejection, effectively, of the Rozanski report, has caused significant funding problems in the Grand Erie board. The Niagara public and Catholic boards would make a complaint along the same lines.

So it's obviously very frustrating, when we hear the government trumpeting its policies on Bill 52, when we hear serious concerns from the principals' council here today, when we hear serious concerns from the OSSTF—and I do have a number of letters written to me from constituents objecting to Bill 52 that I hope I have a moment to get to.

But, very importantly, I think we need to remind those who are watching today, those who are following the debate, that while we at least have the opportunity to debate this bill that has gone through committee, Bill 107 remains under the shadow of the guillotine. In fact, today is the last day of that, Mr. Speaker, and so I have no recourse but to move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Hudak has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1642 to 1712.

The Acting Speaker: Will all those in favour rise and remain standing.

Will all those opposed rise and remain standing.

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 10; the nays are 35.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The member for Erie—Lincoln.

Mr. Hudak: I regret that my colleagues opposite didn't agree with my motion to adjourn the debate. I thought it would demonstrate that members like Mr. Rinaldi from Northumberland would share my concern with the guillotine motion that has forced the committee that's meeting right now to end its hearings on Bill 107.

I mentioned that I had a number of letters from constituents objecting to measures that were contained in Bill 52. I believe the current minister has backpedalled at a rate that would probably cause her to win a sprint on the provision that linked the driver's licence with completing school to the age of 18. Certainly, it was hard to find many who supported that initiative. I think the minister now refers to it as a last resort; nonetheless, I did have a number of constituents who objected to this.

I have a letter from Cheryl Hozjan. Ms. Hozjan, who lives on Highway 56 in Binbrook, Ontario, speaks boastfully about her daughter, as she should: "My 19-year-old daughter has been driving and working since she was 16. In the fall, she plans to attend university to be-

come a music teacher or social worker. She has purchased her own car, pays her insurance and pays for her gas. She has achieved conservatory grade 8 piano and has pursued her interest in literature at home and night school. She loves to read and debate. Right now, she is working full-time as a certified snowboard instructor at Glen Eden. Last summer, she worked at Scott Mission Camp, a camp designed to help the special needs of the underprivileged in Toronto. Last year she completed a college program where she learned outdoor leadership skills. At 16 she spent a month in Peru learning the culture and helping those less fortunate than herself on a missions trip. She was chosen to attend as a leader at a young people's conference designed to help young people become godly leaders. She has been asked to sing on a worship team and diligently seeks to advance herself musically as well as academically.

"Now after stating these facts about my daughter's life I would also like to say she has not attended one day of primary school or high school. But remains an excellent Canadian citizen!

"My concern about Bill 52 is that it may affect my other two children's lives, it may affect my future grandchildren's lives, and generations of young Canadians."

Obviously, Ms. Hozjan's daughter, of whom she's very proud, and justifiably so with that kind of accomplishment as a young woman—there are going to be extraordinary accomplishments by this young woman in the times ahead—was home-schooled. I have a significant number of parents who choose—as is their right, and I congratulate them for it—to home-school their children. Of course, there were provisions in Bill 52 that were offensive to parents who choose to home-school their own children. Marcel and Jeanette Otten on Moote Road in St. Ann's, not too far from my home in Wellandport, raise similar concerns: "Bill 52 extends by two years the time allowed to parents to justify themselves to the government, or fear having to justify themselves to the government, for home-schooling their children. This is especially a problem where students may have completed high school early, or want to incorporate apprenticeship or other learning experiences into their later high school years without having to justify it as satisfactory instruction."

There are similar letters from Jeremy and Maria Bout on Rittenhouse Road in Vineland; Carl and Monica Oosterhoff on Yonge Street in Vineland; Derek Lemstra on Chestnut Street in Jordan Station; and Marissa Lemstra on Chestnut Street in Jordan Station. Those are just some of the letters I have. I do regret, though, that the committee does go on under the government's guillotine motion. We find that objectionable, and that's why I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Hudak has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1717 to 1747.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Hudak has moved adjournment of the House.

Will all those in favour of the motion please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed to the motion, please rise and remain standing.

The Deputy Clerk: The ayes are 11; the nays are 33.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The member for Erie–Lincoln.

Mr. Hudak: I seek unanimous consent to move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? There not being unanimous consent, questions and comments?

Mr. Marchese: I regret to say to the citizens watching this program that I couldn't do my lead today. They'll have to come back next week. That's okay. Next week, whenever that happens, I'll be able to do the whole hour uninterrupted, and that will be good.

I just can't help it. To the member from Erie–Lincoln, I'm not quite sure he heard the minister when the minister said that they consulted—God, I don't know who. They said they looked around the world before they came up with this bill. They looked at the high school curriculum in its totality, more or less, give or take a word. They consulted academia on this, the front lines, and then she said that these ideas came from teachers. For the life of me, I don't know where the academics were in the hearings. For the life of me, I don't know where the teachers were, because I didn't hear teachers saying, "We're just so happy to get this bill in because we know it's going to create stronger, smarter kids, and it will help to build a stronger, smarter society."

Where were they? Where were the academics? Where were these ideas that these people picked up from all over the world where they've done this—except, they say, another province and a few American states that have done it, where there is no measurable difference in terms of academic achievement.

I don't know what experts you consulted and where in the world you went to get this great idea for this bill. But I've got to tell you, I'm looking forward to debating this bill for the whole hour next time we meet so that I can talk a little more about this.

Mr. McMeekin: I'll tell you where they were. The OSSTF has a plan called Putting Students First, and they acknowledge, quite openly, that what the government is doing is, by and large, consistent with their thrust.

There was some reference to OECTA, which came out with a news release that reads:

"Ontario's Catholic teachers are endorsing the McGuinty government's strategy to help students at risk...."

"Members of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association ... applaud the plan to match individual students' strengths, interests and career goals...."

Later they said, "The government heard teachers' concerns about maintaining the integrity of the secondary

school diploma. We look forward to working with the government on the details of implementation."

I could read on, but I do want to comment on the member from Erie–Lincoln, because there's always, notwithstanding what he has to say, at least some gem of wisdom; you have to look hard for it sometimes. He talked about safety, and that certainly is a concern. We heard the principals' council when they were in today, and the minister has already met once and has some other meetings set up to talk about that issue. There was no discussion about the Provincial Stability Commission, which is sorting out about 80% of these concerns, and that's something that needs to happen.

Finally, on the driver's licence issue, I want to just say that I was one of those on this side of the House—and there were many—who had some real concerns as I listened to people. I heard from the Ontario Student Trustees' Association, which had some real views on it, and I'm pleased to say that the government listened, as we normally do.

Mr. O'Toole: I would say that the member from Erie–Lincoln made a number of important points on voices for education when he spoke about parents in his riding who wrote to him or e-mailed him, and indeed students who are saying they favour the home school model. That is kind of the fundamental here, that the primary educator is the parent. As the parent of five children, I think it should be an open part of the discussion, without feeling shunned or that somehow that isn't one of the options. If you haven't got that liberty, then you're almost in "father knows best" mode. So I think that choice in education is an important debate. It is controversial because it contradicts OSSTF and others, and I would say that that's problematic.

The member from Trinity–Spadina, in the last 10 years—I know he comes from a school trustee background. He has knowledge and passion on the topic, so I am interested in listening to his comments for the next five minutes. I intend to get a copy of Hansard and pay attention.

But like many members here today, I did meet with members of the Ontario Principals' Council, not specifically Blair Hilts, but a couple of the principals. They did speak to the issues with respect to Bill 52, but they spoke specifically about school safety. We all read in the papers today about school security and who's responsible for that security. If you don't have a safe learning environment, you have jeopardized that learning environment, and the trust that parents place in the principals and teachers is unfair unless they provide the resources. But this bill—quite frankly, there have been a couple of amendments. Some of them are postdated until after the next election.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mrs. Mitchell: I'm very pleased to rise this afternoon and support Bill 52, and I do want to make some comments.

There were concerns that had arisen with regard to the driver's licence, and that certainly was an issue from the rural communities. I do want to make special emphasis

that there was an amendment that came forward, and those concerns have been addressed. So it reinforces that we are listening and acting and taking forward the concerns. More specifically, those concerns primarily came from the rural communities, so I'm very pleased to say that those concerns have been addressed.

We talk about, "What do our youth need? What tools do they need to build a strong foundation, to have a successful future?" I especially want to take this time to talk about one of the programs that is available in the most beautiful riding in the province of Ontario, that being Huron-Bruce: the high skills program that is available at one of my local high schools. It is working with our agricultural community and our business community. They all came together, as we do, as many communities do, took that opportunity, and agricultural courses are available in our schools. How could it be more appropriate? We are the leading riding in agricultural product in the province of Ontario, and our agricultural community needs tools to give to our young people that will encourage them to choose that as their career. The future of the agricultural community must remain strong so that we can ensure food safety for all the citizens of Ontario. So when we talk about, "What do we need in communities to give to our youth and what can we do?" this is just another example of meeting those needs.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Erie-Lincoln has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Hudak: I appreciate the comments of my colleagues.

My colleague from Durham had mentioned that we had a number of e-mails and letters, which I wanted to continue reading into the record.

Wilf and Natalie Wikkerink of Ninth Street in St. Catharines wrote to me. They say, "Home-schooling is an excellent means of educating our children. Instead of delegating their responsibility, parents take on the task of educating their children using a variety of excellent programs which are becoming increasingly available. The child is not restricted to learning at the same rate as

[his] classmates, but instead their education is tailored to meet their gifts and needs."

Their concern was that "Bill 52 will restrict some of these benefits of home-schooling. Those children finishing their high school education early will have to justify their apprenticeship or other learning experiences to the government."

Similarly, a letter from Kim Bakker, living in Vine-land, Ontario, in the Niagara Peninsula, of course, who boasts proudly of her 16-year-old son, presently finishing his grade 11 studies, who has now come across a setback in his desire to obtain his G1 licence. He was required to show a student card, which of course he did not have, because he was home-schooled. "Instead we reapplied for a health card to have the required photo ID. Everything seems to be fine, however it is our understanding that if this Bill 52 is passed"—as it was at the time—"that my son who will be 17 when he completes his studies may find it difficult or impossible to get his G2 or even employment without the permission of a board or principal of a local school." Ms. Bakker goes on to express those concerns.

Mrs. Mitchell: All fixed.

Mr. Hudak: Well, the government says it's all fixed, like they're taking credit for it, but it was the work of parents like these individuals and opposition members who brought this forward. As a result, we brought forward the amendments to the bill.

Interjections.

Mr. Hudak: My colleagues across the way don't appreciate this comment, which is unfortunate, that they don't care about home-schooling and decide to heckle about this. We wish they had stood up and fought for Bill 107, however, as well.

The Acting Speaker: It being close to 6 of the clock, this House is recessed until 6:45.

The House adjourned at 1800.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Nepean–Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Guelph–Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)
Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
		Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
		Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)

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

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

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

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