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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 4 December 2006**

**Lundi 4 décembre 2006**

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Monday 4 December 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 4 décembre 2006

*The House met at 1845.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to seek unanimous consent to move a motion respecting the consideration of concurrences and the interim supply motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** The deputy government House leader has asked for unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I thank my colleagues for unanimous consent.

I move that, notwithstanding any standing order, the orders for concurrence in supply for the Ministries of Education; Community and Social Services; Finance; Health and Long-Term Care; Health Promotion; Intergovernmental Affairs; Environment; Children and Youth Services; Energy; Municipal Affairs and Housing; Training, Colleges and Universities; Public Infrastructure Renewal and government notice of motion number 258 be called concurrently; and

That when such orders are called, they shall be considered concurrently in a single debate; and

That the time available to 9:20 p.m. this evening shall be divided equally amongst the recognized parties; and

That at the conclusion of the debate, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the orders for concurrence in supply for each of the ministries named above and to dispose of government notice of motion number 258; and

That if a recorded vote is requested by five members, all division bells shall be stacked and there shall a single 10-minute division bell.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Caplan has moved that notwithstanding any order, the orders of concurrence in supply for the Ministries of Education; Community and Social Services—

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker:** Dispense? Dispensed.

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

CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

INTERIM SUPPLY

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Speaker, while we're in such a jovial mood, I think I'll move the motion.

I move concurrence in supply of the following ministries: Education; Community and Social Services; Finance; Health and Long-Term Care; Health Promotion; Intergovernmental Affairs; Environment; Children and Youth Services; Energy; Municipal Affairs and Housing; Training, Colleges and Universities; and Public Infrastructure Renewal.

I move that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of civil servants and other necessary payments pending the voting of supply for the period commencing January 1, 2007, and ending June 30, 2007.

Payments for the period from January 1, 2007, to March 2007, to be charged to the proper appropriation following the voting of supply for the 2006-07 fiscal year, and payments for the period from April 1, 2007, to June 30, 2007, to be charged to the proper appropriation following the voting of supply for the 2007-08 fiscal year.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** The Clerk has brought to my attention that you said "March 2007." You need to specify the date, "March 31."

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Of course, March 31. My apologies.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the following ministries: Education; Community and Social Services; Finance; Health and Long-Term Care; Health Promotion; Intergovernmental Affairs; Environment; Children and Youth Services; Energy; Municipal Affairs and Housing; Training, Colleges and Universities; and Public Infrastructure Renewal;

That the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of civil servants and other necessary payments pending—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins—James Bay):** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker:** If you're in your seat, I'll listen.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto—Danforth):** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker:** Dispense? Shall it carry? Carried.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Well, it's not carried.

**The Acting Speaker:** Sorry, it's agreed. Dispense is agreed.

Debate? The Minister of Finance not being here, the deputy government House leader.

1850

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** It's actually always an interesting time to be able to speak to this, the concurrence in supply motion for the government. What it does is it authorizes the Minister of Finance to make the kind of payments that are brought down in the budget—I must say, a very well-received budget this past March when Minister Sorbara introduced the document here in the House. Speaker, there were some elements in it—because I note for your interest that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, which I certainly have the pleasure to lead, has brought in some incredible work that is transforming and rebuilding this wonderful province of ours.

Back in 2005, we introduced a budget which outlined a \$30-billion infrastructure investment plan. I had a chance during estimates committee to chat with the members of the committee about specific details of that plan: over 100 hospital projects, rebuilding projects, additions, renovations—I would have to say, in the period of time, perhaps one of the single largest investments in health care modernization this province has ever seen; over 3,000 individual school projects in each and every riding represented by 103 members in this chamber, making a difference to teachers who are teaching, but more importantly, to students who are learning, providing better places to learn, better spaces to learn, a better learning environment, and those much-overdue kinds of investments.

But it didn't just stop there. I had the great pleasure, with my colleague the Minister of Northern Development, to outline a northern highway strategy: the completion of four-laning of Highway 11, all the way up to North Bay; four-laning of Highway 69, from Parry Sound up to Sudbury. That kind of building program is literally unprecedented—\$1.8 billion in that northern highway strategy. But it didn't just stop there: an additional \$3.4 billion to support southern Ontario highways for safety upgrades, lane expansion, new highways being constructed—the scope and the breadth. We had seen tremendous road-building in the post-war period, in the 1950s and 1960s. This program, long overdue, rivals even that very ambitious and, I would say, very well-delivered program of previous governments.

But so much more: the justice sector, rural Ontario, the environment, funding for water and waste water systems so that we can ensure that we have safe and clean water. This ReNew Ontario plan, as I said, is a \$30-billion investment in the foundation, in the fundamentals of our province, so that we could build. It's not about the bricks and mortar; it's what in fact we deliver inside, so that we deliver better health care so that our doctors and nurses can deliver shorter wait times for critical procedures, be they hips and knees, cardiac or cataract or MRI's; so that our education system can have lower class sizes so teachers can begin, as they have not been able to for a great long time, to address the individual needs of students who show up in their classes.

I have two boys, 10 and six years old. I want you to know that as a parent I know that having that kind of class size, having the attention of a teacher and the personnel within that school to be able to deliver high-quality education programs, those are the kinds of investments that I appreciate as a parent, but as an Ontarian, I appreciate even more, because when you do the necessary work up front, when you provide the supports, that's when you allow children to realize their potential and be able to contribute in an incredibly meaningful way throughout their lives, whatever kind of career they would choose to go into well into the future. Those are the kinds of things that ReNew Ontario supports.

It supports moving goods and people around our region. I would be remiss if I didn't indicate that my colleague Dwight Duncan, the finance minister, brought forward a Move Ontario plan: incredible support for public transit, some \$858 million, but in addition over \$400 million for roads and bridges, for much-needed repairs and work right across the province of Ontario.

I had an opportunity during estimates committee to outline some of these kinds of investments, long overdue, as I say, that are making a real and a meaningful difference for Ontarians, for our long-term economic prosperity, but indeed to heighten and support a quality of life that will make us second to none. There is so much more to talk about, certainly in the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, let alone the various government ministries.

I see my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I don't know if he is going to share tonight as part of this debate, but a part of some of those earlier budget plans was something called the Reaching Higher plan: a \$6.2-billion investment, the greatest investment in the post-secondary sector in well over—40 years?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** Absolutely.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Forty years, my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities says—most welcome, providing not only financial support, but grants for the first time in well over 15 years to students so that they can have access to post-secondary education; setting up new medical school programs, graduate school expansion. I can tell you, we are really seeing the kind of investment in our people which is going to put Ontario on a competitive track so that we can not only compete with our sister provinces but with any jurisdiction in the world. That is what supply and concurrence is all about: making the necessary investments, creating the necessary opportunities that a government, indeed our society, will benefit from in the short, in the medium and of course over the much longer term.

I note that so many of my colleagues, I am sure, will want to share in tonight's debate. I am delighted to talk about the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal. I did have seven and a half hours at the estimates committee to talk about the many initiatives, but I am very eager to hear from my colleagues, to hear about the priorities they

see in their ridings, to hear about the stories from around the province of Ontario and about many of the great things that Premier McGuinty has led us toward, because I must tell you that what you are seeing now is the fruition of a great deal of work. It's a bold plan, a bold vision, and something which has been a great pleasure for me and I know for my colleagues in government to participate in.

Speaker, I want to thank you very kindly for the attention that you have paid tonight, and I want to encourage all of the members of this House to support this motion.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

1900

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to join in the debate this evening on supply and concurrences. That allows me to speak on just about anything I want to speak about having to do with government programs, and I wish to use the time I have to highlight how the government is out of touch, particularly in the area that I am critic for. We'll see how much time I do have, but I wanted to highlight a few specific examples in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka of how the Ministry of Natural Resources is out of touch with what the people really want to see happening. I've got a couple of glaring examples of that, and certainly the priorities of this government seem to be a little mixed up.

We have the conservation officers that, I hear from around the province anecdotally, are not being properly funded, don't have enough gas in their trucks and aren't being properly equipped to do their jobs, to deal with conservation issues, to catch poachers in hunting season and year-round, that sort of thing.

What are the priorities in the Ministry of Natural Resources? I'm just learning in the last week or so about the fact that they've targeted the Aspen Wildlife Sanctuary, which is located in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. They've gone in there—this sanctuary has been around for many years, over 20 years. Audrey Tournay is the key person who started it. They've been doing all kinds of great work. What does the MNR do? It goes in and basically causes some animals that have been cared for to be euthanized, to be killed. That's the priority of the MNR.

I have to get on the record some of the response I'm getting from constituents in the riding of Parry Sound to this action. People are very much concerned about it. I'm not going to read who they are, but I'll read some samples of e-mails I've received just in the last couple of days on this issue. Here's one:

“Dear Mr. Miller

“We have just read the article in the Weekender regarding the euthanasia of five animals at the Aspen Wildlife Sanctuary.

“We are absolutely appalled, especially as we have worked with the sanctuary and know the wonderful work they do.

“How can we stop this?

“Who is responsible?”

Well, the McGuinty government and the Ministry of Natural Resources are responsible.

Another one:

“A short note to say that my daughter and I have both volunteered at the sanctuary over the years. The chance to work with the top-notch people in the sanctuary has been a great learning experience. It is amazing to see folks that really care about ... animals can run a facility efficiently, and on a shoestring budget.

“Perhaps, government types could take some notes from these gentle, caring folks. Destroying animals to meet some edict in an MNR policy should be reconsidered. Perhaps some of these wise decision-makers should make a visit to the sanctuary to see the fantastic work that Audrey Tournay, Tony and his staff do from morning to night, seven days a week.”

Another one:

“We cannot believe what we have been reading in the paper about this subject. It is an outrage. We have personally supported the sanctuary for many years and observed up close how many wild animals have been helped and taken care of.

“Who and what is the ‘enhanced wildlife rehab program’ anyway, that allows slaughter of innocent creatures without any accounting to anybody, it seems. It must be devastating to Audrey Tournay to see her life's work destroyed.

“We would greatly appreciate clarification.”

I know my mother has personally supported the Aspen Wildlife Sanctuary as well.

Another letter:

“I was very disturbed by the story covered in the local paper regarding the Aspen Wildlife Sanctuary. I have visited it in the capacity of my job since 1983. I have observed many people both young and old come there to view animals from the wild, that were in need of care and rehab. I don't understand how the provincial government can order the murder of some of these animals. (I use murder because that is what it is, not euthanasia which is a politically correct term when one wants to kill something.) No research was done to my knowledge by anyone from the MNR. This is after all a sanctuary, which means that animals from the wild, who are injured (sometimes by humans) can come and heal, and hopefully return to the wild, which I might add many have. If they can't return to the wild, they are given sanctuary. Hence the term....

“Right now, I am just really bothered by the fact that some civil servant (who has a piece of paper from some college or university) can dictate what is to happen to these animals. The animals that I have seen there are in very good hands. In my job, I have access to many places at the sanctuary, that are not open to the public....

“Please, please Mr. Miller, have the MNR stop this foolish action, and get them to concentrate on more serious matters, which I might add, they are failing to do, such as poaching. I'm sure the MNR could spend money and man-hours better than this. I thank you for your time.”

That's very well said.

"We totally disagree with the MNR's decision to euthanize any animal at the sanctuary just because it cannot reasonably be returned to its natural habitat because of its condition. We understand that the sanctuary has successfully rehabilitated many animals from poor health and while they are unable to assume their natural place in the wilds, the sanctuary has been able to give them a home in an environment very close to their natural habitat. To destroy a wild creature just because it is unable to assume its natural place in the environment seems criminal to us. If the same criteria was applied to humans we would require a lot more cemeteries than we now have!!"

"The Aspen Wildlife Sanctuary has been asked to euthanize five animals because they are injured in such a way that they are unable to be rehabilitated.

"As such Audrey Tournay and her staff have decided to allow the animals to live the rest of their lives out within the protection of the sanctuary.

"This is a huge tragedy as often it is humans or human activity that ends up debilitating the animal in the first place!"

I've got many, many e-mails on this issue.

"Please be advised that the Ministry of Natural Resources should be severely castigated for their recent incursion at the Aspen wildlife centre which is located in your constituency.

"Audrey Tournay has devoted her life and virtually all her personal resources to the care and treatment of injured animals. When you offer aid to an animal that is in distress you have no idea if they will achieve a full recovery or if they will be able to be returned to the wild. You hope for the best."

"Please, please do your utmost to halt the madness of the Ministry of Natural Resources' bureaucratic nonsense in singling out the Aspen ... refuge for injured animals for cruel and unusual punishment.

"I cannot imagine the horror the staff of the centre collectively felt when the animals they were trying to heal and protect were killed. Would we be callously taking the same steps with humans? I think not."

I've got many, many more.

I understand that there are five animals that have been euthanized and there are more on the hit list: a coyote, two striped skunks, two raccoons, a common raven and a white-tailed deer. The Ministry of Natural Resources did require, I think, two raccoons, two great blue herons and an owl to be euthanized, and I ask, what purpose is being served by that?

You can see the support that this wildlife sanctuary has. As well, they do good work, in collaboration with the Trillium district school board and the Near North District School Board, going around and educating students on the value of stewardship, of looking after their natural environment, yet the Ministry of Natural Resources has seen fit to make it their business to euthanize these animals. I say there's a lot of other work they should be doing that they aren't doing. The government should realign their priorities, and I hope they will do so.

Another example in my area of the same Ministry of Natural Resources going against the wishes of the local people, once again getting a lot of people in my riding quite upset: The Ministry of Natural Resources has decided that they want to shut down public access to the Port Sydney dam, which has been used as a public trail over the Muskoka River for over 100 years. They're going through an EA process. They had a public meeting a week ago Saturday in the Port Sydney community hall, and they sure heard from the general public. Now I hope they're listening, because the room—I don't know how many it would hold—was filled to capacity, overflowing, and virtually everyone there was against public access to this dam being cut off. The Ministry of Natural Resources says it's a work and safety issue; that this is a problem when their workers are there putting in the logs, particularly in wintertime. I say that the public has been using that dam for over 100 years, and that has to be maintained. We can find ways to maintain that public access and maintain safety for the MNR people who are there doing work on the dam.

I attended the public meeting for the first hour, until I had to go to another function. The people there were overwhelmingly in support of maintaining public access. The first guy with a question asked everyone, "Who here is from Port Sydney?" I don't know how many people were in the room, maybe 300 to 400, however many fit in that room. Everyone put up their hands that they were from Port Sydney. Then he asked, "Who here wants to maintain public access?" and every hand went up. If the government is listening, then they will maintain public access.

I only have a few more minutes to speak, but I wanted to get on the record some of the responses I'm getting. I have too many to get all of them on the record, but here are some of them, just to give you an idea.

"I am writing to add my voice to the chorus of others urging you to keep the dam that connects the Port Sydney community open to the public. Our property overlooks the dam and we are well aware of the hundreds of people who use that dam as a bridge throughout the year and particularly in the summer. It is a key part of the community's identity.

"I understand that concerns have been raised about the safety of the bridge. I am not aware of any casualties that have occurred on it. If the MNR is concerned about the safety of their workers as they drop and raise logs (and I have no idea why they would be), they could rope off the bridge while they do that."

There were many constructive suggestions at the public meeting.

I have another one here. This was after the meeting, obviously: "Gentlemen ... the people have spoken ... please listen!!!"

"I am writing this letter to express my concern with the attempt by the ministry to close the Port Sydney dam to pedestrian traffic.

“For the past five years my family along with a group of six other families have been regularly vacationing in this area.

“We have used the dam as a bridge to get to the town of Port Sydney almost daily while on holidays.

“We walk to the town for ice cream, the newspaper, to go to the beach, or just for exercise....

“My family which includes young children has not at any time felt the crossing of the dam was dangerous or perilous. Whereas walking along the side of the road with cars speeding by is certainly nerve-racking with children.”

#### 1910

Another one: “Please find attached the comments and questions that I include on the comment form which I was given at the public open house.”

They make some good points: “I frequently walk across the Port Sydney dam as a part of my fitness routine. In my 36 years as a full-time resident of the village, I have yet to see the dam being serviced.

“The danger that is perceived for workers and pedestrians obviously occurs only in winter. A more substantial fence ... other than the wire/vinyl that is there now, as well as the posting of potential fines for those who access the dam when workers are present could eliminate whatever danger which might exist for workers. A high chain-link fence along the edges of the present walkway would eliminate the danger....” What I think is being suggested here is that there are solutions.

“If you think that Port Sydney people will allow an historic location to be destroyed, apparently for the sake of MNR’s fear of litigation, you are wrong. Just look at how the citizens united” in other cases, and it goes on.

I don’t have time to read all these letters. Here’s one other short one: “I have been a summer resident of Port Sydney for 80 years. I do enjoy my walk ‘around’ the dam. It is part of the charm of the village. Please do not close the bridge/walkway in Port Sydney.”

There are other members who would like to speak this evening. I have a long list of points I’d like to make, but I would just wrap up by saying there are these two issues in my riding, and it’s obvious that the government is out of touch with the people of the area. I hope they will listen in both these cases to the people who are speaking loud and clearly. And I’ve gotten some of their concerns on the record this evening.

#### **Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):**

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: If you’d indulge me, I’d like to introduce Mr. Kirk Wrinn, who comes from Mr. Brownell’s riding. He was one of our hosts downstairs for the Advocis society of financial planners. He’s one of the greatest financial planners in the world. Kirk Wrinn, ladies and gentlemen.

**The Acting Speaker:** That’s not a point of order, but it was a very good advertisement. Welcome.

Further debate?

**Mr. Tabuns:** I appreciate this opportunity to address the House on the question of supply. As you’re well aware, this evening we’re talking about the request from

the government for permission from the Legislature to spend money so that the operations of government can continue. It’s an opportunity for us, as legislators, to give an assessment of the government’s performance, the reality of whether or not they are spending money wisely and whether or not we believe that they show the managerial competence and the commitment that’s needed to actually run this province. It’s my observation in my brief time here in this House that in fact this government is not a particularly good manager, that this is a government that confuses spending money with results. Frankly, where it can’t spend money, it will rely on puffery to look as though there’s actual activity going on.

I want to touch on three areas in the time that’s available to me. The first is the OPA, Ontario Power Authority, and its investments in energy efficiency; secondly, public infrastructure renewal and the transportation crisis in the greater Golden Horseshoe; and lastly, public infrastructure renewal and the whole issue of climate change. These are substantial issues, ones that this government should be paying attention to, taking action on, and ones where I believe their inadequacies are quite apparent and quite glaring.

In the spring of this year, the federal Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development reported on the climate change efforts of the federal government. I cite the comments of that commissioner because I think that what she found with regard to the federal government is applicable to the behaviour of this government in terms of its response to the electricity crisis and is consistent with this government’s lack of action on climate change.

After 18 months of study, she came back with a number of simple conclusions, foremost amongst them that Canada was not on track to meet its Kyoto obligations. This was after \$6 billion in funding had been announced since 1997. Over that time, greenhouse gas emissions in Canada had risen by 27%. What the commissioner found was that even the basic tools required to determine whether progress had been made, even basic tools to determine if the investments had been wise, were missing, were absent.

Much has been said about this government’s activities with regard to climate change. There is no climate change plan to date. Commitments that were made to address the issue of climate change, for the government to be able to say it was addressing climate change around coal phase-out—all broken. Interestingly though, this government continues to claim that it is reducing electrical demand in the province. In fact, the recent report of the chief conservation officer working for the Ontario Power Authority claimed 950 megawatts in reductions since 2004. However, that claim is not backed up by two of the most significant electricity-related bodies in this province.

When you go to Ontario Power Generation’s most recent quarterly report and you look at their assessment of demand and what’s impacting their operations, the OPA and the conservation strategy don’t even register on

the radar. They are not factors. OPG President Jim Hankinson said, "The more moderate weather this year reduced the need for power for air conditioning in the summer." He also said, "The decline in activity in some sectors of the economy also held down the overall demand for power." Not a word, not a whisper about the claims of the Ontario Power Authority to have reduced demand by almost 1,000 megawatts in this province.

The IESO, the Independent Electricity System Operator, released a report on October 2. They talked about power demand and they had this to say: "Despite the record peak demand set this summer, reduced energy-intensive industrial load has led to lower energy demand in 2006 and throughout the forecast."

In other words, any claim to have had substantial impact on electrical demand in this province through the efforts of this government doesn't register with the two most significant agencies responsible for either making sure electricity gets to homes or generating that electricity in the first place. Those efforts were not consequential to those bodies. That says something significant. Because when you claim that you are having a big impact on electrical demand and yet your efforts are not noticeable, then we, as legislators, have to ask whether those efforts were of any consequence, which is why I hearken back to the federal government, the federal Liberals, and their complete failure, their inability to take action on climate change, something that many of us noticed for years, only recently validated by the environmental commissioner.

This past summer power demand spiked in Ontario, but in Toronto power demand dropped. Toronto has actually—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** Who funded those programs?

**Mr. Tabuns:** Interestingly, I was just heckled by the Minister of Energy. Those programs were funded by Toronto Hydro, which had to go to the OEB to get permission for \$40 million worth of spending. May I go on?

The release from Toronto Hydro reads, "On August 1st a number of heat wave and electricity consumption records were broken in Ontario. Here in Toronto, we were able to actually reduce our electricity peak demand below the record level of 5,005 megawatts set a year ago. We have more summer days ahead of us and more records may fall, but so far Torontonians are proving that conservation and demand management does work and is an important part of Ontario's electricity supply strategy.

"What is remarkable about this is that Toronto accounts for approximately 20% of the electricity used in Ontario. While the rest of the province increased its use by approximately 4% or 845 megawatts last Tuesday, we managed to reduce our peak by five megawatts. And this is a very conservative estimate! Considering normal load growth, and 'heat island' effects in the city during heat waves, we could reasonably expect an increase in inner-city temperatures that would drive electricity consumption higher in Toronto than in surrounding regions.

The fact that we reduced our peak compared to last year's record is a sign that conservation and demand management are working in Toronto.

The reality is that Toronto Hydro and the city of Toronto have been leaders, and the province of Ontario has been lagging behind, has been claiming forward motion that is not detectable by other agencies of that government.

#### 1920

In November, Premier McGuinty made another announcement about energy efficiency programs. He announced on November 3 that three separate programs would be rolled out next summer, including one where hydro companies offer cash rebates for old beer fridges. This was not an announcement that was greeted with joy and enthusiasm on the part of the environmental community. Keith Stewart from the World Wildlife Fund said that rules and standards for appliances and electronics could go a lot further. He said that this was not the kind of program that was going to make him jump up and down for joy.

The energy minister was asked by reporters what specifically would be the impact of these investments and these programs. How would we be able to tell whether or not the investments achieved their target? How would we know if in fact these efforts were of consequence? His response to questions about specific figures on how many megawatts the programs would save came in an answer of "substantial." There were not real numbers given. This is a government that sees spending as equivalent to solving a problem. This is not a government that looks for a target, decides on how to get there and follows through. It's a government that likes to make spending announcements, but not really a government that likes to deliver.

I want to go on to public infrastructure renewal and the gridlock and transportation crisis in the greater Golden Horseshoe. It's been projected and generally accepted that current growth trends in the greater Golden Horseshoe will increase travel time by over 40% over the next 25 years. That's a disturbing thought. If you travel around the GTA, if you travel to Hamilton, you know that people spend a lot of time in gridlock, in traffic, sitting there waiting for cars to move. You know that this is becoming a prime political problem in the areas around Toronto. It's becoming a larger and larger political problem within Toronto itself. People are profoundly frustrated by the shape of the urban regions they live in. They're profoundly frustrated by the impact that the lack of action on transit and transportation is having.

Beyond those matters of inconvenience, beyond those matters of increased cost for business operations, which are measured in the billions, there's the question of our severe smog problem. There's no question we have a smog problem. People know that. They have difficulty breathing on the worst days in the summer. They know that the exhaust from cars and other vehicles is having an impact. They want action on this. When you ask the government about its plans, they will talk very grandly about how it is taking action. But in fact, when you actually



press the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal on their goals to deal with these problems, there are none. There's no way to determine whether the spending that is planned is going to have any impact.

On November 14, in estimates, I repeatedly asked the minister what his target was for control of travel times. If a 40% increase was bad, was he going to spend money with a goal of having a 20% increase in travel times or a 10% increase in travel times? Perhaps his goal was to stabilize so that we wouldn't have an increase in travel times, so that we wouldn't have an increase in frustration. He did say that the investment in transit infrastructure was breathtaking, and maybe it will be. But at no point could he say that he had given instructions to his staff to, "Put together a plan, look at the costs and give me an outline of what it will cost to stabilize travel times so the gridlock and the congestion in the greater Golden Horseshoe don't get worse."

So what I have to say to people who are concerned about this issue is that it seems pretty clear that money's going to be spent. It seems very clear to me that studies are going to be carried out. But no one—apparently not the minister, apparently not his staff—has any sense at the end of the day what those investments and that change in regulations will mean for actual travel times and the creation of smog in the greater Golden Horseshoe. Or they have one and they're not telling legislators or the public.

That, I think, is central to the problem we have with this government. They will speak at length about their spending plans, but it's like pulling teeth to ask for the ultimate impact of those plans, such as they are.

When you look at the plans for containing growth for the greater Golden Horseshoe, you come across a study done by the Neptis Foundation, which looked at the growth plan put forward by the minister. They actually think there's a lot of good stuff here, but as written—and here are their words—"The growth plan, as it now stands, seems unlikely to achieve its own objectives." What they're saying is that business as usual, which the government is holding out as bad news, is most likely what's going to come to be. Even with all this flurry, even with all these plans, we will get business as usual: a 40% increase in travel times over the next 25 years.

Interestingly, they go on to say, "Given the momentum of current growth patterns and the volume of conventional greenfield development that is already approved, only very bold action will noticeably alter the future of the region."

So not only will the plan fail in its own terms, but unless there's a significant departure from that plan, that business-as-usual projection of a lot of people spending a lot of time sitting in their cars, wishing they were home, is going to come true. Get ready to sit in your car for a lot more hours and get ready to breathe a lot more smog. That's the outcome of a lack of planning, a lack of direction, and a lack of leadership and will on the part of this government.

I want to talk as well about climate change and the failure of this government to take on this issue. The David Suzuki Foundation has said before that this government has no climate change plan. Interestingly, although a number of times I've asked the Minister of the Environment, "Where's the climate change plan? What's your direction? What are your goals?" I'm always assured that things are being taken care of, that it's in hand, that they're clear about where they're going. Even in the last month or month and a half, the minister has convened a group of people for consultations on putting together a climate change plan. I tend to think that indicates that one didn't exist beforehand.

During the estimates, I asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal about consideration for climate change spending in his public infrastructure renewal plans, because again, when you talk to the Minister of the Environment, she says, "All the ministries are addressing this matter. All the ministries have responsibility." What people out there may not know is that this government is talking about an investment in the range of \$30 billion over the next five years, \$100 billion over the next 20 years—big bucks. Yet when you ask the minister, "You're spending this much money. You're going to shape investment and infrastructure in this province for decades to come. Do you incorporate climate change planning into those spending plans?" the answer is no. You ask, you press, but you don't get any plan, any measurement, any target. When I ask, "Do you have a role?" I'm told "Yes. We have some very ambitious plans." So I ask, "Tell us, in reductions in megatonnes of greenhouse gases," which is the standard for determining whether you're actually having an impact, "what's going to happen from the \$30 billion or \$100 billion you're going to invest? No answer; not even calculation in those categories. You can't measure if you don't even start setting the framework within which to measure. So you have to ask why a government that says it has a commitment to this issue doesn't even think about it in any systematic, targeted way when it plans to spend \$30 billion to \$100 billion.

### 1930

Interestingly, when the Environmental Commissioner came out with his report, *Neglecting Our Obligations*, looking at exactly how this government has performed in the environmental field, he talked about adaptation to climate change. I'm going to read what he has to say, because I think it's consequential.

He says Ontario has not yet developed a formal strategy to deal with adaptation to climate change, an approach now considered essential for ensuring that the province's ecosystems and built environments such as bridges, dams, sewage treatment plants or drainage systems will be able to withstand the effects of climate change. Projections are that the change in climate will bring more unpredictable weather, including intense rain and ice storms, heat waves and droughts, lower water levels in the Great Lakes and increased costs for cooling

buildings, along with threats to the health or even survival of local plant and animal species.

I think that's a fairly straightforward statement by the Environmental Commissioner. It's a big issue. If you look around the world, increasingly jurisdictions are beginning to take adaptation into account. When they make multi-billion dollar investments, they think about it. The World Bank has issued guidelines for its development projects. This is an issue that governments around the world are starting to come to grips with, except, apparently, here. Because when you ask, "Do you factor in the changing climate to the new roads, bridges, dams, hospitals and schools?" no, it's not there. So you have to say you have a government that, when it comes to the larger environmental questions, is rudderless, that passes on opportunities to actually deal with these questions, these issues, in the course of its normal spending, and that, as the Environmental Commissioner says, has no coherent plan. When it comes to environmental issues and spending in areas that have an impact on the environment, this government is derelict; it has left its duties behind.

We have to vote for this motion. We don't want the wheels of government to stop. But the simple reality is that no one should have any confidence that the money is being spent wisely.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The member from Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge—maybe not in that order.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The order is fine. I think it's the order of the ridings in population, if I'm not mistaken. At least that's the way mine works, Pickering having the greatest degree of population in the riding, and then Ajax and subsequently Uxbridge. It really just depends on where I am in the riding as to what order they're in. Certainly in Uxbridge it's Uxbridge–Pickering–Ajax, or Uxbridge–Ajax–Pickering. It seems to suit the purpose for a whole variety of reasons.

I'm pleased tonight to be able to enter into this discussion and debate on the motion for interim supply. I think probably one of the best parts about a motion of this nature, among other things, apart from the material aspects, is that it gives the members a fairly wide-ranging opportunity to explore a number of issues and matters they may or may not otherwise have the opportunity to do, as members will rise on a point of order to call them back to a bill at hand. It's probably a little easier on the Speaker as well, because the Speaker doesn't have to worry quite as much about whether they're on topic because of the nature of the motion covering so many ministerial areas and functions.

I must say Mr. Tabuns spoke fairly extensively on the motion itself and the implications therein—not that I necessarily agreed with everything he said by any means, but nonetheless, he spoke more extensively to the motion than might otherwise be the case.

Nonetheless, it remains an important motion in the business of the Legislature. It's an important opportunity,

obviously, for the legislators to ensure that we fulfill the authority to implement government programs, that we fulfill the commitments and put the visions the government has into practice and to ensure that the wheels of government continue to turn when we may not be here formally for a period of time. We have to make sure that bills are paid and that our partners in the province, whether it's a transfer partner, which I'll speak about in a bit, as well, or structures that have been set up to support them financially, actually see that happen during times when we're not here. It's one that supersedes other motions for a variety of reasons. Most importantly, without it, no government would be able to undertake the mandate with which it was entrusted by the constituents in the province.

The current spending authority—and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal spoke to this—ends at the end of this year, December 31, I believe. This particular supply motion will ensure that we can continue doing the business of the province, the financial business primarily, during the next six months until the end of June of next year, which takes us over the end of our fiscal year, the end of March. As a result, when the debate is completed and the vote is taken, and on the premise that the Legislature and a majority supports the motion, we will continue to be able to make the payments that we need to make beyond January 1, 2007, and for the six months that follow that.

Without the spending authority so desperately required for the business, we would be unable to make most of our scheduled, and even some unscheduled, payments that might occur. As an example—I mean, it wouldn't happen—nursing homes wouldn't get the transfers that they need, whether it's municipal or private sector or non-profit, to be able to run the business of our long-term-care homes. Our hospital partners, through their boards of directors, wouldn't have the financial resources that they need to carry on their work on a day-to-day basis; the doctors we visit on a daily basis, as the case might be, wouldn't be able to submit their bills for payment effectively. Municipalities, as an example, wouldn't be able to get their gas tax money now that we are at the full two cents a litre for gas tax being transferred to municipalities for the purposes of public transit—they wouldn't have those resources available as they plan their next budget year and their transit initiatives. Those who are on social services, who desperately need the support of the province, would not be in the position to receive that through our either single-tier or upper-tier municipalities who principally have the responsibility for that service level. School boards certainly, as well, without those transfer payments, wouldn't be able to function: teachers wouldn't get paid; custodians wouldn't get paid; supplies wouldn't be purchased; the heat wouldn't get turned on during the winter; and even, in a few cases, probably the air conditioning might not get turned on in the summer, although there are not too many schools that I'm aware of that are very heavily air-conditioned at this point.

In other words, without the motion, our government would be unable to fulfill the mandate that we're respon-

sible for, for the people across this great province of Ontario. Since we came to office some three years ago, the province has been in a period of time where they've benefited from sustained economic growth. Growth is no accident; it just doesn't happen coincidentally. It needs a variety of factors working for it—locally, provincially, nationally and internationally—but it certainly is dependent, at least in part, on the strategies that a government puts in place for its province.

In this case, we firmly believe that some of our economic success during this period of time is as a result of a plan that is rooted in future economic growth. We firmly believe that as we go forward, we'll continue to see economic growth as a result of some of the strategic planning that's been taking place during the past three years. It's certainly a plan to build a stronger Ontario on the strength of the people of the province of Ontario, not on their backs, but on their skills and on their knowledge and by investing in their health, whether it's direct investments in capital infrastructure for hospitals—I know in my own riding, my own community. Actually, it's a shared facility, primarily with the member for Whitby–Ajax; the hospital sits in her riding. We're anxious to see a shovel in the ground next spring so that with the long-awaited hospital expansion at the Ajax-Pickering site, the Rouge Valley system will see its much-needed expansion. Clearly our capacity to ensure that funds flow will be important to them as they finish their planning during the course of this coming spring. I know the member from Whitby–Ajax will be equally as anxious as I am to see that facility take place and I hope that we'll be able to be there at the same time next summer or early fall, as the case might be, turning sod. Maybe we'll get on a shovel. Some have suggested that if for some reason we can't turn sod, I'll arrange for a steam shovel to arrive regardless. It might not be yellow—some have suggested yellow—it could be red. Nonetheless, we'll get a steam shovel on site and dig our own hole—whatever it takes to make things happen there. That's indicative, I think, of what needs to happen as part of the economic growth and ensuring the health of our community as part of that.

#### 1940

We need to have an educated population, an educated workforce, and we have to remain very competitive. That's to ensure that the province is successful, not only that we are successful as a community for the next year or two or five, but that we set in place the types of strategies that will ensure economic growth and prosperity for a decade or more.

I ask those here to cast their minds back to 2003. Where did we find ourselves some three years ago? In my view, our public education system was faltering at best, was failing our students at its worst. I can recall prior to that a former minister speaking about creating a crisis in education. Clearly it seemed to be an objective at that point in time to do that for a particular government's reasons. We're in a far different place today than we were then. We have stable relationships with our edu-

cators. It's indicative of the work they're doing in the classroom, and that's what we need to ensure. The supply motion provides a capacity to maintain that particular stability in the long-term contractual arrangements we have established with the staff in the schools in the province of Ontario.

The health care system was anything but healthy at that point. Hospitals weren't being built and opened. In effect, hospitals had been and continued to be closed in the province of Ontario in an effort to rationalize the system. Unfortunately, that rationalization was not to the benefit of patients or to our communities at large.

Public transit had been orphaned. The province had for all practical means discontinued its support for public transit and the municipalities were facing an even greater burden to maintain the existing level of service, let alone being able to make much-needed improvements or take any bold steps in respect to public transit, moving people from their cars on to efficient systems, being able to generate the volume of transit users that make it viable outside of places like the city of Toronto. In many jurisdictions, it's tough to keep the systems going with the lower ridership as you try to attract new riders and try to build the system so that not only can you move people from their vehicles but you can also entice people who don't have vehicles to use it more efficiently and effectively. And give them clear choices: give seniors, students and those who don't necessarily travel long distances to work the opportunity to use systems in their own communities. Public transit had been an orphan and clearly the investments in public transit over the past three years have changed that dramatically. Certainly the establishment of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and its new chair, the former mayor of Burlington, Rob MacIsaac, is going to make a tremendous difference in that during the coming period of time.

We've made and committed serious investment in post-secondary education and thus we need to ensure that the monies will flow to fulfill those obligations on an ongoing basis. I can tell you that in Durham region—not in my riding particularly but certainly shared throughout the region—the University of Ontario Institute of Technology was desperately in need of stabilized funding, although they had initial funding. It came from the former government. Jim Flaherty and Janet Ecker were both great champions of that facility, as were the other members from Durham region, Mr. Ouellette and Mr. O'Toole. There was great start-up funding. Unfortunately, as we took over government, all of the pieces hadn't been put in place at that point to allow the facility to continue to grow and feel comfortable in those early tough stages. We've stabilized some of that funding. Mr. Bentley was out there recently, and he'll talk in a moment about some of that, but he certainly has been a champion of the facility, as was the former minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Minister Chambers.

The provincial and municipal governments not long ago, in 2003, were at loggerheads. I came from the municipal sector. Some of the folks who are here either

have been there recently or came from that sector prior to that, and we were butting heads pretty hard. There was not much commonality between the sectors. We were finding ways to argue with each other, more so than ways to co-operate with each other, for a variety of reasons, not the least of which had to do with the downloading of costs onto municipalities and the need to have municipalities transfer those costs to the residential taxpayer, and the pushback that came from our taxpayers, and rightfully so. We had little choice but to fight with the provincial government of the day in an effort to ensure they got the message that we couldn't continue this process of downloading because of the cost on the residential tax base—in particular, to those who were on fixed incomes with increasing value in their homes through market value assessment but no increased resource on a day-to-day basis to actually pay the bills they were being asked for.

As a matter of fact, I think that on the municipal front the most notable accomplishment, if one can call it that—one that still stays in everybody's mind—was the mega-mergers that occurred, and the debate that was ongoing and continues to be ongoing in some contexts with respect to that.

We woke up in the fall of 2003 with a fiscal reality of a \$5.5-billion fiscal deficit. We had anticipated some of it, clearly. That debate has gone on that we knew, in spite of the fact that the books were supposed to be balanced, that they wouldn't be, but I don't think anybody at that point really anticipated the magnitude of the issue we would be facing.

Put simply, our mandate then, three years ago, was to build a better Ontario. It was kind of like pick-up sticks—you know, as if someone had taken the pick-up sticks and scattered them on the floor. Now it was time to rebuild by picking up a stick at a time and not shifting too many other pieces so that the whole game would be lost in the process.

Our school system today: We have more teachers, the class sizes are smaller, the test scores are higher, and the buildings, physically, are in better shape. We need these financial resources through our supply bill to be able to ensure that continues.

Primary health care, community care and long-term care are improving the health of Ontarians. Hospitals are actually being built. Shovels are going in the ground or the plans have moved well forward. We have primary health care teams approved. Many are now in operation; others are still ramping up. We've established a whole new structure around how communities will engage in health care through the structure of the LHINs, which are really beginning to take formal shape and action, and we are looking forward to all of that.

We're seeing today that hundreds of thousands of students are benefiting from the commitment to \$6.2 billion in post-secondary education. I mentioned UOIT, but I'll speak briefly about, in my own community and in that way the broader community, the level of confidence that's being shown in the community now, to a large

measure as a result of that long-term not only stable annual commitment, but growth-related commitment, because we need that.

Recently, there was an event that Minister Bentley had the opportunity to attend in which there was a \$1-million donation to the institute, that new facility. It's new. It's small in relative terms, but the E.P. Taylor family and Tribute Homes jointly made a \$1-million commitment to that facility. It was hosted, emceed, by Sandy Hawley, the renowned Canadian jockey, who is now also a spokesman for Tribute Homes.

The minister's attention to that matter, as well as support of members throughout Durham region on both sides of the House, I think, was important, and certainly will continue to be important. I think it's reflective of what's happening in other jurisdictions in the province, where the private sector and the community are leveraged for support when they see government being there at the table as well. It is very, very difficult to get community support and private sector support for initiatives in which the government is not seen to be at the table. I can tell you that from my municipal days as a member of our local hospital foundation. It's a struggle to get the kind of dollars you need on your 30% commitment at the time—it's changed now. We've changed the structure and the dollar value. But it's a struggle to get the community to get to those levels on projects of \$10 million, \$20 million, \$30 million and \$50 million in the absence of a clear indication that the province is actually going to be there, and the \$30-billion plan for capital investment signals to communities that we're going to be, that we have the capacity and that we're prepared to find the means to be at the table at a point where they're ready to go.

#### 1950

We're making huge investments in public transit and part of this process will help to continue that, both in new public transit and in municipal roads and bridges. In last year's budget alone, as we came to the end of the budget year, we had some \$400 million we managed to provide to municipalities throughout the province in one-time funding, but available to them immediately. As they prepared and finalized their budgets, they were able to put that into action immediately to improve their basic infrastructure. In addition to things like COMRIF and other structured partnership programs, this was a one-time opportunity to not only do things in their communities but enhance the economic climate of their communities as well.

We have an energy plan beginning to unfold now that's speaking to the long-term energy needs of the province, as well as encouraging conservation. A modest amount of some of those dollars is going toward conservation initiatives and ensuring the conservation message is getting out there.

At the end of February or thereabouts, I'm going to have the opportunity to hold the third annual energy conservation forum in my community at the Pickering Town Centre. I've had the support and privilege of being able

to use their facility. It's nice. It's a captive audience that travels through the mall on a Saturday, so you don't have to really go looking for the audience. People are keen to learn anyway, but they don't have to make a special trip, in many cases, because they may be at the mall, in addition to those who come. I'm looking forward to the 30- or 40-odd conservation organizations—municipalities, private sector initiatives, our local utility, Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One—that will participate in that yet again for a third year. I think their ongoing participation is, to a large measure, reflective of our commitment to initiatives that are important to them in supporting their business models as well.

Today's provincial finances are managed with a high degree of transparency and a degree of prudence required by a democracy that works well. I've had the opportunity over the past three years to work directly in two ministries, first with Minister Phillips at Management Board, now government services, and, subsequent to that, with both Minister Sorbara and Minister Duncan at finance, and now Mr. Sorbara again. I've had the opportunity to see the breadth of the provincial enterprise, as it's referred to by the bureaucracy and others on occasion, which I may not have had the same opportunity to do working within a ministry or ministries. It gives me a great deal of pride to have worked in that environment, because I've seen not only the political activity and the debate and discussion that goes on over particular initiatives and the to and fro that happens with that, but I've also had a chance to see the incredible expertise and professionalism of the Ontario public service, not just here in the Legislature, with the assembly and the folks we work with, but across multiple ministries as they traipse through—and they traipse in numbers some days. The Ministry of Health may come in with a number of staff in support, in the event that there are questions and queries that need to be asked and responded to, to make sure the expertise is there. I've been tremendously impressed by their work, their professionalism and their ability to detach themselves from the politics, clearly understanding what their role is in delivering government policy and what our role is in the development of government policy.

I'll tell you quickly that when I first arrived at Queen's Park, after three or four months I was mildly frustrated. It was kind of like, "When are we going to do something? I'm a little tired of going to briefings. When do we actually move on with this initiative?" I think it was an ADM I was chatting with who said, "Look, we're ready to go on that particular initiative, but until we get clear direction from your government—from cabinet, from the minister—on that particular file, it is kind of on hold. It's slowed down a bit. It may be a great initiative, it may be one you want to continue with from the former government, or it may be one that you want to put on the shelf if you have some other agenda at this point in time." They were so very professional in the way they managed that process, understanding that they had an obligation to wait upon government, to brief and provide

all the information necessary to allow cabinet to make a determination on initiatives that they felt were important to move forward, and then move deliberately on those and not in any way try to undermine those for any particular reason because they have been wedded to an earlier policy directive. As I say, I've been impressed with ministry staff throughout the entire enterprise, as it's referred to, and the opportunity I've had to work with them.

I think that the plan we set out is working. I can see it in my constituency. I can see it as I visit schools and talk to educators. I can see it as I meet with members of our hospital board or hospital foundation or the hospital staff. I can see it at the university and college when I get the opportunity to visit there at events or speak with their presidents, as the case might be. I can see it when I talk to the friends and contacts I have within Ontario Power Generation, in particular, because of the role that I played there with the nuclear plant in Pickering. I can see it when I talk to my colleagues at Veridian Energy, the successor to our local utilities, forming a new utility, about the sixth- or seventh-largest in the province now. But I have, like you do, a chance to interact with people on a great variety of community initiatives. I can tell as I've talked to them, as I talk to business about what has happened, as I talk to manufacturers or retailers, that we're clearly on the right track in a long-term initiative to ensure that this province is on track and remains on track for some considerable time to come.

It's not as though we're without challenges. Clearly, the challenges that we've been facing in the past while remain in front of us. Oil prices have come down somewhat, but they're still high relative to where they were, and we really can't be sure where they're heading at this point in time. The Canadian dollar remains strong, which is fine if you're travelling outside the country; not so great, though, if you're exporting. Interest rates, you will read on a daily basis, are either going up or going down, but they're a little higher than they were just a few years ago. Clearly, what's happening south of the border, reading the Financial Post today—and one only needs to look at the paper or the media—is that there is a weakness in the American economy that can, and likely will have, some impact on us, depending on our ability to stay above that fray.

We will do our part to ensure the economy withstands those external factors to the greatest extent that we can. Part of that is managing not only our own finances in a prudent fashion, but assisting those organizations and entities we are partnering with to ensure that they remain economically strong and viable and then can attract to our communities the type of investment that creates those other job initiatives we wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to see.

This is an important piece of legislation because it does allow us the capacity to continue our obligation to those who work here for the province of Ontario and our partners that we have a direct relationship with, and in setting the stage as well, for people to have confidence in

our ability to continue to manage the economy and manage the province.

I'm pleased to be able to stand tonight and speak to the motion. I could probably take the balance of the time, but I won't do that, because I know we have other members of our caucus who would also like the opportunity to express their views on this particular motion. With that, I will sit down.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton):** It's my pleasure tonight to join the debate with my colleagues on the motion for supply and concurrence. As my colleague mentioned earlier, this is a very important motion, obviously, that we're all going to have to pass because the order of business has to continue. It does give us an opportunity, though, to reflect on some of the issues that are important to our constituents but also on the areas that are of importance to the broader context of what happens here in Ontario.

It reminds me of just last Friday, when I was able to host at a little event in my riding, with the federal member of Parliament, as well as the school board trustees, all the new city councillors who were elected in the city of Ottawa to discuss issues of mutual concern.

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** Which ones did you endorse?

**Ms. MacLeod:** I had one of the people, Mr. Watson, whom you actually endorsed at my event, so it was wonderful. We got to talk about issues that were very important under the general category of growth, which included education and transportation issues, as well as health care issues. One of the big issues for myself and some of the councillors and school board trustees I'm working with in my constituency is a new public school, a secondary school in Nepean–Carleton, that's obviously very much needed because we've got such a fast-growing community, with the highest birth rate in all of Canada. Obviously our school board, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, has voted to authorize the final design phases for a grade 7 school in our community of Longfields and Davidson Heights. This is very important. We've got three feeder schools—the Adrienne Clarkson school, the Farley Mowat school and the Berrigan Public School, all elementary—that require about 1,200 classroom spots for children in south Nepean. Currently, these kids are being bused out of their zone. They require a school in their own community. The additional problem, of course, is that some of these kids have decided to leave the public system for either the private system or one of the other three school boards in the city of Ottawa.

**2000**

It is one of those things that the community has gotten behind. We're very pleased that the province of Ontario has finally lifted a three-year moratorium on school closings in order to make way for new educational facilities, and hopefully one will be this new school at Longfields and Davidson Heights.

We've been calling on the province and we've been working very hard with one another: school board trustees Alex Getty, Greg Laws, former trustee Norm MacDonald who has brought us the three former schools

I just mentioned, as well as city councillors Jan Harder and Steve Desroches. We were quite pleased two weeks ago when the famed Canadian author Farley Mowat, who's one of the namesakes of the feeder schools, decided to sign our petition and be the first person to sign it. Since then, we've got 11,081 signatures in just one week. We'll continue our petition-signing and I'll be continuing to bring it up in this Legislature right up until next Thursday when we rise for the holiday season. But it just goes to show you that in areas of this province—some of the areas, anyway—we've got such high growth that we have to look after not only our young, but also our elderly.

That brings me to my next point. One of the big issues that has come up in one of the aging populations in my community has been the shortage of long-term-care beds in the province and in particular within the city of Ottawa, where we're short about 850 beds. In the summer, I contacted the Premier via letter on August 15, first of all to indicate to him that Ontario needs to acknowledge and accept that there is a looming health care crisis in our city with respect to no new long-term-care facilities, affordable retirement homes, home care, recreational facilities and programs for our aging population. I mentioned to him at that time—and certainly today, we're reaching a critical level. Second, I've asked him to get involved, to put a plan forward that will begin to address the crisis in long-term-care facilities.

As I mentioned several times in this Legislature, 850 long-term-care beds are what we're waiting for in the city of Ottawa. Of those, about 130 patients are waiting in hospital beds. They're known as bed blockers. That's been creating a shortage for those who require immediate health care. There are about 590 additional people who were placed in facilities who are waiting for nursing home care.

In Ottawa, there are currently no new plans for any new nursing homes to reduce that shortage. The only replacement is the Madonna Nursing Home in Orléans, and of the 155 beds that are available, 75 are already spoken for by the current residents. In my view, the time to build new long-term-care facilities is now, not when the crisis hits. Of course, there would be some people in the Ottawa area who would argue that the crisis has already hit, because they're already waiting on long lists for long-term-care facilities, medical procedures, home care and other affordable retirement homes. That's one of the big issues in my constituency, along with the school.

In addition, when we're talking about long-term care, you also think about Bill 140. In the 2003 election, the McGuinty government made a commitment that they would provide \$6,000 in additional care and ensure an additional 20 minutes of care for every long-term-care resident. Unfortunately, with Bill 140, not only does it not address new beds, it doesn't address the \$6,000 and it doesn't address the 20 minutes of additional care. That's a bit of an issue that we have in the city and of course throughout the province.

Recently, as many people here know, I used to work at the city of Ottawa for a city councillor there, Jan Harder. She indicated to me that Bill 140 does not address the very needs of our most vulnerable long-term-care home residents. She adds, "It adds a burden of administrative compliance and documentation that will bleed dollars from front-line care without a significant increase in funding. For municipalities it represents another down-load of legislative requirements without the dollars to support them." That's a real concern to us in the city as we prepare to move forward.

I do want to congratulate the city of Ottawa for opening up some of its long-term-care beds at the Peter D. Clark long-term-care facility, as well as at the Carleton Lodge, which is in my home constituency of Nepean-Carleton.

These are some very important issues.

The other issue I've been able to raise in this Legislature is the issue of the long wait lists in the city of Ottawa with respect to what's happening with the acute care beds but also what's happening with cardiac treatment, pediatric treatment and so many other issues that we have been dealing with. We tend to be on the last of every list. We rank at the bottom of a growing number of health care wait time lists. The situation is getting worse and the provincial government doesn't seem to have a plan for dealing with the issue in our city. First we learned that our seniors have some of the highest wait times in the province when it comes to trying to find a long-term-care bed, then it was our children in Ottawa who have to wait longer than any other children in the province for pediatric surgery, and just last week we learned that we had the absolute worst wait times in Ontario for radiation treatments. That's obviously very disappointing.

We've also learned in the past that according to other published reports, waits for prostate cancer surgery and heart surgery are twice as long in Ottawa as in the rest of the province. Hip replacement waits are 154 days in Ottawa versus the provincial average of 99 days, and knee replacement waits are 194 days in Ottawa versus the provincial average of 146. So we're concerned that we're being either underfunded or we are clearly being terribly neglected.

Those are some of the issues on the health care front.

Another issue has come up in the last week. I and my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, Toby Barrett, have brought up the very important issue of supply management. I wanted to talk about dairy farmers in my constituency of Nepean-Carleton. They are such hard-working people. When I've had an opportunity to work with other members at other levels of government, the farming community in my constituency of Nepean-Carleton has always been so welcoming, so kind. They are just hard-working, wonderful people, and they've contributed to our economy in such a meaningful way.

At a time today when agriculture seems to be under attack, Ontario's 5,282 dairy farmers continue to flourish. They produce almost 2.5 billion litres of milk each year.

They've added about 42,500 jobs to our community. They've generated farm cash receipts totalling \$1.6 billion.

They operate under something that's very important. If you go out canvassing in Nepean-Carleton, it doesn't matter what election—federal, provincial or municipal—the issue of supply management will come up from time to time. It's the foundation of our rural economy. Under supply management, consumers have guaranteed supplies of high-quality products at fair and stable prices and, in return, the farmers get stable incomes and receive a fair share of food prices. But the supply management sectors are nervous that ongoing trade negotiations might threaten this system.

That's why my entire caucus, including our leader, John Tory, has signed the FarmGate 5 petition, which I'd encourage members opposite, if they haven't already done so—I understand there are some 31 of the Liberals who haven't signed the FarmGate 5 petition—to sign it, because it is a fundamental thing that our farmers in the constituency of Nepean-Carleton absolutely require. At a time when they're going to be confronted with dealing with implementation of the Clean Water Act and other invasions of their private property and their land, it's important that we show them at least some sort of support. I think it would behoove members opposite to show that level of support to our rural community.

On a final note, I just wanted to talk briefly about an area that's of concern to me, and of course that is our children and our youth. As the critic for the official opposition, I was somewhat dismayed last week to learn from a leaked Auditor General's report that \$1 billion was not being spent appropriately for our children and our youth. I was quite disappointed by that because obviously our most valuable resources are our children and they, as we all know, are our future.

What was saddening and disappointing to me, and I think to several others across the province, was when we learned that several executives with children's aid societies were given vehicles, including two SUVs worth over \$50,000 apiece. I want to put this in perspective, because some sources who met with me from residential treatment centres indicated that \$50,000 would go a long way in the treatment of one troubled youth in a year. The cost would be about \$66,000 to treat a young child who is troubled. To know that we've essentially wasted over \$100,000 on these vehicles is quite troubling.

#### **2010**

We also learned last week that the Auditor General had uncovered some stunning evidence of improper spending, including the expensive vehicles I just mentioned, but also meals at high-end restaurants with no explanation and expensive trips to the Caribbean, China and Buenos Aires. I'm sure tomorrow, when the Auditor General finally releases his report, we'll see a little bit more and we'll understand; a lot of this will be put into perspective. Nonetheless, I think people in all political parties in this Legislature were quite dismayed to learn that some of our most vulnerable children were put in

harm's way in quite this way, with the misappropriation, if I may say so, of some of the funds.

The good news, of course, is finally the McGuinty government decided to—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. MacLeod:** Pardon me?

Finally, I'd just like to say that the Liberal government decided to make good on one of its promises. Usually they like to break them, and they like to talk over you when you mention the fact that they break their promises all the time. But they did introduce something that took them three years after they were elected and another 20 months after the second time they made the promise, which was to introduce an independent child advocate, something that is very intriguing. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the first person to introduce a child advocate in the province was Premier Davis, a Progressive Conservative, in 1984. It's gone a long way, and just to commend the minister for introducing it after such a long time after she had promised it.

In any event, we'll be making sure every step of the way in this political party that we are consulting with the people, studying the legislation and making sure we hold their feet to the fire so that children never again have to wake up in the morning and find out that \$100,000 was spent on vehicles and not on the treatment of children at high risk.

On that note, I just want to conclude. I certainly enjoyed the debate this evening and I'll be looking forward to hearing what all of my other colleagues have to say.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I very much appreciate the opportunity to stand and debate concurrence in supply today and follow up on a couple of topics that a number of our members have spoken about. I'll speak about a number of issues.

Recently, I just happened to sit in on a committee and we discussed a number of things that were very concerning. I certainly hope that the government is going to review and bring forward some strong amendments on the changes to the bereavement act and what takes place there. We heard from a number of groups and organizations on that committee and it was very concerning. It didn't quite answer the big-picture questions on how to deal with that. I hope that when we deal with that issue through the committee in the amendment process the impacts on all the communities in that area will be taken into consideration. As well, the title and mortgage fraud issue was very key and very important, as a lot of people have some strong concerns, and I agreed with the bar associations that were presenting that it shouldn't be an intent that homeowners would be obliged to purchase insurance in order to deal with this issue. I certainly hope that through the amendment process we can strengthen these things up quite strongly.

I'm going to comment on the member for Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge. He just had to go and mention it, didn't he? He had to go and mention what concurrence in supply does and doesn't do, and it takes care of and pays those school boards. I'm sure, thanks to the member now,

that the kids on the hockey team—I coach kids' hockey—every one of those kids watching will be saying, “You mean if you didn't pay them we wouldn't have to go to school?” And the parents would be saying the exactly opposite: “You mean if you didn't pay them they wouldn't be going to school?” Yes, having the kids out—I coach a minor atom hockey team.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ouellette:** The kids are a lot of fun; the parents, sometimes, I don't know. Terry Kelly once gave me a book on coaching kids. He went into great detail and said you can always tell the first-born or the first one playing in the sport, because the expectations can never be achieved.” Unfortunately, he's right. But the reality is that you've got to get out there and work on behalf of the kids. When the kids are out there, they're having a lot of fun, they're walking away with a smile on their face, and that's the most important thing.

Hopefully, when we bring a private member's bill forward, we'll get some support. I spoke with the Solicitor General and the Attorney General about it. There are some problems in there regarding individuals that the minister responsible for children and youth should look at, where there's not a criminal investigation report required for referees or empires and those areas. It just so happened that somebody brought to my attention that a multi-conviction sex offender was out refereeing six-, seven- and eight-year-old kids, and I have some strong concerns with that. So we're going to bring a bill forward, and hopefully we can get some support. I know the Solicitor General and the Attorney General were very supportive of that, and we'll look at that later.

We quickly sent out an e-mail to some of the kids. I want to make sure that we wish all the kids on the hockey team a Merry Christmas: the goalies, Spencer and Nick; all the defencemen, Nick, Quinn, Brad, Gaelan, Jordan, Charlie, Michael, Jake, Isaiah, David, Jack, Cole, Cody and Ian; and of course my son Garrett, and my other son Josh, who doesn't play on that team. The kids really enjoy seeing the opportunity.

I'm sure that a lot of the sitting members here and those who are on other business right now appreciate and enjoy being with the kids and having the opportunity to get in and talk with the schools. I got an e-mail tonight from Cole, who said, “Oh, my teacher's all excited because you can come and talk to the class.” Well, that's one of the fun things that you do as an MPP, to get in and talk to the kids and give them a rundown of what happens in the Legislature. I know quite a few of them are watching tonight because I was going to mention their names, and I appreciate the opportunity.

But there are a lot of other things that we want to talk about. The member from Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge also mentioned the energy plan, which I have some strong concerns with. I met with the mining industry, and they have some very strong concerns with the price of natural gas, the projections for the costs, what's going to happen with natural gas and how it works as a potential replacement—potential replacements. When we were in



power, we had an all-party committee called the alternative fuels committee. I thought it was very productive. I see one minister of the current government who was on the committee, and she did a great job on the alternative fuels committee. It was very interesting to try and get some input of how we're going to deal with this energy issue throughout the entire province.

The mining industry's concerns were very similar to a number of other groups and organizations. As a matter of fact, this Friday I have another individual coming to my office to talk about wind power and about some of the opportunities there. The concern from the mining sector was the cost of natural gas. Even with the new pipelines coming down, the tar sands are going to occupy all the use of the gas coming down, and the expectation is that by the year 2015 the demand is going to far exceed the supply. So after that date, you're going to expect to see huge increases in natural gas costs, because you've got to project a long ways down the line. We're dealing with an energy plan. How are you going to deal with that, and what changes can you make now to accommodate for that? Part of it with the mining sector is that these individuals are dependent on machinery that utilizes natural gas to drive their machines. If they don't have that, then it's very cost-ineffective, and it's going to be difficult. They're looking for some sort of method of coming forward and dealing with that issue.

I know that both ministers are in the House tonight. While we had the opportunity to serve in the previous government, we established a committee that tried to address this issue. It went on and what it dealt with was the fact that potentially the Ministry of Natural Resources has control of about 2,400 to 2,600 dams in the province of Ontario. Now, these would be considered low-flow dams or low-potential generating opportunities. What we did was—quite frankly, it took me a couple of ministers from the Ministry of Energy side before I found one who found some interest in it—we established a joint committee to possibly review the opportunity to address and utilize that low flow. For anybody who drives on Highway 28, when you go by Lovesick Lake, you'll see all that water flowing through there on a regular basis. There must be a way to be able to harvest that and harness that energy on a regular basis so that it can add to the grid in a special way. Quite frankly, if the resources and the energy were put in at this time the way they were put in for other aspects in life for the high-producing dams, the Beck and those other dams that are dependent on minimum flows and a minimum height of 12 feet of water—I think the new low-flow generation would certainly be able to add substantial amounts to the grid. What you have to look at is that what we invest now will certainly spawn new investments and new development later on. Those 2,400 or 2,600 dams that the ministry has control over could produce anywhere from one to five megas for a significant number of them.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** Are you saying I don't give a dam?

**2020**

**Mr. Ouellette:** Well, I'm not saying that, but I know that there are individuals within the ministry who might give you that perspective in a different sense. I'm speaking to the Minister of Natural Resources.

There is some huge potential there. In the riding of Oshawa, Camp Samac or the Winchester golf course, for golfers who may know the dam in the area, could potentially add one to five megas. Winchester might be able to bring in three or four megas and the other one or two megas. When you're dealing with hydro and the potential for development there, the peak time is in June, July and August; that's when those dams are flowing and utilizing the energy in the best way. That would certainly add to a lot of problems. Not only that, but a lot of the sites are potentially at end-of-line designations. The Minister of Energy would know that those are some of the key sites, because it's very hard to get all that transmission line to the end-of-line sites. If you can reduce the amount of energy going to those end-of-line sites, which are small communities in remote parts of the province, you would be able to significantly contribute back to the grid, because these low-flow dams are—guess what?—located at a lot of these end-of-line sites.

Great things are happening in Oshawa. It's the community and everything coming together. We're seeing the great contributions, the vision of the council there. I want to congratulate the new and re-elected members of council and also thank those who served and didn't come back this time around for their vision in things like revitalizing downtown Oshawa with the brand-new GMC arena. People don't realize what the positive impacts are of that new arena downtown. I happened to do an article on costs. When you're dealing with costs or operating costs, you look at what's happening in the community. I've been informed that the new arena has about 240 event nights throughout the year, and of those 240 you're looking at about 1,500 meals per night in downtown Oshawa. That's huge, the community coming together and revitalizing downtown Oshawa. Not only that, but we've got the new rinks at the Legends centre and the university, the south Oshawa recreation complex and the Connaught community centre and the new fire station.

A lot of great things continue to happen in our riding. We've got the new university and everything happening there with the new facilities. It's got new ice rinks. It's got the Ridgebacks; that's the name for their teams, their hockey team and that. Things are moving along quite nicely. It's adding benefits to the community, and it's growing in leaps and bounds. Not only that, but I want to congratulate Don Blight and Chuck Powers from the hospital foundation for a great event that was held, and all the volunteers and individuals down at the new GMC centre. They raised a huge amount of dollars for the new cancer centre and all the revitalization at the hospital. It's going very nicely. Things are happening. We've got the university, the cancer centre, the new hospital aspects that are coming on-line, the new arenas, the new fire station and the rehab centre. The Canadian Mental Health

Association just had a significant amount of funds for a new building, and the region should be thanked on that for their contributions. The region contributed a lot of chairs and desks and facilities within the Canadian Mental Health building there, and it helped out significantly in providing a work environment that's very friendly and very compassionate for the individuals.

For the recent municipal elections, Oshawa had a couple of questions on the ballot, and they supported one of my strong concerns. I introduced a private member's bill in the past to directly elect the regional chair, and apparently it was over 80% response in favour of directly electing the regional chair.

We've also got other things, such as Hillsdale reconstruction, all the new schools in the community as well, and things are happening quite nicely with the Stevenson Road interchange and of course the new children's aid building on Taunton Road. There seems to be some controversy over that, but providing services for kids is paramount for a lot of individuals. Of course we would be remiss if we didn't mention the new courthouse that's coming to downtown Oshawa and helping to revitalize the community.

A lot of great things are happening in our community. It's not a single entity that's making a difference; it's a community. That's why I say "community," because the community is bringing it all together and making those changes. We're very happy to be able to stand there and support the community and events like this and say thank you for the hard work they do, as well as look forward to working with them in the future, wherever possible, in any way we can.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak on the supply and concurrences. I will be seated and allow my other colleague to continue on.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** It's my pleasure to stand up for Cambridge, the heritage river community where the Speed and the Grand meet, and discuss the supply and concurrence motions before the House.

Residents of this great province have endured three long years of government mismanagement under the McGuinty government. This government has frivolously wasted millions of hard-earned tax dollars, monies that could have been spent to strengthen our health care industry or ease traffic gridlock, but this government chose to waste millions of dollars to grab headlines.

The McGuinty government spent \$2 million to tell residents of Ontario that they could now see a doctor. Today, since that ad ran, there are still 20,000 men, women and children in my riding of Cambridge without a family doctor. I would ask the Premier, where are these new doctors? I can tell you that they sure aren't in Cambridge or any of the other underserved areas in Ontario. A very long time ago, in 1997, I had Cambridge declared an underserved area, and we've been working hard to attract doctors. But it's become more and more difficult as time passes, and nothing is being done to address the problem. There are 1.2 million people in Ontario without a family doctor, and yet this government

has the audacity to say, "The doctor will now see you." That is a cruel joke. The ad is a slap in the face to the more than one million people without a family doctor.

This government seems to have a cloudy view of reality. Maybe the McGuinty government should spend less time and money advertising and more time investing in the needs of Ontario. I recently introduced a private member's bill that for the first time ever forces governments to address this crisis by establishing an absolute minimum of doctors required to service Ontario patients. The patient-to-doctor ratio bill forces governments to meet a target, for if they do not, all cabinet ministers would take a reduction in pay for that year. As the former catcher for the Dodger baseball team, Yogi Berra, once said, "You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there." That aptly describes the McGuinty government's lack of a plan and vision to solve the doctor shortage. They truly don't know where they're going. The time for talk is over. What we need is action now by the government. This is simply not an issue that the McGuinty government can turn its back on any longer.

This government spent \$6 million to drop one letter from an acronym. That is just plain wrong. The residents of Ontario work incredibly hard for their paycheques, and this government has no respect for how it spends Ontarians' tax money. Traffic gridlock has become almost unbearable, but this government continues to ignore the problem and worry about issues such as dropping the "C" from OLGC. I am not sure what it will take for this government to realize we have a traffic congestion problem in Ontario cities and towns.

It is not good enough to have a government that collects and wastes taxpayers' money. The people of Ontario deserve a government that is accountable to its taxpayers. They deserve a government that is transparent. They deserve a government that will address the issues that matter. What they do not deserve is a government that does not respect their hard-earned money and just squanders it all away, which is what they're getting from this government.

The McGuinty government will say anything to get re-elected. This government will tell the people of Ontario that wait times are down, even if that is not so. Ontarians are still waiting months and months to get an MRI. Actually, some Ontarians are so fed up with waiting to get an appointment that they are travelling to the United States, paying about \$400 and getting their MRI.

There is a huge problem when this government is telling everyone in Ontario that wait times are down, and yet Ontarians are so fed up with waiting, they're travelling out of province and out of country to receive proper health care. This government is more concerned with getting a front-page story than they are with governing.

#### 2030

This government has broken more than 50 promises since 2003. It is disheartening to see a government with such neglect for what it promised to do. The people of

Ontario put their faith and trust in this government, and the McGuinty government has zero respect for that trust.

McGuinty's latest broken promise affects our seniors in long-term-care homes. This government committed to increase funding to seniors in long-term-care homes by \$6,000 per resident per year. Now, three years into this government's mandate, they have done nothing and plan to do nothing to keep this promise. These are our mothers and fathers and our grandparents in long-term-care homes, and they deserve the utmost respect. They are simply not getting that from this government. When you make a promise, you keep it. It is a sad state of affairs when this basic principle is ignored.

I have met recently with numerous administrators, staff, family members and residents of long-term-care homes, who are all deeply concerned with the Long-Term Care Homes Act as proposed. Their concerns are all valid. Long-term-care homes need more money for their residents, and the staff need more time with the residents. The Long-Term Care Home Act is void of both of these major concerns.

The McGuinty government has chosen to pay more to feed criminals in Ontario than to feed our seniors. In Ontario, provincial jail inmates receive approximately \$10 per day for a food allowance while long-term-care homes receive \$5.41 to supply three meals a day for seniors. The McGuinty government simply has the wrong priorities. The \$5.41 for three meals is less than a Big Mac meal for \$6.38 at McDonalds or a Whopper combo for \$6.03 at Burger King. That is shameful when our mothers and fathers in long-term-care homes receive less than three meals a day than one Big Mac meal at McDonalds.

**Ms. MacLeod:** That's if they're getting into a long-term-care home.

**Mr. Martiniuk:** Yes. The new Long-Term Care Homes Act imposes new requirements on long-term-care facilities but does not provide additional funds to carry out those additional requirements. This simply means that the money to implement the new requirements will have to be taken from other areas, such as the food allowance of \$5.41 per day per resident, and will obviously aggravate the present problem considerably.

I have been fighting for three long years with this government to get hospital expansion and upgrades needed for Cambridge Memorial Hospital. The expansion and upgrades were promised long ago but have yet to be carried through. I commend the hard work that the doctors, nurses and administrators do at our community hospital, but they can only do the best job with the available resources. The last promise made by the McGuinty government was that a shovel would be in the ground in the fall. Well, we are watching the winter approach, and still no shovel.

Last week, in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, there was a story that ran with the headline, "Hospital Expansion Delayed Until Late Spring." It's typical of this government to just keep pushing back the start date. I actually had a doctor from the hospital ask me if all this

government does is make announcements and re-announcements. He said this government has made the same announcement three times, but do we ever actually see the money? That is what the people think of this government. The McGuinty government is simply based on announcements, not results.

We have an emergency room crisis in the province of Ontario and in the region of Waterloo. What is the McGuinty government doing about it? Ignoring the problem, just pretending it doesn't exist. Ontario should be a leader in health care, and right now, I am not seeing that. What I am seeing is a government that imposed a new health tax but is failing to invest in health care.

What Ontarians need and deserve is for the McGuinty government to stop mismanaging the taxpayers' money. What Ontarians need is for the McGuinty government to stop saying anything to get re-elected and to start showing some leadership. What Ontarians deserve is for the McGuinty government to stop breaking its promises.

**Mr. Bisson:** I want to put on the record a couple of issues as this particular concurrence in supply motion deals with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and education etc. I want to put on the record something that is becoming increasingly more and more of an issue in northeastern Ontario—my good friend, the Minister of Natural Resources, will understand this issue, representing a riding that represents mining—and that is the whole issue of common core.

I've been having calls, and I'm sure the member has been having the same calls, from a number of constituents who basically want to get into the mining industry. One of the issues is common core, which is the basic training people need to take if they want to work in the mining industry, be it underground or the mill environment or, as they call it, the plant environment. They have to undergo what's called common core in order to make sure that the workers are trained and identify the issues of safety and how to work properly within the mine so that it's done in a safe way. I think all of us in this House—I know all of us in this House—support that initiative in regard to making sure that all workers be trained in the systems of safety and understanding what is safe as far as the work that they do within a mining system.

It used to be at one time that common core was done and certified on site by the individual mine. In other words, if I got employed at, let's say, Kid Creek Mines or Macassa Gold or wherever it might be, that training was done directly at the mine, and there were people who were qualified to certify employees in the common core training. What has since happened over the years is that we've transferred that to the community college system, which in itself is not a bad thing, but the problem is that in order for people to be trained for the underground portion of common core, they need to go to Sudbury. For people living in Kirkland Lake or Timmins or, in this case, Kapuskasing, because of the Agrium mill or De Beers up in Attawapiskat, it is difficult to get people down to Sudbury in order to qualify for common core to work underground.

I think the government needs to take a look at how we're able to deal with making sure that yes, people do qualify under common core, but that it be done within their local communities from which they come is the first issue. Yes, there is some training that is done locally. For example, Northern College in Timmins provides some part of the common core training program in the city of Timmins, and that is a good thing, but they're not able to provide all of the certification needed for people to be able to work underground. As a result, if you're looking for work and you happen to get hired on by a contractor or by a mining operator to work in the mining industry, you need to qualify yourself for common core before they allow you to work in the mine itself. For many, that has become a huge issue. Number one, a lot of people don't have the ability to get to Sudbury to do the common core training for all kinds of reasons, one of the simple ones being if you're unemployed and you don't have money, how do you get to Sudbury in order to do the common core training? It's a very basic thing.

The second thing is that the cost is borne by the worker. Here's a scenario: I'm an unemployed worker who is trying to get a job in the mining industry where there is employment available today. I've got to pay for the entire cost of training of common core before I can even qualify to go underground. So I may, yes, get hired by a mining contractor or by a mining company, but I can't start there until I pay the money to go out and get trained. The problem is that most of these people are without the means to do it.

I've been receiving a number of calls in my constituency office, both in Timmins and in Kapuskasing, and I know Charlie Angus, my federal colleague, has also been getting them in Kirkland Lake, and I'm sure the Minister of Natural Resources is getting exactly the same thing in Kirkland Lake and across the area.

We need to do two things. We need to take a look at re-uploading the costs of common core. Common core should be borne, I would argue, by both the province and the employer and should not be a cost to individual workers trying to get work in the underground to qualify for common core. The second thing is, we need to take a look at how we're able to certify individual mining operators and contractors, to certify that these employees that they're hiring are able to qualify under common core.

So that's one of the recommendations I would make to the government, and I hope it is one they will listen to, because we all know that one of the only good news stories we have when it comes to the employment situation in northern Ontario is the mining sector: gold and precious metals specifically, and base metals. The prices are high, and in communities like Kirkland Lake, Timmins and other mining communities we're doing very well when it comes to the mining industry. There is a huge demand for workers in that particular industry, and one of the problems that I'm hearing about from both the employer community and the employees who are trying to find work—the unemployed—is that this whole issue of common core needs to be dealt with better.

#### 2040

The second issue is that of training overall, both apprenticeship training and on-the-job training. One of the things that we need to do—and I believe that the community colleges have a huge role to play in this—is make sure that our community colleges are engaged with employers in the particular regions they serve to help them provide the type of training they need within the employer's community to make sure that we have the basis by which to qualify workers for the very technical trades that we have and the very technical work that we have to do within our industry. Far too often, specific training programs are not available to employers, and I'll give you another example.

In Mattice—actually, it's not in Mattice; it would be in Jogues. No, it's not in Jogues; it's actually in—oh, my God, is that ever bad, when you're trying to find the name of a community—anyway, just south of Hearst there is an operator who basically takes remand products out of the Columbia Forest Products mill in order to build and add value to that particular product that he makes. He takes, for example, MDF that may be grade B or grade C, cuts out the bad parts, uses the good parts to make shelving and various materials and resells it into the market at a premium. It's a good little value-added business. One of the difficulties he has—it's in Hallebourg—I just finally got around to where it is. It's in Hallebourg. How can I forget? My friends over there will get mad at me.

One of the issues, he tells me, is the same thing that I'm hearing from many employers across northern Ontario. He has to physically cover the cost of training for all the employees he takes into his work site. It's fairly technical work. You're talking about computerized equipment that operates at a fairly fast pace. People need to understand the programming and the logistics of how the computers work and how the machinery works. To train a worker to do that kind of work results in a fair amount of effort and cost on the part of the employer to make sure that they're able to train workers up to that level.

The problem is that these smaller employers in the value-added industry are having to cover the entire cost of training out of their own budgets, which adds costs for them to do business. But what is really galling is that once they've trained these people and they've shown that they're productive workers, that they're able to keep a job, that they're able to work their shifts and not miss time and perform the tasks that are required of them, a lot of them say, "Do you know what? I'm working here in this value-added plant at 12 or 14 bucks an hour. Now I'm going to apply at the big plant"—the sawmill, the paper mill or whatever it might be—"for a job at 22, 24, 25 bucks an hour," and you can't blame them.

The problem is that the employer who has the money and is able to train these people gets the benefit of the training from the smaller employers. So the smaller employers are paying to develop the workforce by providing the training. They basically act as springboards for the

major employers to pick them up, and then they're able to benefit from the training that was given by the smaller employers. That's everything from WHMIS to health and safety issues to the actual training of the workforce.

So I would propose that we need to take a look at training from a different perspective. Again, I believe that's something that the province should be doing. It is to our collective good as a province to make sure that we provide adequate training for employers to be able to develop the skills that they need within their workforce. I think the province is well suited, through its community college system and others, to be involved in a more direct way in assisting employers to develop and then to run training programs within their employ. It would seem to me that would be one way that we're able to provide support to our local businesses and to reduce their costs so that they're able to better compete in the marketplace when it comes to competing with other jurisdictions out there that may be in the same business.

I only note that in the value-added industry, countries such as Holland and Norway, and many others, do far better on the value-added side than we do. But you have to take a look at why a country like Holland, that has far fewer trees than Ontario, is a bigger player in the value-added industry. One of the reasons is, they've specifically developed strategies by which to get them there; that is, they provide the training supports that those industries need in order to provide the kinds of supports they need so that they can do what they've got to do at a cost that's affordable to the employer. They also have strategies by which they help to identify markets—and that's for another debate—and they provide not direct grants but also assist with loans and financing to assist those industries to operate, as well as looking at transportation as an overall issue.

I say to the government, training is a huge issue for the employer community and workers. We need to take a look at trying to undo some of damage that was done in the past when previous governments—in this case the Harris government—basically transferred the cost of training from employers in the province onto the individual. We now have a situation where apprentices in the electrical field, apprentices in the machinist field and others are having to pay. They're now working; they're in an apprenticeship training program. They used to be able to go off to trade school in the college system, and that was paid by the province. Now tuitions are paid by the individual, and far too often many people choose not to go to trade school because they cannot afford the tuition. We need to take a look at how we make education and the workplace more affordable for those people who are there.

I look forward to one day where this government either comes to its senses or a day when we take government as New Democrats to deal with these very important issues of training when it comes to supporting employees who are trying to get the training they need on the job, workers who are trying to get into the workplace and, yes, employers who are at the end, needing these

particular skills. We've got to get the province much more involved in the process of providing the type of training needed to get people back to work.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** I just want to take a moment and introduce two very special guests in the Legislature: my sister, Carole Matthews, and her son, Dillon Sambasivam.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? Is there any other member who wishes to debate?

Not seeing any, Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Education. Shall the motion pass? Carried.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Was there a no? I didn't hear it. I'm sorry. I'll do it again.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Education. Shall the motion pass?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry, I'm not hearing anything here. All right, then, I'll take him at his word. There is a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance, including supplementaries. Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health Promotion. Shall the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Environment. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Energy. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Caplan has moved that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of civil servants and other necessary payments pending the voting of supply for the period commencing January 1, 2007, and ending June 30, 2007. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Pardon? Excuse me, another paragraph below that. Please, if I could just have some silence. We're almost finished.

Payments for the period from January 1, 2007, to March 31, 2007, to be charged to the proper appropriation following the voting of supply for the 2006-07 fiscal year, and payments for the period from April 1, 2007, to June 30, 2007, to be charged to the proper appropriation following the voting of supply for the 2007-08 fiscal year. Filed on November 30, 2006. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

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

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 in the afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2052.*

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