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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 20 December 2006

Mercredi 20 décembre 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 20 December 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 20 décembre 2006

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):

Today I'm calling on the McGuinty Liberal government to allow Ontarians to have full access to their, and I emphasize "their," locked-in retirement savings accounts. Four of the provinces in Canada have opened up access to the principal in these accounts, ranging from 25% in New Brunswick, to 50% in Alberta, to 100% in Saskatchewan, and soon to be 100% in Manitoba.

Under current Ontario rules, our residents can only access the principal in their accounts if they can prove to a government board dire financial or health need through a bureaucratic appeal process. The only exceptions to this rule are current and former members of this assembly who had their defined benefit pensions terminated and rolled into locked-in accounts. Those members, and I'm one of them, can access 100% of the principal. This is wrong and needs to be corrected. There should not be two classes of citizens for pension rules, and the time is long overdue for government to cease its paternalistic "We know what's best" approach to Ontario retirees.

Premier and members of the Liberal government, I urge you to move quickly to allow Ontarians full access to their locked-in pensions.

TERRY JAMES

Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge): I rise today to honour and pay tribute to my friend, a passionate golfer and one of Pickering's most active volunteers, Terry James, whose recent passing was a loss not only to his friends and family but to the community at large. Terry's astute sense of humour, his dedication to Pickering over the past 23 years and his ability to engage people in public life were among his many admirable qualities.

I first met Terry when he founded the Pickering Civitan service club, and we continued to work together thereafter. Terry James won an individual volunteer award in 2004 at the city of Pickering civic awards ceremony, and it was well deserved. He was father to three children and husband to his wife Marie. Terry was

also an organizer of the St. Paul's on-the-Hill food bank Christmas luncheon for children and their families. He was a member of the Pickering Museum Village advisory committee as well as founder and past president of the Pickering Civitan Club. Terry was chairman of the Hospice Durham golf tournament for Girls Inc. and, most recently, president of the Durham Region Senior Games. Mr. James was also the president of the new Pickering–Scarborough East Liberal riding association.

To say that Terry was involved is an understatement. After his retirement in 1998 from the city of Scarborough, he became even more passionately involved to better the city of Pickering. I, on behalf of his community, extend my deepest condolences once again to his wife and extended family. We'll all remember him with deep admiration and miss his kind, selfless spirit.

MURIEL VERCH

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):

I rise today to recognize a constituent of mine, Muriel Verch, who was just recently named Country Woman of the Year by Country Woman Magazine, an international publication based in the United States.

Muriel was chosen from hundreds of applicants, which were narrowed down to three finalists late last summer. She was nominated by her daughter, April, who besides being a devoted daughter, is one of the Ottawa Valley's most talented and accomplished musicians.

It has been said of Muriel, "You couldn't pay Muriel Verge to serve her community." She insists on doing it for free. As April said, "She's the most generous and selfless person I know."

Muriel is a community leader who has been organizing children's Christmas parties, youth events, dinners for seniors and the winter carnival for over 25 years. She was chair of the Rankin fire station support group, which raised over \$70,000 to establish a fire station where none existed. She's active raising funds for Valley Heritage Radio, serves as an elder and treasurer in her church and as a director of the annual Knights of Columbus Irish play. In addition, she has, of course, taken care of her family in a most admirable fashion.

Muriel was chosen Country Woman of the Year by virtue of receiving the most votes among the three finalists. I want to thank the good people of my riding for taking the time to ensure that a fine Valley woman would receive this honour. I was pleased to encourage them to do so when Muriel was chosen as a finalist. To Muriel,

her husband, Ralph, and her entire family, congratulations. It is well deserved.

To everyone everywhere, may the love of Christ be with you this Christmas and always.

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): It's time that the McGuinty government allowed Ontario's seniors to unlock their locked-in pensions. Bill 175, my private member's bill, would allow seniors to withdraw up to 100% of their locked-in pension funds. This one measure would instantly add to our seniors' financial independence and quality of life at no cost to the taxpayer.

CARP, Canada's Association for the Fifty Plus, supports my bill 100%. Bill 175 would unlock the vault of pension savings that McGuinty Liberal MPPs are withholding from locked-in pensioners while they care for themselves and their own life savings plans.

I'm sure many people would be surprised to learn that once pensions are locked in, it's virtually impossible for Ontario's seniors to access their money. Only at age 90 can seniors withdraw their funds completely. Until then they are limited to a scant withdrawal of 2.5% to 6.2% of the principal. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and the federal government have already changed their laws to enable seniors to access some or all of their locked-in pensions. But in Ontario, only 61 MPPs have had the freedom to unlock their pensions. For everyone else, these pensions are locked tight, cannot be withdrawn except in dire circumstances and only with government approval. Why should our seniors have to put up their hands and ask permission to access their own money, which they saved up over a lifetime of hard work?

Unlike the McGuinty Liberals, I trust seniors to manage their own money. Let's unlock pensions for Ontario seniors. They have worked hard all their lives and deserve to reap the fruits of their contributions. Seniors deserve the right to access and to control their locked-in pensions, and the McGuinty government should respect that right.

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): What's the fastest growing crime in North America? Yes, it is identity theft. In 2004, over 10 million people in North America had their identity stolen.

We now have the latest statistics on identity theft in Canada. One and a half million Canadians were subject to identity theft for the purpose of fraud. How do these fraudsters get our personal information in the first place? The privacy commissioner tells us that dishonest employees steal personal information. While there is little our citizens can do to protect themselves from dishonest employees, there's certainly something they can do when requested to provide personal information, such as filling out a registration card for a warranty on an appliance, or

for a magazine subscription, renting a video or even filling out a contest card or, horror of horrors, providing personal banking information to someone in Nigeria or South Africa who wants to transfer a million dollars into their account.

To its credit, the McGuinty government is providing a number of programs, educating the consumer as to the pitfalls of phishing and data mining. But none of these programs or laws will prevent identity theft unless we have informed citizens. The best way to create an educated, vigilant citizenry certainly is to begin in our schools.

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NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): It has now been 296 days of occupation at the Douglas Creek Estates subdivision in Caledonia. As we mark the end of 2006, the empty words and lack of leadership of the McGuinty government mean no end is in sight for the area.

Since February 28, the occupation has resulted in chaos and mayhem, and now fear and intimidation continue as a normal part of daily life. Mr. McGuinty watches and he says, "I'm pleased that things are in a more peaceful state these days in Caledonia." That was said a week ago today. Nothing could be further from the truth.

At 1 a.m. this past Sunday, a house on Argyle Street in Caledonia was ransacked by yet-to-be-identified intruders. The intruders smashed and overturned furniture. The intruders urinated in three rooms. The intruders injured the family's border collie. The intruders spray-painted racist and vulgar expressions on the walls and mirrors. For 10 months now, people have been worried about property values, vandalism and noise.

On June 16, this government made a promise to people in Caledonia to provide emergency funding for those directly affected. The act of vandalism this past Sunday is a case in point. Who would buy a house in this market today? The people of Caledonia continue to ask when this government will stand up for them, when the needed compensation will be forthcoming.

MOUVEMENT D'IMPLICATION FRANCOPHONE D'ORLÉANS

M. Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans): Jeudi dernier, j'étais très fier d'être au Centre du Mouvement d'implication francophone d'Orléans, aussi connu sous le nom de Centre MIFO.

Ce jour-là, la Fondation Trillium leur a fait une allocation de 85 000 \$. Ces fonds seront utilisés pour améliorer les locaux de l'école de musique du MIFO.

Cela fait 28 ans que le Mouvement d'implication francophone d'Orléans œuvre sur plusieurs volets. Le MIFO se consacre depuis toutes ces années aux besoins de la communauté d'Orléans. Le MIFO répond aux

besoins artistiques, culturels, sociocommunautaires et éducatifs en offrant des services variés en français.

Il me fit un grand plaisir aussi de voir le MIFO s'impliquer dans le nouveau centre des arts qui sera construit tout prochainement sur le boulevard Centrum, dans ma circonscription d'Ottawa–Orléans.

Ceci dit, le MIFO aura accès aux autres locaux à Orléans et à une salle de spectacle qui pourra accueillir 500 personnes.

Annuellement, près de 35 000 clients utilisent les services du MIFO. Sa programmation artistique, culturelle et sociale est un exemple qui démontre que le MIFO est à l'écoute de sa communauté.

Je voudrais prendre cette occasion pour remercier l'équipe du MIFO qui, sous la gestion de M^{me} Marie-Claude Doucet et grâce à la participation de leur conseil d'administration, et aussi aux efforts de Patrick Bourbonnais, directeur artistique, assure que le MIFO est plus qu'un centre culturel et communautaire.

ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): I rise today to speak to the continued good work of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, through the Ministry of Culture, by providing funding for so many worthy projects both in my riding and in the province.

In November, I was able to announce that the Trillium Foundation had committed \$81,200 over 24 months to the Lake Huron Learning Collaborative in Goderich. This organization has a membership that represents a number of organizations within the community, including local school boards, the Huron United Way, Women Today of Huron, municipal governments and individuals from a variety of sectors. Their goal as an organization is to create a learning centre that draws upon the environmental, cultural and historical aspects of the Great Lakes and rural heritage in order to offer residents of the community lifelong learning and post-secondary educational opportunities.

Lake Huron Learning Collaborative has been working on developing a centre of learning in Huron county for over two years, and it has recently reached agreement with the University of Western Ontario to offer two first-year university courses in Goderich this fall. Bringing post-secondary education to the riding of Huron–Bruce meets our educational goals as it may not have been previously able to do.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation continues to support this province's small communities and the projects that make them unique and successful.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): Since being elected in 1999, I made the commitment to bring the messages, the hopes and dreams, and the needs and desires of the people of my riding to Queen's Park to seek support, co-operation and partnership.

Today, I am pleased to report to this House that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman, announced the approval of an MRI machine in the Brantford General Hospital. Since we were elected government, I have worked to ensure that the Minister of Health has been aware of my community's health care needs and our belief that we could support an MRI. This piece of vital equipment will mean that the BGH can perform over 4,000 scans each year. For people receiving these scans who get a clean bill of health, it will mean quicker peace of mind. For others, it may mean a fighting chance against a disease like cancer where early detection is vital. It means that we will no longer have to leave our community to receive this service, and it will continue to drive down wait times.

On behalf of my community, I've been telling both our government and the previous government that an MRI is an important tool for the Brantford General Hospital. I am proud to have spoken out on the need for an MRI, and I am even more proud that this government listened and took action.

Thank you to the staff and volunteers of the BGH for your patience and co-operation. Thank you also to the many individuals and organizations doing fundraisers to help purchase this machine. I would like to especially thank the Rizzo family, who have spearheaded our community's efforts. This MRI belongs to the whole community.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FILM CLASSIFICATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CLASSEMENT DES FILMS

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 180, An Act to amend the Film Classification Act, 2005 / Projet de loi 180, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2005 sur le classement des films.

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

The member may wish to make a brief statement.

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): This bill would give the government power to make regulations requiring an exhibitor to devote a prescribed amount of exhibition time to films made in Canada and prescribing what constitutes Canadian content. We have need of support for the Canadian film industry. This bill will provide some of that support.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

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

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

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that the following committees be authorized to meet during the winter adjournment, in accordance with the schedule of meeting dates agreed to by the whips of the recognized parties and tabled with the Clerk of the Assembly, to examine and inquire into the following matters:

The standing committee on finance and economic affairs to consider matters related to pre-budget consultations 2007;

Standing committee on the Legislative Assembly to consider Bill 155, An Act to provide for a referendum on Ontario's electoral system;

Standing committee on government agencies for up to five days for agency review pursuant to the terms of reference as set out in standing order 106(e); and

Standing committee on public accounts for up to four days pursuant to its terms of reference as set out in standing order 106(g);

And that the committees be authorized to release the reports during the winter adjournment by depositing a copy of any report with the Clerk of the Assembly, and upon the resumption of the meetings of the House, the chairs of such committees shall bring any reports before the House in accordance with the standing orders.

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

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

HEALTH CARE

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I rise in the House today to announce the launch of our government's public dialogue about health care in Ontario. This engagement with Ontarians is essential to the development of a 10-year strategic plan for the province's health system. Why? Because it is their health care system. When our government first took office three years ago, we immediately began significant changes to the way health care was being delivered in Ontario. That's because we knew that patients were waiting too long to get the care that they needed. We knew there weren't enough doctors,

nurses and other health care professionals in this province. We knew there was no sustained focus on promoting wellness and preventing illness, so we tackled the most pressing problems first.

We have achieved much in the last few years. Ontarians have more access to doctors and nurses than before. Wait times for key procedures have come down, including MRI and CT scans; cancer, cardiac and cataract surgeries and hip and knee replacements. But collectively, we've got more work to do. Now we want to look at what needs to be done to ensure that our health care system will be there for Ontarians in the future. We are in this together. Our system serves us all. So the preservation of our health care system is nothing short of sacred. It's the best expression of Canadian values. That's why our government is such a passionate defender of medicare. But defending medicare doesn't mean defending the status quo. Medicare must change to meet the needs of the people that it serves. That's why we've been making significant and innovative changes, changes that have been guided by a vision and a vision that's been realized through a well-thought-out plan.

One of the most important changes we've made is to provide for more local control for the planning, funding and delivery of health care through Ontario's 14 local health integration networks. LHINs have come to life and fostered a new level of dialogue about health care—this time at the level where citizens can participate. That's thanks in great part to the public consultations they've been conducting in their communities. The input from these consultations has informed the LHINs integrated health services plans, which are their three-year plans for local delivery of health services. Further to that, when we passed the Local Health System Integration Act, it created an onus on us to develop a provincial strategic plan for the health system that includes a vision, priorities and strategic directions for the health care system. That's a huge challenge and a huge responsibility. We can't do it without listening to the thoughts, concerns and ideas from the people of Ontario. That's why we're reaching out to Ontarians interested in health care to get their views on the development of the plan.

Ontarians care deeply about the health care they receive and want to know how the system will serve their children and will be there for their grandchildren. That's why we want to hear from as many people as possible to determine the overall direction Ontario needs to take when it comes to health care.

The plan will articulate what Ontarians want their health care system to be in the future, what kinds of needs must be met and how services can be improved, with the ultimate objective of ensuring the sustainability of the health care system. This planning and open dialogue with Ontarians will help in the development of three-year, five-year and 10-year goals, strategies and expectations for all levels of our health care system. Among other benefits, this strategic approach will help to move our health care system away from simply reacting to and solving the problems of today. Together with

people from across the province, we will develop the 10-year plan over the coming months, with an expected release date in the spring of 2007.

To get that done we're inviting as many Ontarians as possible, representing the diversity of our province's population, to take part in the process. To hear from as broad a range of Ontarians as possible, we'll be working with people at the local level—our LHIN partners, our health professionals, administrators, volunteers—but most of all, we'll be listening to patients through meetings and through meaningful dialogue. We'll have a website—ourplanforhealthcare.ca—and a toll-free number set up to enable people to provide feedback and to give them access to information, including ways to get further involved.

The information gleaned through the public dialogue will be the most significant resource in developing our strategic plan. That's why we'll be building on the advice gathered by the local health integration networks during their own public dialogues and on patient satisfaction findings gathered through the health system. We'll also be building on research and we'll be using input from health care providers to determine how to best respond to patient needs.

I can't overemphasize the importance of this public dialogue in the development of our plan for health. The onus is on all of us to ensure a health system that will deliver the quality of health care that Ontarians expect and to which they are entitled.

GROWTH PLANNING

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I am delighted to be here today to share with this House and with my colleagues that our provincial government has won a prestigious American Planning Association national award for Places to Grow, the growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe. I'm pleased that Ontario is being recognized internationally as a leader in growth planning.

The growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe is the cornerstone of an ambitious package of government initiatives that includes the greenbelt, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and, of course, ReNew Ontario, our five-year, \$30-billion-plus infrastructure investment plan. It's a plan that will help us realize a sustainable and prosperous future. The growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe is the first plan from outside the United States to win the American Planning Association's Daniel Burnham Award.

The American Planning Association is the pre-eminent national professional planning organization in the United States, representing 39,000 professional planners, officials and citizens. This is a true honour and it puts Ontario at the forefront of an effort in sustainable development.

The American Planning Association gives this award to the plan that best illustrates progress, community benefit and contribution to the advancement of the

planning profession. It is awarded to a plan which best represents the APA slogan of "Making great communities happen," which is what this government, under the leadership of Premier McGuinty, is working to achieve through the Places to Grow Act, creating healthier, more sustainable communities and improving our quality of life.

The growth plan reduces development pressures on important natural areas and agricultural lands and ties long-term growth planning with infrastructure decisions. Carol Rhea, the chair of the awards committee, called the growth plan both visionary and pragmatic. She went on to say that it provided a strategic, innovative and coordinated approach to sustainable growth and development. In other words, the growth plan was selected for meeting the awards criteria in an exemplary way, criteria like being original, innovative and progressive; having high-quality research and attention to detail; showing an effort in public engagement, participation and consultation.

We could not have done this alone, nor would we want to. We had the help and the input of literally thousands of citizens, stakeholders and experts. The process for developing this plan has been one of very careful consensus-building, drawing on internal and external planning expertise, with support coming from all sectors: municipalities, developers, environmentalists and, most importantly, residents in the communities of the greater Golden Horseshoe, all of whom I would say recognize the need for a big-picture plan and a strategy for growth.

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Thanks to all that work, we have an unprecedented consensus that Ontario will be more successful and prosperous by following a set of smart planning principles.

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone involved in creating this award-winning plan. Here today in the east gallery, in fact, we have several individuals, two of whom I'd like to acknowledge. One is my former chief of staff, Mr. Ross Parry, without whose help this plan would not have achieved what it did; also, assistant deputy minister Brad Graham, who leads the Ontario Growth Secretariat. Gentlemen, well done. We also have members of the Ontario Growth Secretariat, and I welcome you as well and thank you for your hard work and efforts in putting this plan together.

I think that Daniel Burnham, one of the most famous planners in the United States, would be proud of our effort. He said, "Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood," and probably would not be realized anyway.

Our growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe will build opportunities for the people of Ontario by promoting economic prosperity and creating better-planned communities. It will help create complete communities with a greater mix of businesses, services, housing and parks that will make them more livable.

We're presenting better choices for a brighter future. Through the plan and our complementary initiatives, we will help ensure that Ontarians receive the communities that they want, that they deserve, and that they long to

leave for future generations. So please join me in celebrating Ontario's achievements.

BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services): For Ontario to be at its best, we need every Ontarian at his or her best. That's why we're making significant investments and improvements in the education, skills, health and competitiveness of Ontarians. This is essential to the future we all share.

Most of these services, as the members of the Legislature know, are actually delivered by what we call our transfer partners: schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and many others. It is essential that our partners, those who deliver these important public services, do so in a way that is effective, transparent and accountable.

As Minister of Government Services, I have been enormously impressed by the dedication of the hard-working people who make up our broader public service. However, the Auditor General's report has shown us that the professionalism displayed by so many must not blind us to the transgressions committed by some, or even the potential for such transgressions. The report highlights that some of our transfer partners are not following appropriate procurement and purchasing principles.

When you recognize that our transfer partners receive approximately \$60 billion in taxpayer money, we regard it as imperative that they have the appropriate procedures and accountability in place and that those procedures are followed. We all want to ensure that every dollar is used prudently and in a manner consistent with the public interest.

That is why, in 2004, our government made important changes to the Audit Act. It's why this Legislature gave the Auditor General—an officer of the Legislature, I might add—new powers to perform value-for-money audits not just of government ministries, but also of the broader public sector, including transfer partners such as hospitals, school boards and broader public sector organizations. It is why this government and this Legislature take seriously the recent recommendations from the auditor that the rules for some organizations must be more comprehensive and must be more rigorously applied.

We've instructed all of our deputy ministers to order all broader public service organizations to review their accountability standards and compliance mechanisms to ensure prudent and effective management of public funds. We are telling our partner organizations across the broader public sector that we expect these standards and the necessary controls will reflect current and best practices in public sector spending and will ensure transparency so as to withstand public scrutiny.

Letters urging these organizations to confirm that such standards are in place or to report what actions will be taken to ensure that they are in place have either been sent out or are in the process now of being sent out. We believe that the ultimate measure is the quality of the

public service for Ontarians. We all must make every effort to ensure that each step in the process that leads to service delivery is above board, above reproach and worthy of the people we are privileged to serve, the people of Ontario.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): Despite the rhetoric that we've heard from the Minister of Health today, this has been another very, very sad year for people in the province of Ontario when it comes to broken promises in health care. We know that the first thing this government did was introduce the health tax. At the same time as they introduced the health tax for people in this province, they decreased access; they eliminated public access to physiotherapy, to chiropractic services and optometry. In fact, they privatized those services, despite telling people they weren't going to do so and despite telling people they weren't going to introduce a health tax. I can go on and on.

If we take a look at access to doctors, they have simply not been able to deliver. There were 126 underserved areas in this province when they came into office; today we have about 138. The reality is that there are about 1.2 million people in this province without a family doctor. As far as the family health teams are concerned, they simply are not up and operational. When it comes to long-term care, there are about 35,000 people in this province who are forced to live in C and D beds, who do not have any privacy whatsoever, and this government refuses to develop a plan. They refuse to give those people living in long-term-care facilities the \$6,000 extra funding per year which they promised in order to ensure that there was more care provided for these individuals. The list goes on and on.

We have a broken promise as far as access to doctors. We have a broken promise in privatization, a broken promise to the people in long-term-care facilities. They said they were going to create these nursing positions. We now understand they're not going to be able to create the 8,000 nursing positions—another broken promise. Of course, recently we have seen that the LHINs are not making progress; they're making no decisions and costing taxpayers a lot of money.

GROWTH PLANNING

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): To my colleague and friend the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal we offer our congratulations on the win of the APA award for planning. In the spirit of the season, I wish the minister a happy Hanukkah as well, to enjoy the celebration. In that spirit, as we head to Christmas, I do want to say to the minister, who also has responsibility for the LCBO, if he is considering a Christmas gift for the MPP for Erie–Lincoln this year, please move forward on our VQA Wine Stores Act—it has passed second

reading and has gone through committee—which would open up a new channel for our VQA wines. Whether it's new locations or at casinos, farmers' markets—a great many opportunities for a new outlet. I say that to the minister.

I want to congratulate—it's good to see Ross back here again in the Legislature and the assistant deputy minister, Brad Graham, and Amy Tang, as well, responsible for this hard work. I did take the time to look up the American Planning Association's congratulations on this. They noted that the minister has been leading this effort since 2001. I want to congratulate the minister, because even when he was on the floor of the assembly as a Liberal, he was secretly helping out the Mike Harris and Ernie Eves governments, I guess, when this whole plan began. So I want to commend the minister, who obviously worked hand in hand with Minister Chris Hodgson and David Young as part of this process.

But in all seriousness, my commendations to the minister, his team and previous ministers who have brought this plan forward. The plan is important; getting through the jury and getting the thumbs up is important. I will remind the minister that American Idol's Ruben Studdard and Clay Aiken got the thumbs up from the jury, but after that performance, not so much. We want to make sure the minister follows through on the plan and performs. Projects like the mid-peninsula corridor, for example, have been long in delay. I know he's pushing the Minister of Transportation for that to move forward. I remind him of Fort Erie as well, cited for growth in his report, but then all of a sudden these new wetlands started popping up due to some work I'm concerned about with the MNR that wasn't groundproofed and has delayed that. But I know that the minister will carry through on his plan to make sure there are growth areas in Ontario and that infrastructure projects move forward.

I've run out of time to respond to the Minister of Government Services. I do want to point out that the cabinet spent some \$431 million in one last cabinet meeting and about \$3.5 million per minute in another. So when you hear the minister lecturing transfer partners about responsible spending and then you see this drunken sailor of a spending spree at the end of the year, they're pulling a McGuinty, saying one thing and doing another.

1410

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): I'm rising to speak to the whole matter of the award from the American Planning Association that the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal just spoke to. I have to say that this is a plan that I think looks much better from a distance than it does close up.

This is a plan about which the minister, when asked, cannot tell to what extent it will deal with the congestion and sprawl or congestion and gridlock problem we have in the GTA and the greater Golden Horseshoe. He cannot say to what extent this plan will be an improvement over business as usual. We have no idea whether there will be any improvement. If you actually look at closer-to-home think tanks, closer-to-home institutions and their com-

ments on the plan, they're not that glowing. The Neptis Foundation commented that the Liberals' final growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe includes a requirement that 40% of all new residential development must be constructed within built-up areas by 2015. When Neptis looked at that, they said that at this rate of intensification, there would not be a shift of new residential development from farmland to genuine intensification that would be sufficient to do what is needed to reduce gridlock and congestion. In other words, it looks nice from a distance, but in terms of those people who get to sit on the QEW or the 401 or Major Mackenzie Drive and dream about being at home, this isn't going to help them.

The Pembina Institute commented on and provided advice on this plan from its initial draft. They commented that while the initial draft was promising, the plan and subsequent drafts became mushier, mushier and mushier. It's very difficult to tell where this plan deviates from business as usual; again, business as usual meaning more congestion, more gridlock, more smog.

It's nice that the American Planning Association noticed Canada. It's unfortunate that they gave an award to a plan that actually did not get the review it should have gotten at home.

BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): I rise in response to the Minister of Government Services. I have to say it's very difficult to be supportive of an action which accomplishes so little.

I'd like to read exactly what I think is the ultimate paragraph here. It says, and I quote the minister, "Letters urging these organizations to confirm such standards are in place or to report what actions will be taken to ensure they are in place are in the process of being sent out." So in fact, all this announcement is is that they're about to send out some letters asking these government agencies to try to come up with a plan. That's all that's being announced here today. There is no reference to what will happen if these government agencies do not comply with the request. There is nothing here to say what will happen if there is weak compliance with the request. There is no reference at all to the actions primarily related to past abuses documented by the Auditor General and what this government is going to do about them.

Everyone who works in government must believe in the public service, as I most profoundly do, but the public service is only as good as the managers of the system. What we need from this government is to do something to change the corporate greed which was uncovered and the culture of entitlement which seemed to pervade some of these agencies. That's what we're asking the government to do, and it is not in this announcement.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): In the short time that I have, I certainly hope Ontarians will contact this

government by e-mail, by the 1-800 line, by any mechanism they have to remind the Liberals of their broken health care promises.

For example, the promise that was made to enhance funding for residents of long-term-care homes by \$6,000: The government has only provided \$2,000. Where is the remaining \$4,000 in the fourth year of this Liberal government?

The promise that the government would reinstate a minimum of 2.25 hours of hands-on care per resident per day for each resident in a long-term-care home: That doesn't appear in Bill 140, the long-term-care bill. Where did that promise go?

The promise that this government made that they would only use public financing for hospital reconstruction and new hospitals: We now have private financing that is going to cost us oh, so much more.

I do hope people will contact the government and tell them to live up to the promises they made.

DEFERRED VOTES

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2006
LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 173, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act, the MPPs Pension Act, 1996 and the Executive Council Act / Projet de loi 173, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, la Loi de 1996 sur le régime de retraite des députés et la Loi sur le Conseil exécutif.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1416 to 1421.

The Speaker: Mrs. Bountrogianni has moved second reading of Bill 173, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act, the MPPs Pension Act, 1996 and the Executive Council Act. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jeffrey, Linda	Patten, Richard
Arthurs, Wayne	Klees, Frank	Peters, Steve
Balkissoon, Bas	Kular, Kuldeep	Phillips, Gerry
Barrett, Toby	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Bartolucci, Rick	Leal, Jeff	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bentley, Christopher	Levac, Dave	Ramal, Khalil
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	MacLeod, Lisa	Ramsay, David
Bountrogianni, Marie	Marsales, Judy	Runciman, Robert W.
Bradley, James J.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Matthews, Deborah	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Mauro, Bill	Scott, Laurie
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	McGuinty, Dalton	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	McMeekin, Ted	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	McNeely, Phil	Smitherman, George
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Dhillon, Vic	Miller, Norm	Takhar, Harinder S.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Milloy, John	Tory, John

Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Duncan, Dwight	Murdoch, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Fonseca, Peter	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John
Hudak, Tim	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael
DiNovo, Cheri	Kormos, Peter	Tabuns, Peter
Hampton, Howard	Martel, Shelley	

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 72; the nays are 8.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): I refer the bill to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: The bill is referred to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like unanimous consent to deliver this food to the Premier. It was given to me today by celebrity chefs here in Toronto; Jamie Kennedy was one of them. This has been made from raw—

Interjection: No.

Mr. Murdoch: Oh, you don't want us to give it to your Premier.

The Speaker: Mr. Murdoch has asked for unanimous consent. Agreed? No. I heard a no.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. For about a week now we've been asking you to apologize for your wait times television ad, which was found by the advertising standards council to be "inaccurate" because it left people with the impression that "wait times for all ... procedures have already been reduced" and "that Ontarians are now spending less time" waiting.

You said yesterday that you're going to "make sure that the people of Ontario continue to see that their wait times are in fact coming down." But let's see what Ontarians really find if they look at the website—and this is putting aside for a moment that the numbers there are under suspicion because of the Auditor General's findings. Since August and September 2005, wait times for cancer surgery are up 10% at North York General Hospital, 15% in Markham, 51% at the Southlake hospital, 62% at the Credit Valley Hospital, 139% at

Montfort Hospital and 350% at Bluewater Health in Sarnia.

All over the province we have these wait times for cancer going up. Don't you think it's time for you to apologize? Will you do so, Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): It is absolutely true that we have some real challenges with respect to our cancer procedure wait times. But we're proud of the fact that we're making that information public for the very first time in the history of this province. The fact of the matter is that cancer surgery wait times are up overall by 6.2%, but I should say that 89% of cancer surgeries are now completed within the access target timeline.

In all the other areas which the leader of the official opposition is reluctant to mention, whether you're talking about angiography, angioplasty, cataract surgery, hip replacements, knee replacements, MRIs or CTs, those wait times are down.

Mr. Tory: Again, putting aside the fact that the very wait times website that you talk about and that you said you made available has been found to be misleading and should be taken with a grain of salt by none other than the Auditor General of Ontario, the Premier mentions cataracts. Let's look at cataracts. Wait times are up 13% at Rouge Valley, 15% at Montfort, 16% in Woodstock and 92% in the Niagara Health System. That's the story. There are some examples on cataracts where the wait times are up. You just finished telling this House and the people of Ontario that the wait times are down for cataracts. People are waiting longer.

Yesterday, the Kitchener-Waterloo Record called for an apology. Today the London Free Press said that your ads are "hard to swallow" and that this whole saga "certainly looks suspicious." We agree with the Auditor General; we agree with the Kitchener-Waterloo Record; we agree with the London Free Press and the advertising standards council. Will you retract these ads and apologize for what you've done in terms of this inaccurate information?

1430

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader is saying that Ontarians shouldn't trust the website, but he's using that to source his information that he's deploying in this House today. I want to congratulate the leader of the official opposition for accessing the website. We've had 2.1 million-plus hits on that website so far.

When the leader of the official opposition references that some cataract surgery times have gone up in some hospitals, he's absolutely right. But overall, in Ontario, cataract surgery times are down by 27.7%. And the reason for making this information public at all our hospitals was so that Ontarians could look at that and ask themselves and ask their family doctor whether or not they want to go to that hospital or whether or not they might want to go to another one which is offering faster service. That's the whole idea behind making this information public to the people of Ontario for the first time.

Mr. Tory: I don't know how the Premier can get up and talk with such pride about the fact that 2.1 million people have been exposed to data that the Auditor General said was misleading. The fact is, when Mr. Kirby reports and what the Auditor General is saying, that the numbers aren't going to get better when you figure them out properly, they're going to get worse. I'm happy to stand and say that this is the best-case scenario that anybody is going to see in Ontario. So that's why you should apologize for the ads and apologize for the website.

Let's look at MRIs: the waiting time is up 20% at the Lakeridge hospital; up 27% in London; up 44% at Rouge Valley; up 86% at Joseph Brant; up 122% in Timmins; up 136% at St. Joe's in Toronto; and up a whopping 238% at the Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital. In community after community, you cannot support the claims you made in your television commercials.

I'm asking you simply to stand up and apologize for the fact that you ran these inaccurate ads that are not reflective of the facts being experienced by people in this province. Why won't you do it?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition is plain wrong. The fact of the matter is that wait times are coming down in the province. The fact of the matter is that we have collected information that was never collected in the past. We relied on expert medical advice in terms of the best way to present that information to the people of Ontario.

The Provincial Auditor tells us he takes issue with that; we're going to pay very careful attention to that. We've asked Senator Kirby to get himself involved in this and help us to reconcile the conflicting expert advice we got from the Provincial Auditor and our medical experts.

But the fact of the matter is this: Wait times are coming down in the province of Ontario. Angiography is coming down by 39%; angioplasty by 17.9%; cataract surgery is down overall by 28%; hip replacements by 20%; knee replacements by 20%; MRIs down by 13%. The Minister of Health announced just yesterday the opening of two more new MRIs in Ontario. We're moving ahead. We'll keep moving ahead, and we'll keep getting wait times down.

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

Mr. Tory: A new question for the Premier. Again, he says, "We'll keep getting wait times down." Let's take a look at CT scan wait times: up 15% in London; up 18% in Thunder Bay; up 23% at Rouge Valley; up 23% at Sunnybrook; up 25% at Joseph Brant; up 27% at Lakeridge; up 41% in Halton; up 41% in North York; up 61% in Scarborough; up 74% at Grand River hospital. One more priority procedure where the wait times are going up all over the province, one more reason why you should be apologizing to the people of Ontario for putting this information on the website, which the Auditor General himself said was misleading.

Why won't you simply admit you were wrong and do what the Kitchener-Waterloo Record called on you to do, which is to apologize for running these inaccurate ads and running this information on your website that the Auditor General says is misleading? Why not just apologize? Stand up and do it.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I want to thank the leader of the official opposition. If he hasn't done so, I would strongly recommend that he personally visit that website and join the 2.1 million Ontarians who have done so.

Now, it's all fine and dandy for the leader to stand up and reference 10 or a dozen hospitals, but there are close to 160 in the province. Why doesn't he stand up and list the figures for each and every one of those hospitals? Because he would see, if he did that, the fact of the matter is, in every area, overall, wait times are coming down, except in cancer. I acknowledge that we've got more work to do there, specifically for cancer surgeries. But overall, wait times are coming down.

Mr. Tory: We have just provided evidence of the fact that the McGuinty Liberals, today and every other day, with the ads and with the website, are trying to bamboozle the voters, and they're not willing to say they're sorry for trying to bamboozle the voters. It happened in the election campaign big time, and now it's happening again.

Let's go on. The Premier mentioned hip replacement wait times. Hip replacements are up 9% in Quinte, up 17% at the Toronto East General Hospital, up 22% in Stratford, up 24% at the Montfort, up 26% in Chatham and up 31% in North York. In Timmins the waiting time is up 51%, up 54% at York Central and up 60% in Sault Ste. Marie, and the list goes on.

Once again, Premier, my question is: In view of this utter failure, in view of the information that the Auditor General says is misleading, the ads that have been found to be inaccurate, why won't you apologize and admit that you've tried yet again to bamboozle the voters, as you've tried to do so many times before?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: What the leader of the official opposition is doing is, frankly, unbecoming. He is cherry-picking specific data from our website, a website which he tells us he does not trust. Although there are close to 160 hospitals in Ontario, he's very selectively choosing hospitals—which exist; we made that public—where we still have challenges with some of these wait times. But the fact of the matter is that, overall, wait times are coming down, whether you're talking about angiographies, angioplasties, cataract surgeries, hip replacements, knee replacements, MRIs or CT scans. In all those areas, overall, wait times are coming down.

Mr. Tory: The fact of the matter is that these are real hospitals that we're naming, affecting real people who are waiting for real procedures. And we'll have more tomorrow. We haven't even begun to touch on the subject of all the procedures that are not on your list, that are not being reported, where people are waiting a long, long time across the province.

Let's just deal with knee replacements: wait times up 8% at William Osler, up 10% at Toronto East General, up 14% in St. Thomas, up 23% at Southlake, up 25% at York Central, up 34% at Hotel-Dieu Grace, up 37% at Montfort, up 89% in Cornwall and up 52% in Chatham.

Your ads were found to be inaccurate. Your information on the website was found by the Auditor General to be misleading. You should stand in your place and apologize for the fact that you have tried to fool the voters of Ontario on this important matter that affects their health.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, I say to the leader of the official opposition that this idiosyncratic perspective on the numbers that are being made available in Ontario for the very first time is unbecoming, because I expected more of the leader of the official opposition than to present numbers in such a way that contrast those cases where there is still more work to be done with the overwhelming majority of cases where we are enjoying success. The fact is, we have invested \$600 million to purchase 657,000 additional procedures. That's why wait times are coming down in Ontario.

I would ask Ontarians to consider our investment of \$600 million, specific to buying 657,000 more procedures, with the leader of the official opposition's determination to take \$2.5 billion out of our health care system. I ask them to ask themselves: What is that going to do to wait times in Ontario when you take \$2.5 billion out of our health care system?

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Premier, on November 22, your Minister of Natural Resources said that Ontario's forest sector "has gotten off relatively scot-free from the downturn in the US housing sector." Since his comment, Tembec announced the permanent closure of its sawmill in Timmins—140 jobs destroyed; Domtar announced the closure of its sawmill in Nairn Centre—140 jobs destroyed; Bowater announced the permanent closure of its Ignace sawmill—60 jobs destroyed; and Buchanan announced the layoff of everybody at its three Thunder Bay sawmills—more than 600 jobs.

My question is this: When did the layoff of more than 1,000 forest sector workers in northern Ontario just before Christmas become "getting off scot-free" for the McGuinty government?

1440

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

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): Especially at this time of the year, I really feel for the families and the workers who have been impacted by the collapse of the softwood lumber industry, primarily brought on by the collapse of the American housing industry. There are over 700,000 newly built homes in the United States that

remain unsold, and so demand for housing in the United States has crashed. At the beginning of this, Ontario was not impacted as much as was Quebec, where at that time, when I made those statements, they had a 50% loss in their industry. We are starting to feel it at this time, as the shipments to the United States continue to decline. It's very sad for the northern Ontario economy.

Mr. Hampton: I'm sure those 1,000 workers who will not have a paycheque at Christmas will appreciate knowing that the McGuinty government feels their pain.

Premier, your Minister of Natural Resources also said, and I want to quote him, about the softwood lumber agreement, "I do support it. I think it's a good deal for Ontario." Yesterday, when Bowater announced the permanent closure of the Ignace sawmill and the destruction of 60 jobs in a small town, he said, "The softwood lumber agreement reduced quotas and that is the reason for the closure of this sawmill." My question is this, Premier: Can you tell the people at Ignace how the destruction of more than 60 jobs in a small, one-industry town was a good deal for them?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: The Bowater company was particularly hard hit by this because the way the agreement worked, quota was to be distributed based on a record of export over the last five years. Ignace production was not very consistent over that time, and their Fort William operation on the Fort William reserve only got up and running a couple of years ago and took a while to ramp up. So they didn't have a very strong export record and therefore came out at the short end on the quota, unlike some of the other companies that had a consistent export record over five years. They had much more quota than the Bowater company does, and that's obviously very sad for the workers who work for that company.

Mr. Hampton: I guess we can take it from that answer that the McGuinty government still thinks this is a good deal.

Premier, in February of this year, your Minister of Natural Resources said that the forest sector in northern Ontario is beginning to turn a corner. Since that statement, more than 2,000 forest sector workers in northern Ontario have had their jobs destroyed as a result of the McGuinty government's misguided policy of driving hydro rates through the roof and your too little, too late changes to forest policy. I want to ask this question: When did the destruction of a further 2,000 forest sector jobs in northern Ontario under the McGuinty government become "turning the corner" for the forest industry?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: The initiatives that the Premier and I have announced over the last 18 months have made Ontario one of the more competitive jurisdictions in Canada when it comes to all of the forestry sector, especially the softwood lumber sector, as we have taken over complete payment for all road construction and maintenance. We've given some stumpage relief, and of course we have our prosperity program where we are incenting the companies to become more efficient. They are applying to those programs, and we're moving ahead with that.

We are in a cyclical housing down. That happens in the United States from time to time, and that does hurt us. But the member will know that that housing market in the United States will rebound, and that means that our sawmilling industry will rebound. Unlike Quebec, which didn't put the programs in before the softwood lumber agreement, Ontario will be in a very good position when that happens.

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

Mr. Hampton: To the Minister of Natural Resources: The Minister of Natural Resources says, "a very good position." Here's the reality: 45,000 jobs have been destroyed, and the McGuinty government calls that a good position. That's 45,000 working families without a paycheque at Christmas.

At the same time, you just voted for a \$40,000 pay increase for yourself. I want to ask you this, Minister: Are you going to tell those 45,000 working families who do not have a paycheque at Christmas that you really deserve a \$40,000 pay raise?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I would certainly take issue with not only the description of these jobs being totally destroyed and the number with the honourable member across the way. I just said to him in the last response, and he knows this very well, that at least 60% of the softwood lumber produced in Ontario goes to the United States as an export market. We know we have a cyclical market situation there, but that will rebound. So those jobs are not here today, and we are sorry that we have those layoffs, but we have very efficient mills.

We have the timber resources, unlike Quebec, which has to claw back their timber resources, because we've managed our forests very well. We have everything there, when this market rebounds, to get those jobs back, and those jobs will come back.

Mr. Hampton: Minister, here are some casualties in the McGuinty government's misguided too little, too late changes to forest policy and your completely misguided policy of driving hydro rates through the roof.

I'll start with Thunder Bay: Cascades paper mill—375 jobs destroyed; the Bowater kraft pulp mill—250 jobs permanently destroyed; one Bowater paper machine—140 jobs destroyed; the Smurfit-Stone containerboard mill—over 100 jobs destroyed. Add it all up and it's 825 jobs destroyed; 825 families without a paycheque at Christmas.

We just saw you vote for a big pay increase for yourself. Can you look those people in the eye and tell them that after all of these jobs were destroyed under your watch, you deserve a \$40,000 pay increase?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I can look those people in the eye and say to them that my Premier, Premier McGuinty, my ministry and all my colleagues on this side of the House have worked very hard, have dedicated a lot of time and have presented a very good package for the forestry industry that is absolutely unprecedented in the history of this country. No province or national government has brought forward a policy, a package of incentives and

assistance, as the McGuinty government has. The people of northern Ontario know that, and we are working through that, and we're there with them through these tough times.

They are tough times. In fact, it is a crisis there; there's no doubt about it. But a government that acts in crisis and works with the people affected is what really counts, and we're there with the people of northern Ontario and the forestry industry.

Mr. Hampton: Red Rock, the closure of the Norampac containerboard plant—300 permanent jobs destroyed; Dryden, where Weyerhaeuser closed its sawmill and shut down a paper mill—385 permanent jobs destroyed; Smooth Rock Falls, where you're going to let the corporation keep the hydro dam and profit by selling electricity, but you're okay with 250 jobs destroyed there; Espanola—120 jobs destroyed there.

It seems that every time you trot out another part of your government's PR campaign, which has done nothing to sustain jobs, which has done nothing to prevent the destruction of jobs in the forest sector, every time you trot out another PR announcement, another 300 or 400 layoffs result.

I'm going to ask the minister again—45,000 jobs destroyed in the forest sector over the last three years under your watch: Can you honestly tell those 45,000 people that you deserve a \$40,000 pay increase?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: The leader of the third party may wish he had a magic wand and he could make all of this better. We in government have to do it step by step, working with the industry and getting the right inputs in place to make sure that they are competitive.

What the member fails to say is that we have helped reopen the Neenah Paper mill in Terrace Bay and got those jobs back. So there's a reopening. We're working with a new set of investors who want to reopen the Cascades plant in Thunder Bay, and we're very close to seeing that happen. I would hope you'll have that announcement in the new year.

We are starting to make some progress. It's not all doom and gloom, though it is bad news up there. We are working with the communities, we're working with the companies and we're working with the industry to make sure we have a strong, competitive industry in northern Ontario and therefore sustainable communities in northern Ontario.

1450

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, on November 20, you stood in this House and responded to me when I asked you why your government was discriminating against federal pensioners and creating a second class of citizens in the province of Ontario when it comes to drug coverage. You said that you were going to go ahead with that policy for retired federal public servants because you were going to save tens of millions of dol-

lars which you could use to improve access to drugs for others.

A few weeks later, on December 8, your Premier wrote a letter to the president of the Federal Superannuates National Association, stating that, "We have decided not to move forward with the policy."

Minister, who is in charge at the Ministry of Health?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Oh, it's still you.

I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to say that it's an appropriate day for the question because today is the day when we put out a new formulary in the province of Ontario. I'm very pleased to report to the people of Ontario, through our initiatives in Bill 102, that 23 new brand name drug products are being added to the Ontario government's drug formulary today.

On the issue that is mentioned, some shenanigans have occurred on the part of the federal Treasury Board which have caused an exacerbated degree of fear among federal pensioners. We're very honest about it. This is the circumstance that has occurred. The honourable member will know, accordingly, that our government has very clearly announced, through the leader of our government, the Premier of Ontario, that we will not be moving forward with this initiative. That's the final word on that.

Mrs. Witmer: To the minister again: It's obvious that this Bill 102 that was introduced to supposedly expand access to drugs for people in Ontario continues to be as flawed as it ever was. You did no consultation, you did absolutely no analysis, and then you find out after the fact how it's negatively going to impact people. In fact, everybody has told you—the pharmacists, the drug companies, the researchers—that this drug bill was flawed from day one.

You've lost \$14 million in savings; you're now going to lose another \$100 million in savings. This was supposedly the reason for the bill. I guess I would say to you today, Minister, where are you going to find the savings that you said you were going to provide to patients? They were counting on the money in order to have better access to drugs.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: Firstly, the honourable member who asked the question is not straightforward enough to acknowledge that her foundation for asking the question is that she's on the side of a party that proposes a \$2.5-billion cut to health care. So if the question is to be asked about where such savings are—

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): That's not true.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: You're not even in your seat. If the question is to be asked on the basis of where savings will be found, then it really is the honourable member who's on the hot seat on that one. She and her teammate there have got a cut of \$2.5 billion proposed for health care.

The reality is that through the initiatives associated with Bill 102, we've reduced the impact on the treasury by a couple of hundred million dollars. But way more

importantly than that, far more importantly than that, we stand today as a government proud of the initiatives related to Bill 102, which have meant that 23—

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: He's not in his seat, Mr. Speaker—new brand name drugs have been added today to the Ontario drug formulary.

SEXUAL ASSAULT CRISIS CENTRES

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): My question's for the minister responsible for women's issues. On December 31, the Sexual Assault Care Centre in Scarborough will face dramatic cuts in its ability to serve women immediately after they are raped and sexually assaulted. Essential members of the sexual assault health support team will no longer be available to provide medically necessary services to women in crisis. You are the minister responsible for women's issues in this province. Why are you allowing this to happen under your watch?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues): I'd be happy to refer the second question to our Attorney General, if it is related to a sexual assault crisis centre. As the member opposite knows, funding for those centres does go through the Attorney General.

Let me just say this, though: This member comes to the House today to ask a question and purports to be helpful to women's issues and all of those agencies that work so hard. This is the same member who does not acknowledge that as of today we have moved from introducing a \$66-million domestic violence action plan to delivering an \$82-million domestic violence action plan. But what is more important is that this same member has voted against every single opportunity to improve the lives of women, and I find that very hard to square with asking about an initiative to fund—for the first time, those sexual assault crisis centres received more money. They have not had that happen in the last 15 years. That happened under this government—not the NDP government, but under this government.

Ms. Horwath: Not surprisingly, the minister hasn't addressed my question. Dr. Rosalind Zucker and her colleagues are on call at night and on weekends, when raped and sexually assaulted women need care. She wrote to the McGuinty Liberals months ago because the on-call funding was being cut by you—not by anybody else, but by you, crippling this crucial community resource. Yesterday your government refused to help and, in fact, told Dr. Zucker to wait until 2008.

Minister, women in east Toronto and Scarborough can't wait until 2008. These cuts are happening now. Will you take action today and stop the cuts before December 31?

Hon. Ms. Pupatello: I am happy to follow up with this particular crisis centre on a personal level and not address it here in this House. But let me say again what I

have said before. I'd like you to go to the Ontario Women's Directorate website. On that website you will find, in very short order, this particular update of the domestic violence action plan. It is unprecedented, in the history of the Ontario government, the level to which this government has brought together 13 ministers, 13 ministries to help the plight of women who suffer abuse. In an unprecedented way, we have come to the table, not just with funding but with structure so that these agencies have never seen the level of support that they are now getting from this government, not just in the area of sexual assault crisis centres but community supports across the board: in training, in the justice sector and, special and most of all, in public education. It is critical that we have support from all members of this House—

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

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Vic Dhillon (Brampton West–Mississauga): My question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, two weeks ago my private member's bill, Bill 161, the protecting vulnerable workers act, 2006, was debated in this Legislature. I am proud to say that my bill passed second reading. As you know, this issue is very near and dear to me and is one that affects a great many of my constituents in Brampton West–Mississauga. In fact, this issue affects Ontarians throughout the province, particularly some of our most vulnerable workers, including women, immigrants and visible minorities.

The purpose of my bill is to establish a licensing scheme for the control and regulation of businesses that operate as employment agencies. While there are many reputable temporary staffing agencies that play a useful role in our economy, there is no doubt that there are some breaking the rules and causing undue hardship for some of our most vulnerable citizens. Minister, what are you doing to protect these vulnerable individuals from exploitation by unethical staffing agencies?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I want to thank the member for his question and his advocacy on behalf of his constituents and, as well, his advocacy on behalf of vulnerable workers in the province. His bill raises some very interesting initiatives, and as a ministry we are taking a look at that bill. Also, we're continually looking at ways to address the issues and the challenges facing temporary workers in this province. I do want to stress, however, that temporary workers are currently protected under the Employment Standards Act. Their work may be temporary but their rights are not.

I can also tell you that the Ministry of Labour has had closer scrutiny of temporary agencies this past year. I am pleased today to announce that I have directed Ministry of Labour staff to undertake a targeted inspection campaign focused on temporary work agencies. Beginning in January, a group of employment standards officers will dedicate themselves exclusively to proactively inspecting temporary agencies. The officers will check to ensure

that employers are following the rules, including paying appropriate wages—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you, Minister. Supplementary, the member for Mississauga East.

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Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): That's great news. It's good to hear that this government takes the concerns of our vulnerable workers so seriously. I know that many of my constituents will breathe a sigh of relief knowing that the Ministry of Labour is taking action against these unscrupulous employers who prey on the weakest in our society.

While I still believe this industry needs to be regulated to fill the void left after the Conservative government chose to repeal the Employment Agencies Act, this is a fine step forward. It's no secret that women, newcomers and visible minorities are excessively represented in the lowest-paying and most insecure forms of work. They need our protection. But we're dealing with two issues here. One is compliance with the act by uncooperative employers, which I am hopeful your dedicated inspection team can improve, and one is education: How do we inform our vulnerable workers of their rights? Many are newcomers to Ontario. Minister, what—

The Speaker: The question has been asked.

Hon. Mr. Peters: I want to thank the member for his question, and his advocacy as well. Over the past three months, my parliamentary assistant, Mario Racco, has been touring around the province, meeting with community groups and newcomers, so that people understand their rights in the workplace. As well, we've developed community partnerships such as the Centre for Information and Community Services. We've launched a two-year partnership with the Settlement and Integration Services Organization in Hamilton, where counsellors and staff are trained to explain workers' rights in 40 different languages. Recently we partnered with the Chinese Inter-agency Network to help obtain valuable information from front-line temporary workers to assist our targeted enforcement. As well, we're offering outreach through the Ministry of Labour staff. We've entered into partnerships with three GTA community colleges to help employers understand compliance with the ESA. We have a website available as well, and we've moved forward with dedicated inspection.

In two years, the team recovered \$3.2 million in wages. The team beat targets for the last two years: 2,300 inspections in 2004-05; 2,560 in 2005-06. Again, our Ministry of Labour staff will undertake a targeted inspection campaign focused on temporary work agencies—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

SEX OFFENDERS

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): My question is for the Attorney General. Although Christmas and the holidays are just around the corner and I'm wearing a Christmas tie, all isn't quite as well as everybody thinks

it is. You see, I was in a classroom yesterday at Adelaide McLaughlin school and last Friday I was in O'Neill Collegiate, and there are a lot of concerns. The students are concerned; the teachers are concerned; the parents are concerned. They're coming to me in the arenas, because something is taking place that I think some people would like to hear about. You see, within half a block or within walking distance of those schools I was at, Jamie Moorcroft has been released. And just for those who would like to know—or not like to know—he has 10 criminal convictions, four of them against young boys. This man was convicted and released on house arrest for nine months.

Attorney General, people want to know, how are you protecting the people of the province and the kids by allowing individuals like that to be released in our community?

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General): I thank the member for his question, and I appreciate that he's bringing an issue to this Legislature that's very important to his community. I understand that and I appreciate it.

The member will understand as well that it is not for a Legislature to be making decisions about facts and law that are presented before a court. It is for a Legislature, on the other hand, to bring forward reforms, as this government has brought forward and as this government has brought forward to the federal Parliament, to make the changes that are necessary, without getting into this particular case, to see to it that if there are injustices out there that you and your community want changed, we do that.

I will certainly undertake to sit down with the member and with the official opposition to talk about what those reforms might be in the case of the particular area that the member is raising.

Mr. Ouellette: To quote here from CityNews, "Cops are sure he's a candidate to re-offend." There's nothing they can do about it at this time. Let me restate that: 10 convictions, four of them against young boys; nine months' house arrest. Something has to be done. If this Legislature has to come together to deal with issues like that, let us know what we have to do to make those changes, because we can't have things like this. I can't have my kids coming home from school with papers saying, "Guess what? This guy's on"—people want to know that he's living on Fernhill Boulevard, just north of Rosalind, but the police can't tell them that. I just did. We need those individuals out there addressed. We need this Legislature to come together to make those necessary changes. What is it that we have to do to work together to move forward on that issue?

Hon. Mr. Bryant: I hope the member appreciates how inappropriate it would be for an Attorney General, for a chief legal officer, to comment on any particular case or any particular individual. I know he understands that.

I have undertaken to sit down with the member, with the official opposition and with the third party to discuss reforms. It is very clear that there is a level of govern-

ment in which reforms are taken, the federal Parliament, which is not to say that we can't have a role in making those changes. The Premier led the national fight to make changes that resulted in reverse onus on bail going before the federal Parliament. We can work together on not only that issue but on other issues. I've undertaken to sit down with the member and I look forward to sitting down with him, after I've answered this question, to arrange for a time for us to begin that hard work.

LANDFILL

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. This morning, residents of Tiny township's Stop Dump Site 41 campaign travelled here to request that the McGuinty government reconsider approvals for a garbage dump on top of some of the purest source waters not just in the province but on the planet. The McGuinty government is being asked if it will walk the walk when it comes to protecting source waters. Will the McGuinty government protect these pristine source waters and reconsider the EA approval for site 41 under section 11.4 of the Environmental Assessment Act?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): I would ask my friend opposite to really pay attention to the history of what has transpired with respect to site 41. We are the government that has taken the single largest step in all of the country to protect source water with the Clean Water Act. That was an act that you voted against.

The environmental assessment for the landfill, which the member now speaks about, was originally approved under the NDP government some 10 years ago, and processes have been undertaken in that community over many years. The conditions on the certificate of approval were approved under the former Tory government. The role that the Ministry of the Environment now plays is solely to examine the design and operation of that landfill being sought to be constructed by the municipality in Tiny township. So before my friend opposite points fingers across—

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

Mr. Tabuns: It's nice to know that the day after your government passed your Clean Water Act, you issued the provisional certificate of approval for site 41. The act that you proclaim—acclaim—is not applied to a situation where we have source waters that actually have to be protected. This water is so clean that researchers use it to look at contamination in bottled water.

Now that we've gotten through all the rhetoric, will you use your powers as the government of the day to reconsider the EA approval for site 41 under section 11.4 of the Environmental Assessment Act, or will you ignore your actions on source water protection?

Hon. Ms. Broten: As I've suggested to my friend opposite, it is imperative that he examine the history of what has transpired here: a full hearing before the

Environmental Review Tribunal and a full examination of the issues by the government of the day, which was your government, an NDP government; approval of a full environmental assessment; provision of a certificate of approval; and an examination at present day by the community seeking to build their landfill, with the role of the ministry being to ensure that that community will be safe and protected.

The ministry has set out incredibly tough conditions to ensure that the landfill will be constructed using state-of-the-art engineering techniques that continue to exist, and we have put in place mechanisms to ensure that there's an opportunity for the community to continue to work collaboratively with respect to ensuring the safety of their drinking water. That is something I am committed to as a minister who brought in and passed the Clean Water Act. We will ensure that the source water in this community is clean and safe.

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IMMIGRANT SERVICES

Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. From 2003 to 2005, over 24,000 newcomers chose to settle in the city of Brampton. That's an average of 8,000 newcomers a year.

Minister, recently you were at the Brampton Multi-cultural Community Centre to announce an investment that is a result of the first-ever Canada-Ontario immigration agreement that the McGuinty government signed over a year ago.

"The immigrant community in Brampton and Mississauga has grown by leaps and bounds, but their needs were not reflected in the settlement resources we'd received over the years," said Ahmed Iqbal in the Toronto Star.

The centre is expected to get \$989,000 to strengthen language programs and hire job developers and counsellors, roles that fell to volunteers.

Minister, does this announcement mark the fact that a significant amount of funding is starting to flow to service agencies from the agreement?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I want to thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale. For the last two years, he's been asking the federal government to ensure that an immigrant who goes to Malton gets the same funding as an immigrant who goes to Montreal. We signed that agreement, and now that money's flowing.

In Brampton, we just announced almost \$1 million for the new settlement services that go into the schools now, enhanced language training and job search workshops. They're hiring more people. This is the first time in over 20 years there's been an increase in funding for settlement services. There are more programs and more experts going in there, helping newcomers integrate. It's good news for Brampton, it's good news for Peel region and it's good news for Ontario.

Mr. Kular: Minister, the federal-provincial agreement is only one of the initiatives in the McGuinty government's comprehensive plan to break down barriers for newcomers. Recently, you also announced the opening of Global Experience Ontario, an access and resource centre for the internationally trained, a result of the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act that passed recently. Minister, how will this centre help newcomers break down the barriers they are faced with when they arrive in Ontario?

Hon. Mr. Colle: I was proud, along with Minister Smitherman, to open up Global Experience Ontario at Ryerson University. At Ryerson University, there's going to be a one-stop information resource centre for newcomers to link with our bridge training programs, to link with services that will help them break through the barriers. This is the first centre of its kind. It's an investment in people who have global experience.

Frankly, many of us are sick and tired of hearing that excuse about, "Sorry, no job. You don't have any Canadian experience." What we're asking employers and regulatory bodies to do is look at people's global experience, international experience. That's why this centre will do a great job in ensuring qualified people get the right information and the right support to practise in Ontario. Whether it be doctors, engineers or pharmacists, these people deserve a chance. The access centre, Global Experience Ontario, will give them that chance and the support they've been long waiting for. It's about time.

SIGN LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): My question is to the Premier. Today in the gallery we have former MPP Gary Malkowski, and with him several representatives from the Ontario Association of the Deaf, the Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf as well as the Canadian Hearing Society.

As you know, Premier, American sign language along with English and French are all recognized as languages of instruction under the Education Act. The act also develops the regulations for the use of American sign language and LSQ. Can you tell Mr. Malkowski and the representatives mentioned who are here today what the status is and why there has been little or no action from your government on developing and implementing regulations on ASL and LSQ under the Education Act?

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): Thank you very much for the question. The member should know that since I was parliamentary assistant, actually, to Minister Kennedy, we have been in conversation with the folks who are concerned about this, because there's a range of issues here in terms of language of instruction and exactly what the regulation should say. I will commit to the member that we will

continue to have that conversation with Gary Malkowski and the people who have been in communication with us.

Ms. Scott: Thank you, Minister, but there have been many consultations. It's gone on for a long time. The president of the Ontario Association of the Deaf, as recently as October of this year, clearly stated that most deaf students do not pass the standard grade 10 literacy test. That's a pretty woeful statistic from a minister in a government where the leader proclaims himself as the education Premier.

You know you have the power to implement action if you so choose. Regulations have been created governing the other languages of instruction. You know you can pass regulations under the Education Act. Numerous studies, including the recent Ontario Human Rights Commission's Guidelines on Accessible Education, November 2004, and the recent federal court's Canadian Association of the Deaf decision, August 2006, recognize that action is needed.

Please, Minister, why are you avoiding the implementation of ASL and LSQ regulations in schools across Ontario? You have the ability to do so. Will you commit today to a timeline, please?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: First of all, action on enactment of this regulation could have taken place under the previous government; it did not. Eight years it sat. What we're trying to do in the education system, in addition to putting extra resources into the post-secondary system for interpretation, is build capacity. Gary Malkowski and I have had many conversations about this, that what is really needed is capacity in the system.

The member opposite makes a gesture that suggests we're not doing anything. In fact, what we're doing is working with our teachers of the deaf. We're working with the school system as a whole to make sure that the professional development and the training is in place that will allow capacity in the system. We can pass a regulation, we can change a regulation, but if there is no capacity, if there are no teachers to deliver, if there is no way for students to get the service they need, then the regulation is meaningless. So we're going to build capacity rather than make a paper decision.

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

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question as well is to the Minister of Education, and it's on exactly the same topic. In addition to English and French, American sign language—ASL—and langue des signes québécois are recognized and accepted as languages of instruction under the Education Act. People have the exact same right to sign in American sign language and LSQ as they have to speak English or French. Despite this, there is no action in the development of regulations for minimum standards for the classrooms of the deaf and the hard of hearing.

You're into the fourth year of your mandate. Can you tell us why your ministry has yet to develop and implement ASL and LSQ regulations under the Education Act? Why haven't you done it in four years?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: Not only did the previous government not enact this regulation, this regulation could have been enacted by the government preceding the previous government. This issue has been around for a good 14 years.

We are working with the deaf community. We have had many conversations with Mr. Malkowski. In fact, various wordings of a regulation change have been drafted and there has been a very specific conversation about what we can and can't do. If this were a simple issue of changing a regulation and making it so that all students who need ASL would have access to it, it would have been done. The point is that capacity has to be built in the system to allow students to get the service they need, and that's what we're working on.

Mr. Prue: We're having conversations. The answer we want to hear, and I'm sure that the people here want to hear, is that we're taking action. That's what you're not doing.

The recommendations for development of these regulations were supported by all the former ministers. I wasn't here and you weren't either. I don't know why they weren't done, but you have the opportunity to do them. They are being supported by the Ontario College of Teachers, and even the Supreme Court of Canada has said that it needs to be done.

You have delayed developing and implementing the ASL/LSQ regulations that would ensure those minimum standards for sign language interpreters and teaching schools across Ontario, despite your so-called commitment to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. It was in there too. Minister, when will you commit to ensuring that deaf students in Ontario are ensured quality instruction in their officially recognized language of instruction, that is, ASL/LSQ, in Ontario?

1520

Hon. Ms. Wynne: What was in the AODA was the commitment to set standards. That process is in the works. What we are trying to do is to build capacity in the system. We're trying to train teachers, we're trying to make sure that the services for deaf students are in place. It is very cheap politics to suggest that just changing a regulation and demanding that something happen in a system that has no capacity to make that happen—it's dishonest. I am not prepared to be part of a government that would do such a thing.

What I believe is that we have to keep making investments in the system that allow the teachers to get the training that they need, that allow us to have the capacity to deliver the service to the children. At the post-secondary level, we are making investments that will provide for access. We are working on the regulation changes. Mr. Malkowski couldn't get a meeting with the previous government; couldn't get a meeting, didn't have a conversation. We're working on drafting a regulation and building capacity.

TOURISM

Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex): My question is for everybody's favourite minister, the Minister of Tourism. Minister, the tourism industry has been facing some tough times in the past few years. What with September 11, SARS, the high dollar, high gasoline prices and the proposed passport policy in the United States, they've all had an impact on the tourism industry in Ontario.

Minister, I recall last summer that our government invested in the Chinese Lantern Festival at Ontario Place and that it was a great success. In my riding of Essex, there are many great festivals and events, not the least of which is the international wine festival in Amherstburg. Minister, what are some of the ways that our government is encouraging people to attend all of these great festivals and events happening across our great province?

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I thank you very much for the question, the member from Essex, and I want to say that the member is a great ambassador for tourism in his part of Ontario.

I'm pleased the member asked this question because our government has a new initiative called Celebrate Ontario. Our government is investing three million new dollars to help organizations develop and market festivals and events across the province. Some \$2.5 million of this new money will be invested to support the growth and enhancement of existing signature festivals and events. This new initiative will provide up to \$100,000 in one-time funding assistance to develop new features for festivals and events in every region of the province. In addition to this, \$500,000 will be available to increase support for advertising and promotion of events and festivals in Ontario.

We are encouraging the people to get into festivals and events in Ontario. There's no place like this. I can assure you that if I look at each of the members of this House, I know that in their ridings there are special festivals which would attract people, not only from one part of the province to the other, which we want, but also people from outside of the province and outside of the country who will come to enjoy all that Ontario has to offer, including—

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

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): My follow-up question to the Minister of Tourism is, I'm glad to hear that there's some more money on the table to help out festivals, because often people forget, as the Minister of Culture has pointed out many times, the contribution that festivals make not only to the dynamics of a community by having people visit Ontario and learn of a few things, but to the economic well-being. For example, I was president of the Canadian Tulip Festival for five or six years. It contributes \$30 million to the base economy, \$40 million to Ontario. That's very seldom recognized. I'd like to ask you this: We have volunteers, people struggling to keep these events alive. The tulip festival

almost went bankrupt this year. How is this particular program going help keep them alive so that they can be more and more solvent and not so dependent upon weather every May?

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I want to save some time for the member for Leeds–Grenville, who has a question next. I'll cut it off with just about two seconds to go so he can get his question in.

I want to thank the member for sharing this information. The tulip festival in Ottawa is outstanding. Everyone should attend it.

It's very important for all of us to recognize the unique and exciting events happening in all of our communities across the province and to encourage people to get out and see Ontario. In fact, we invite everybody to vacation in Ontario this winter if they are able to do so. I ask all MPPs to talk to the festivals and events organizers in their communities and encourage them to apply for grants through my ministry. Organizers can visit the Ontario Tourism festivals website to find out more information on how to apply for Celebrate Ontario. As well, organizations wanting to learn more about the tourism events marketing partnership program can visit www.tourismpartners.com to get more information.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, as you know, your friends at MPAC have become extremely restless since the property assessment freeze was instituted and most recently have come down hard on owners of properties at 1 King Street West here in the city of Toronto. The minister probably knows that they are assessing those buildings as a residential assessment and applying commercial tax rates to those properties, which has caused exorbitant tax increases.

By one example cited in the media, one owner's property taxes have increased from \$1,000 per year to \$11,000 per year in taxes. In fact, these are much higher taxes than even hotels like the King Edward or the Royal York face. It is a double whammy of the higher assessment category of residential assessment, about \$300,000 per unit, and commercial tax rates. This is a tax gouge that would make even Dalton McGuinty blush. What are you going to do about it?

Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I guess it's late in the day, sir, and my friend from Erie–Lincoln can shape matters as he thinks best. This is a matter of properties that are commercial properties, in essence hotel rooms, being assessed as commercial properties.

There is, I tell my friend, an issue because in part the building is a condominium and in part it's a hotel, so we've undertaken a review, because we're seeing more of these hotel-condominiums emerging, and we hope that this review can provide a reasonable resolution to the issue. In the meantime, as you know, it's up to MPAC to assess properties, and if property owners are not content

with those assessments, the property owner has a process of appeal to the Assessment Review Board, and obviously we would encourage that kind of appeal.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

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

I have signed this.

VISITORS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): Mr. Speaker, I just want to introduce a point of order. We have a gallery full of incredible volunteers from Parkdale–High Park, including an outrageously handsome man, my husband, Gil.

1530

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I'm pleased to bring this petition from my seatmate, the member for Niagara Falls, to whom I send my greetings and those of the members of his caucus. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

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

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

“There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration, resulting in loss of sight if treat-

ment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most" people "and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program."

I am pleased to sign this petition and to ask page Kelsea to carry it for me.

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): It's good to see you in the chair. The best of the season.

I'll read a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)," as promised by Dalton McGuinty during the election of 2003.

I'm pleased to sign it and support that and hand it to Philip, one of the pages who have been working here in this last session. He's done a great job.

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): My nephew.

Mr. O'Toole: He's Jim Wilson's nephew, actually.

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I have a petition presented to me by Mr. Sonny Sansone, a constituent of mine in Scarborough Southwest. He asked me to read it out, so I will.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas gun violence has been on the rise in the province of Ontario;

"Whereas such violence has had a devastating effect on communities across this province;

"Whereas programs supporting youth such as employment and recreation are essential in diverting youth from pursuing and embracing a culture of crime;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that the government of Ontario, as part of its strategy to deal with gun violence, restore and fund more programs that fund initiatives that empower youth like employment and recreation."

I agree with the petition. I affix my signature to it and give it to page Simon, who's here with me today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Now, to get back in the proper rotation, the member for Toronto-Danforth, whom I couldn't see before.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth): It's my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in Toronto-Danforth. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas climate change is recognized as a global crisis that requires immediate action;

"Whereas in Ontario, greenhouse gas emissions alone have grown by 16% over the past decade;

"Whereas provincial policies in energy, transportation, planning and infrastructure can reduce emissions in accordance with Kyoto;

"Whereas Ontario has received failing marks for not having a coordinated strategy in place to tackle climate change and reduce emissions;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to mandate that Ontario have a climate change plan based on the Kyoto targets."

I agree with this petition. I affix my signature to it, and I will give it to page Or for presentation.

PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I have more petitions to do with the Mary Lake dam.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the dam at Mary Lake has historically provided a pedestrian walkway for use by the community and visitors since the dam's construction; and

"Whereas the walkway provides a vital link and a tourist attraction for the community of Port Sydney; and

"Whereas restricting access to the walkway would result in pedestrian use of the roadway, where motor vehicle traffic poses a danger to pedestrians; and

"Whereas closure of the pedestrian walkway across the dam is inconsistent with other provincial government programs, including Ontario's action plan for healthy eating and active living and the Trails for Life program, both of which promote active lifestyles; and

"Whereas all ministries should strive to encourage and support healthy lifestyles;

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

"That the Ministry of Natural Resources continue to permit the use of the pedestrian walkway over Mary Lake dam indefinitely."

I support this petition.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I am pleased to present another petition on behalf of my hard-working seat mate from Niagara Falls, who keeps sending them into the Legislature, for which we thank him. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's a bit of a mouthful; here it comes:

"Whereas the people of the province of Ontario deserve and have the right to request an amendment to

the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents; and

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

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

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

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

"Whereas we support Bill 8, as introduced by Niagara Falls MPP Kim Craitor;

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

Once again, I thank the member for Niagara Falls for continuing to send in these petitions. I sign it and I ask page Simon to carry it for me.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): God bless you, Mr. Speaker. Merry Christmas.

I have another petition saying:

"Protect Homeowners from Skyrocketing Assessments
To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas working families, seniors and young people are facing higher taxes, higher home heating costs, higher hydro rates and higher user fees in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario; and

"Whereas skyrocketing property assessments and the resultant property tax increases are simply unaffordable and are forcing some homeowners, particularly seniors on fixed incomes, to sell their home; and

"Whereas Bill 75, the Homestead Act, 2006, would preserve the Canadian value of home ownership by:

—Capping assessment increases at 5% per year,

—Allowing homeowners to make up to \$25,000 per year in home improvements without triggering an assessment increase, and

—Providing a property tax break for seniors and the disabled by ensuring that the first \$10,000 of their home's value would not be taxed;

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

"The McGuinty Liberal government should adopt the assessment reforms in Bill 75, the Homestead Act."

I attach my signature in support.

PORTLANDS ENERGY CENTRE

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): I am presenting a petition on behalf of my constituents. The petition reads:

"Whereas the proposed Portlands Energy Centre power plant will increase air pollution in east end and downtown Toronto;

"Whereas the city of Toronto opposes the construction of this 550-megawatt gas-fired power plant on the waterfront;

"Whereas alternatives to the plant exist to provide the power and power savings necessary to maintain the supply of power in the city of Toronto;

"Whereas the construction of the plant will undermine efforts to conserve power, reduce pollution, develop renewable power and revitalize the waterfront;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to block the construction of the Portlands Energy Centre on the waterfront and to invest instead in energy efficiency, conservation, alternative and renewable power."

I agree with this petition. I affix my signature to the petition in agreement and pass it on to page Kelsea for submission.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I too wish you a very Merry Christmas, Speaker. This is another petition from my hard-working seatmate from Niagara Falls. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It also deals with macular degeneration, and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

On behalf of my seatmate, the member for Niagara Falls, I certainly wish his constituents all the best. I'll sign this petition and give it to page Gloria to carry for me.

1540

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

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

“Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada’s first Nobel Prize recipient; and

“Whereas this great Canadian’s original homestead, located in the town of New Tecumseth, Alliston, is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

“Whereas the town of New Tecumseth has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

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

“That the Minister of Culture endorse Simcoe–Grey MPP Jim Wilson’s private member’s bill entitled the Frederick Banting Homestead Preservation Act so that the homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come.”

I want to thank Bob and Peter Banting for that petition.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge): I have a petition here which reads:

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

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

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

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

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

ill-advised and contrary to the responsibilities of elected representatives in Canada.”

Since I agree with this petition, I’ll affix my signature to it and ask Connor if he would deliver it to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House related to Bill 173, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act, the MPPs Pension Act, 1996 and the Executive Council Act, that the order referring Bill 173 to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly be discharged and the bill be ordered for third reading, which order may then be immediately called;

That when the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That there shall be no deferral of any vote allowed, pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Debate?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: It’s a pleasure to enter into today’s debate, to be here in the House.

Fundamentally, this time allocation is about the work that MPPs do. I had the great pleasure today, on behalf of all members of this Legislature, to talk about some of the work that we do and that we did as far as developing a blueprint for growth, for environmental protection and for economic development here in Ontario—very important work, work that will last generations over the course of the next quarter of a century—for the almost four million additional people we wish to settle, the over two million jobs that we project will be created; how those are going to translate, where those people and jobs are going to grow, how it’s going to be connected together and supported by transportation, by the critical infrastructures that are necessary.

I don’t want to suggest for a minute that this work was entirely the doing of the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal or even of members on one side of the House, because I can tell you that this work, in fact, began formally as an initiative under my colleagues who are now opposite but at the time under the leadership of then-Minister Chris Hodgson in the formation of what he called Smart Growth panels. I congratulate the previous government and Chris Hodgson for the work they did in bringing this forward, in bringing people together, in bringing members of this Legislature together, to plan for

the growth and development, to build the consensus. That was tiring, painstaking work that he and other members in the then government caucus initially undertook and engaged in, but also in co-operation with members of other caucuses: the important work, the critical work, for the growth and development of this province.

Fundamentally, that's what today's motion is about, the kind of work that we do. I truly believe that I have had a privilege to be able to pick up much of where Chris Hodgson had left off and to work with a number of incredible individuals on both sides of the House, and outside of this place, to build a plan which is going to put Ontario at the forefront of growth and development.

Of course, one of the things I am especially thrilled about is that the eyes of the world are now back on our province. You know, we were in a leadership position for so many years. I don't want to ascribe it as anybody's fault, because it isn't, but we just rested on our laurels and it was time that somebody got back into the game. That's certainly happened. The world is watching and the world is looking, and the world is giving us two thumbs up.

We won the Daniel Burnham Award. Now, that's not an award that goes to David Caplan or the Ministry of Public Infrastructure; that is an award that honours the province of Ontario and all of the people who contributed to it, but certainly the leadership of MPPs in their communities, helping to develop that kind of a progressive view, that kind of a consensus, that kind of a will, and the movement and the momentum forward, to build that kind of plan.

Daniel Burnham was a very famous American planner. He was the one who developed the city of Chicago plan back in 1909 and subsequently the Chicago World's Fair and was credited with revitalizing the American Midwest. You can literally go and Google him and you will see—I think some call him the Frank Gehry of planning. He was the person whom internationally people looked to as somebody who got to understand the overall necessity of having a good plan and then having a good implementation.

Mr. Burnham said something very interesting: "Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will themselves not be realized"—have bold plans, have bold dreams. That's what members of this Legislature do on behalf of the people we are honoured to serve; on behalf of the people of Don Valley East, whose neighbour I have the privilege of being and of representing them here in this Legislature; on behalf of the people of every riding where members represent, advocate for and are the voice for their particular neighbours and constituents. That's what we do. It's important work. That's what this motion before us is about. It's about the work that we do to represent our neighbours and to not only dream big dreams but to deliver on their behalf.

1550

The growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe will build opportunities for the people of Ontario by promot-

ing economic prosperity, creating better-planned communities and creating complete communities and a greater mix of business and services, housing and parks that will make us more livable; in fact, get us into that virtuous cycle where people will want to come and put down roots and raise their families. Business people will want to put down roots and raise their businesses. It's about that cycle of prosperity that we can all share in. That's the critical and important work that I've been privileged to have a hand in, that members of this Legislative Assembly and so many others have had a critical hand in.

I had a chance during ministers' statements to talk a little bit about the plan and the honour that has been bestowed on the province of Ontario. I want to thank—because I don't get a chance to—the member from Erie-Lincoln for his very kind and warm remarks.

I did want to address something that the sour and dour member from Toronto-Danforth had to say. I think it's important to put a few comments on the record. I vehemently and fundamentally disagree with him in his perspective, but of course the sour and dour have to be represented as well, and Mr. Tabuns, the member from Toronto-Danforth, does an excellent job of doing so. He said, "Maybe you should look up close at the plan. It doesn't bear out the kind of scrutiny"—I'm paraphrasing, of course. I disagree, but so do a number of other people. I'd like to put some of their remarks on the record.

I'd like to start with the honourable mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion, a force in her own right. She says: "This is an historic plan." "I commend the government for taking this bold step to make our communities strong, livable and healthy, now and in the future." "The government is making real progress in building a growth plan that will help make better and stronger communities in the Golden Horseshoe region." "This vision goes a long way in making growth a benefit to all." "When implemented, the plan will protect the future of our communities and will be well received by the public."

I want to quote another local leader, Oshawa mayor John Gray. He said: "The growth plan will focus our growth in our existing cities; it will revitalize older downtowns that can benefit from new growth, take advantage of our existing infrastructure, save us money and take the pressure off building new subdivisions on the urban fringe."

I want to quote former Hamilton mayor Larry D'Ianni: "The proposed growth plan provides a clear, coherent vision for the region to make sure we stay economically prosperous in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. We look forward to working with the province on its implementation." "The growth plan," he says, "is key to Hamilton's economic future. The new growth plan shows the government is on the right track."

I want to quote the former mayor of Barrie, Rob Hamilton: "It is imperative that we have this growth plan in place to support the growth that is coming to our area and to ensure that we have the infrastructure in place."

I want to quote the former mayor of Peterborough, Silvia Sutherland: "Peterborough will benefit from the

growth plan. The province's focus on revitalizing existing urban centres makes sense for the city and we look forward to working together with the province on this initiative."

I want to quote the former mayor of Burlington, Rob MacIsaac—

The Acting Speaker: I would like to remind the honourable member that we are debating government closure motion number 286. I have yet to hear—and I've been very patient; almost 10 minutes—that even being mentioned. I would ask you to get to the issue at hand.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: Speaker, I did say that this bill is about the work that we do as MPPs, and I firmly believe that. These local leaders recognize the work that this Legislative Assembly does. In fact, Rob MacIsaac, the former mayor of Burlington, said so: "The vision that the province"—that's the MPPs, the members of this Legislature, who are the subject of notice of motion 286.

Moving forward—and Speaker, I know you'd want to acknowledge this—the province has, for the greater Golden Horseshoe, the vision, as shared by the city of Burlington: "We want a vibrant pedestrian and transit-friendly community where people can enjoy a high quality of life. The proposed growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe is a big step forward to getting us there." "The draft growth plan reflects a good fit with the goals of the Greenbelt Task Force"—another initiative of this Legislative Assembly and the important work that we do on behalf of the constituents whom we serve, which of course is the subject of notice of motion 286.

The former mayor of Markham, Don Cousens: "We are very excited about the possibilities that the growth plan will give to Markham city centre. The province's thinking is in line with our own," reflecting the fact that the province—I'm injecting now—is very much in line and working with MPPs on all sides and the important work we do. Don Cousens, a former member here in the House, my good friend from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound knows well. We have great affection for Don and wish him and his family well during this holiday season. "The province's thinking is in line with our own on the need to build transit supportive downtowns where people can live, work and play in close proximity."

But of course it would be important to quote city of Toronto Mayor David Miller: "The province's growth plan will be a great help to the government of Toronto as we implement our own plans to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of new residents we expect in the next 30 years."

You see, working with our local leadership is one of the key jobs of members of this assembly. It's some of the most important work we do. But it's not just in those communities. Regional chairs, like a former member of this House, Peter Partington, regional chair for the region of Niagara: "As a part of the greater Golden Horseshoe, Niagara is unique in terms of the assets and opportunities that it brings to the future growth of Ontario. Places to Grow not only addresses how we manage our inheritance from the past, but it focuses on what we can accomplish

by working together in the future,"—working together, members on both sides of the House, the important work that we do on behalf of our constituents. He goes on to say, "Niagara plays a key economic role ... both as a vibrant smart growth community and as an economic corridor between two countries."

There are so many more local views by local leadership and by others in business and industry and in the environmental sector. I would mention, of course, the work that we do with people outside of this House, people like Joe Berridge, a well known advocate for cities, well known in this city as a member of the Toronto Board of Trade, certainly, but as a progressive thinker: "Now is the time for this kind of bold direction for the future of the region," he writes. "The province must move forward on the growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe and put in place the necessary transit and land-use tools to ensure that the region stays a wonderful place to live, and remain competitive on a global scale."

There are others, people like Neil Rodgers, of the Urban Development Institute: "Places to Grow is a positive step in a right direction.

"It recognizes the need for a competitive and affordable land supply, urban intensification and investment in public infrastructure to ensure Ontario remains globally competitive.

"The growth plan is a significant achievement and will ensure the future growth and economic competitiveness of the region and province. It demonstrates the province's leadership in planning for growth and infrastructure investment in the GGH."

There are so many others: Jan Kasperski, from the Ontario College of Family Physicians—because this is a broad coalition of MPPs on all sides of the House, and the important work that we do is recognized in this motion 286 here today. Jan says: "We know that urban sprawl has an adverse effect on people's health.

"The Ontario government's connected strategies such as the ... growth plan and the planning reform initiative are positive ... steps in controlling" urban sprawl.

"The Ontario College of Family Physicians recognizes the importance of developing and implementing strategies to control sprawling growth—and the need to plan for safe and healthy communities."

There are so many more: Chris Winter of the Conservation Council of Ontario; David Crombie of the Canadian Urban Institute; Mike Harcourt, former Premier of the province of British Columbia and the Prime Minister's adviser on cities. Those are just here at home, people who up close live in, work in and lead this community.

I know that I have more than illustrated why my dour and sour friend from Toronto-Danforth is simply wrong in his assessment, why we disagree, and I would encourage him to vote for this motion. I would encourage him to support the work that MPPs do in planning the growth and development, the economic prosperity and ultimately the high quality of life that our residents and neighbours would like. I will be voting in support of this motion. I

wish to encourage all members on all sides to do likewise, and I thank you, Speaker.

1600

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): I was asked to participate in the debate this afternoon just a few minutes ago, but I am pleased to have this opportunity to reflect upon the situation that's before the House today and to offer my comments to the Legislature.

I want to begin by wishing you, Mr. Speaker, and all members of the House all the best of the holiday season. I think all of us are looking forward to the break that's coming so that we can spend some time with our families. I certainly am one of those members who is looking forward to spending some family time after a long fall sitting of the Legislature.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, in his comments on this motion this afternoon, indicated that in his view, the debate this afternoon is about the work that the members of provincial Parliament do, and I would agree with that. I am very pleased to be joined in the House by my colleague the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. Bill and I have been good friends since we were both first elected in 1990, and I know Bill is one of the most popular politicians in Ontario in terms of the support that he has in his riding. He deserves it. He has worked hard to achieve it over the years, first, for many years, as a member of county council, the local council, as the reeve of Sydenham township, and as the warden of the county of Grey before he was elected in 1990. Some members may not know this, but his plurality in a tough election in 2003—the last election, of course, which was pretty tough for our party—was one of the highest in the province. And again, he has worked hard to earn that, to earn the trust of his electorate, to earn the respect of his constituents, and no member in this House is harder working in his riding than Bill Murdoch.

I want to touch upon the issue before the House today in another way as well, because the issue involves the compensation of members, of course. I was first elected to this place in 1990, and I felt very honoured and privileged, and have been honoured and privileged to serve here ever since. But I can honestly say that when I first ran as a candidate in 1990, I had no idea what the members were paid; I had no idea what the total compensation was. I was aware of the fact that the members were reasonably paid.

At that time, I was working as executive assistant for my predecessor, Jack Johnson, who served here for 15 years with distinction. I had some idea of what I was getting into, but I didn't inquire as to what the pay was. I wasn't that concerned about it. I wanted to serve; that's why I was running. Mr. Johnson was retiring after 15 years of service, and our party needed a candidate. Again, that 1990 election was a tough election for us, but I worked my heart out in that election campaign and I was supported by a lot of good people on our campaign team and across the riding. I was fortunate enough to be successful in that election.

Again, I have to say how honoured and privileged I feel to be here, to do the work that we do. I think the Ontario Legislature is an important parliamentary institution. I'm concerned about what may happen in the future if Bill 173 doesn't pass, because I think we do risk becoming a second-rate parliamentary institution vis-à-vis the federal House of Commons. For that reason, I've expressed support for Bill 173.

I realize the New Democrats are opposed to it, and they have every right to express their concerns. The fact that we're here discussing this issue an extra week above and beyond what we anticipated is of no concern to me, other than I wish I was spending time with my family. But certainly I feel an obligation to be here to participate in the discussion this week. The New Democrats have their perspective. I don't agree with it, but they have every right to express their views on this issue. They have done that very well this week.

I want to talk a little bit about the work I've been doing in my riding in recent weeks, because there have been a number of issues that I've had the opportunity to bring forward in the Legislature that I feel very strongly about with respect to the riding of Waterloo–Wellington.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal in his comments talked about the Places to Grow initiative, and I know he's very proud of the recognition that the government has received today. He was gracious in terms of talking about how our government, under the leadership of Chris Hodgson, the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, had laid down a lot of the groundwork with his Smart Growth initiative that the current government has attempted to build upon with Places to Grow.

There is a great deal of interest in the Places to Grow initiative as it affects our area, in Wellington county in particular. I've had the opportunity to raise this issue in the Legislature by talking about the target growth numbers that Places to Grow seems to have for our area. Places to Grow would have you believe that the county of Wellington and the city of Guelph will increase in population from 195,000 people in 2001, the most recent census data, to 321,000 people by 2031, an increase of 126,000 people. That's a 65% increase over 30 years in communities that I serve and represent that draw their water from the ground, the vast majority of which lack any form of public transit, and that are served by a county and separated city form of government. So we are quite concerned as to how this growth will be managed, and we have a lot of questions about how the infrastructure will be paid for.

I think it's incumbent upon the government to bring forward a plan for the infrastructure that's going to be needed if we're going to be able to absorb this kind of population increase in our area. I would encourage the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal to take a sincere interest in what's being said by the municipal politicians in Waterloo–Wellington on this issue, because I've heard from a number of them. I believe fundamentally that communities should grow at a pace at which they wish to grow, and that if communities want to

grow modestly or remain relatively constant in their population, the provincial government shouldn't be interfering in that or dictating to them what size their communities are going to grow to.

I've also had the opportunity to raise in the House this week my appreciation to the Minister of Transportation for the fact that Highway 6 between Fergus and Arthur is going to be rebuilt. I understand that the tenders have been called for, and it's about a \$20-million highway job. This stretch of Highway 6 is very much needed. I'm sure the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound would suggest that Highway 6 needs to be rebuilt right up to Owen Sound, and I would certainly concur with that. But this particular stretch of highway, between the communities of Fergus and Arthur, has fallen into a very, very severe state of disrepair.

When I was first elected in 1990, the very first words that I uttered in this House as the member for Wellington were to draw attention to the need to repair and upgrade Highway 6. That was 16 years ago. I raised it continually in those early years in the 1990s and the government of the day responded with assistance—a highway project, actually—rebuilding Highway 6 from Guelph north to Fergus, but that's where the project stopped. So we've got a lot of work to do in the months ahead.

I've worked hard to raise the transportation issues in my constituency in the Legislature by advocating for the Waterloo-Wellington transportation action plan. In January 2003, I wrote a letter to each of the municipal councils in my riding and asked them to give me their advice as to what the highway and transportation priorities were for those councils and what projects they would want me to advocate for for the next five years and beyond. Each municipal council responded with a list of their priority projects. We packaged all of those projects together, some 40 projects, and called it the Waterloo-Wellington transportation action plan. I've attempted to highlight our transportation needs as opportunities have come up month to month, week to week, and I'm pleased that the government has responded with this Highway 6 project. So I'll continue to advocate for all of the projects on that list. We're not done yet, but I do believe that we have to make transportation a higher priority because it's so important for our economy and so important for road safety. So these are things I'm going to continue to raise.

I think I have used the time that I was asked to speak on today. I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence in terms of allowing me to talk about my role as a member as well as the work that we do as MPPs. I don't anticipate that the New Democrats are going to support this motion today, as the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal asked them to do, but I certainly think most of the members will, and I think we need to move forward on this issue.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I, along with a number of other New Democrat members, will be speaking to Bill 173, because I know there's some interest on the part of the people of Ontario on this issue. What the government has done this afternoon is presented

a motion to shut off debate, to in effect guillotine further debate of the McGuinty government's proposal for a 31% pay increase. People, in listening to the spokesperson for the McGuinty government, may have thought, "Well, I heard him talk, but I didn't hear him refer to the bill at all." That is because I think members of the McGuinty government want to avoid discussing this issue at all costs, and that is the reason for this government motion shutting down debate.

1610

So that people understand how this works, the government uses its majority and brings in a motion saying that there shall be no further debate on this issue, requires an immediate vote on the issue, and then the government hopes that they can hide the issue, put it to bed, and that people will forget about the issue over the Christmas holidays and into the new year. I don't think that strategy is going to work. It hasn't worked so far. I don't think it's going to work into the future.

But I want, again, people at home to know why New Democrats are opposed to this motion, why we're opposed to shutting down debate on this issue, and why we're opposed to the government's Bill 173 in the first place. As I say, Bill 173 is all about the McGuinty government trying to ram through this Legislature a 31% pay increase, and do it at Christmastime, when they hope that the people of Ontario are not watching.

My reasons for opposing the bill and the New Democrats' reasons for opposing the bill are essentially three: one, we think it is underhanded and that it appears sneaky when a government tries to ram through this kind of legislation immediately before Christmas when, admittedly, many people are preoccupied with other issues. I think any reasonable outside observer would say that the process the McGuinty government is engaged in here is sneaky and underhanded. So that's certainly one of my objections. What we're seeing today is a furtherance of that strategy on the part of the McGuinty government, to shut down democratic debate, to avoid public hearings on the issue, to avoid further discussion of the issue. This is a very anti-democratic step, in effect a guillotine motion: Shut down debate and force the issue through.

The second reason that I am opposed to this legislation is that context is everything in society. The context that we see now in many parts of Ontario is not a good one. I asked the Minister of Natural Resources today, who has watched the destruction of 45,000 direct and indirect jobs in the forest sector in northern Ontario, if he thought that he was entitled to a \$40,000 pay increase, when he's presided over the destruction, as I say, of 40,000 direct and indirect jobs in the forest sector. I think that's a question that needs to be answered. Personally, I don't think anyone who has presided over the destruction of 40,000 direct and indirect jobs in the forest sector deserves any kind of pay increase. In fact, what they probably deserve is to be out of the job that they're in now. But we see something of the standards of the Premier in this matter when he suggests that someone who has presided over

the loss of 50,000 jobs, direct and indirect, in the forest sector should receive a very substantial pay increase.

And it is substantial. Let's be clear: The pay increase that McGuinty government members, aided by Conservative members, want to vote themselves is more money than a lot of workers make in a year. In other words, the size of the increase is larger than the annual salaries of many workers. The average woman worker in Ontario gets paid an annual income of \$25,600. When you add all of this in, the pay increase and the increase to RSP contributions, the government is in effect voting itself a holus-bolus increase here, an immediate increase, in excess of what the average woman worker makes in this province in a year. That, I suggest, is incredible.

The government has tried to argue that MPPs are low-paid. Well, the fact of the matter is, and Statistics Canada tells us this, that for an MPP in Ontario, a member of the provincial Parliament of Ontario, the pay is in the top 10% of income earners. In other words, MPPs earn more than 90% of the income earners in this province. So we're already in the top 10%.

What the McGuinty government proposes to do in one fell swoop now is to move into the top 5%. MPPs will then make more than 95% of the constituents whom we're called upon to serve. That's quite a substantial change in a very short time, from being in the top 10% to being pushed up to the top 5% of income recipients in the province.

Ontario MPPs make more money now, before the pay raise, than members of the Legislative Assembly in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. So context is important, and when you look at the context, it suggests to me that this is not warranted.

But I think from the perspective of all those Ontarians who are being told by this government to work longer and harder for less, that's happening. For those people who are struggling to make ends meet on minimum wage, we know that minimum wage in Ontario now is not a living wage. People who are working for minimum wage are in many cases working two or three jobs. They have one job during the day, another job in the evening and a further job on the weekend, all in an effort to make ends meet, and they can't do it. They can't pay the rent, they can't put food on the table and they increasingly have difficulty looking after their kids. What is the government's answer to those folks? The McGuinty government's answer is, "No increase." We put forward a proposal to increase the minimum wage to a modest \$10 an hour. The response of the McGuinty government is, "No, absolutely not." From the perspective of all those people who are trying to survive, struggling to survive on the basis of Ontario Works benefits, to all of those people who are struggling to survive—and I mean struggling to survive—on the very limited Ontario disability support plan benefits, this is grossly unfair and unwarranted. To those lowest-income children in the province who actually see the McGuinty government claw back from them and their families literally hundreds of dollars each

month, money that is provided to them by the federal government to help them have a better standard of living, yet the McGuinty government claws that money back from them, from their perspective this is unwarranted, unjustified and unfair.

I think context is important. The context of the McGuinty government's trying to ram through this 31% pay increase when so many others in Ontario are having to struggle, when many others in Ontario have lost their jobs, when many others are actually seeing the government claw back money from them, is not a good context.

Finally, I oppose this legislation. I oppose what the government wants to do here in terms of a 31% pay increase because I think it's bad public policy. I think it's very bad public policy for MPPs or anyone to go around awarding themselves a 31% pay increase. How does this government then go to grossly overpaid people such as Tom Parkinson at Hydro One, or the successor of Tom Parkinson at Hydro One, and say, "You have to receive less"? How does this government approach Ontario Power Generation? How does this government deal with the explosion of very high income salaries at the Ontario Power Authority? I think it's bad public policy when governments of any stripe and at any level engage in this kind of activity to holus-bolus, all at once, with very little discussion, trying to avoid public discussion, simply say, "a 31% pay increase." I think it's very bad public policy.

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But I think what the government is trying to do today is worst of all: trying to shut down debate. The irony is, this is a Premier and this is a government that said that all legislation should have a public hearing, that legislation should be out there for the public to comment on so that the public can be heard and can make its points. What the government is doing today by this gag order, by this guillotine motion, is an attempt to terminate and avoid public hearings, to stop the people of Ontario from having any say, to stop the people of Ontario from exercising their democratic right to speak out on issues, to be heard on issues and to voice an opinion. I think this speaks volumes about how the McGuinty government will say one thing and then do another, how the McGuinty government will profess to believe in one thing and do something totally different. That is what is there for all to see once again today.

When the government presented their legislation for this 31% pay increase, I got a very interesting call from someone, who said, "You know, I watched Dalton McGuinty in the last election. I saw him make promise after promise after promise, and I've watched him break almost every one of them. But you know what? I don't remember him promising that the 31% pay increase was a priority. How is it that something that was never promised, was never mentioned, suddenly becomes a legislative priority for the McGuinty government when all of the things that were promised and we were told were a priority have been forgotten over and over, and promises broken repeatedly, by the McGuinty government?"

I think that is a fair question for people to ask. That's one of the things that would have happened in public hearings. People could have asked, when did this become such an all-important priority for the McGuinty government? When did the McGuinty government go to the people and say this was more important than everything else? That is clearly the case.

We have a number of bills—important bills—that have passed second reading, that are sitting on the order paper: a bill, for example, that would protect health care workers who work in our hospitals and our homes for the aged from very serious needle-stick injuries; a bill that would ensure more fair treatment of firefighters who suffer from cancer as a result of chemicals and conditions that they have experienced on the job; a bill to raise the minimum wage to \$10 an hour.

Is the McGuinty government dealing with any of these issues in any sense of urgency? Not at all. Those pieces of legislation are being left to languish on the order paper by the McGuinty government as they rush through their own 31% pay increase—I repeat, a pay increase that is larger than what the average woman worker in the province of Ontario makes in a year. The average woman worker gets paid \$26,500. This one-time, holus-bolus pay increase is actually larger than the income that the average woman worker in this province receives in a year.

I know that many of my colleagues also want to speak to this legislation, so I'm going to ensure that they have that opportunity. But let me say again to folks across Ontario, the context of this is bad. It is bad public policy at any time to try to usher through a 31% pay increase. I think it sends all the wrong signals out there. Especially the process that the McGuinty government has engaged in here has been bad, because the perception is that it has been sneaky, it has been underhanded, it has been less than transparent and it has been less than open with the people of Ontario. For all of those reasons, what the government's trying to do here today is wrong. We should continue to have debate, and we should have public hearings on this legislation and hold the McGuinty government to yet again one of the promises they made before the last election.

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion this afternoon. I would note that the members on the opposite side have a somewhat short memory when it comes to time allocation motions. In fact, our government has introduced over 102 government bills, we've passed 83 bills and we've only time-allocated 14. That is, by far, the fewest number of bills any government has time-allocated since 1990, considerably less than the Tories who time-allocated a whopping 102 bills.

To my friend the leader of the third party, I would also like to note that the NDP did use time allocation over five times more than the previous Liberal government before them. When they were doing their greatest piece of work, as some people see it, ripping up collective agreements with their social contract, they allowed no time for third party debate, and no public hearings when they raised the

gas taxes. So it does not lie well in the mouth of the leader of the third party to be speaking so vehemently in opposition to this motion today when in fact his party's history is not unblemished.

I'd like to take the lead from the member for Waterloo–Wellington, who today spoke about some of the things that are of concern to his riding and some of the things that he is working on, on behalf of his riding. As well, the leader of the third party did talk about a number of things that are before this House and that are being debated and discussed. I'd like to talk about some of the things today that are of interest to the people of my riding and some of the things that we've accomplished over the last year in my riding.

Just this last Friday, we had a groundbreaking for the new Mattawa hospital site, a project that's been long discussed that resulted from a hospital that had a fire in 1967 and that has been housed in portables for the last nearly 40 years. I can tell you that it was a happy day in the community of Mattawa on Saturday as they saw ground broken on the site and heard from the contractors directly that they would start construction this past Monday, or at least start the ground clearing and moving forward. We'll see lots of work on the site in January. It's a delighted community, a deserving community and a very deserving staff and group at the hospital, who have been working in less than standard conditions for so many years. So to the medical director, Dr Wilkins, and to all of the medical staff, the nurses and the volunteers at the Mattawa General Hospital, as well as all of the fundraisers who have worked so hard on this project, I say congratulations. To the members of the community, to the mayor and the councillors, and to the over 800 people who came out last fall for a rally in support of the hospital, I say to them congratulations and a very Merry Christmas. What a delightful present for the town of Mattawa.

We've also seen progress in the town of Powassan, where their number one infrastructure project has been a water tower. We were pleased to be able to announce provincial support for the construction of a new water tower in Powassan that is moving forward. Again, their council declared that as their number one priority and that is now moving forward as a result of the support of this government.

We've seen new libraries, redeveloped libraries and refurbished libraries in the town of Bonfield, and again, in the town of Mattawa, where we've seen the public library relocated into the high school library site, therefore creating a hub in the community at F-J-McElligott, F-J being a high school in the community of Mattawa that was at risk of closure under the Conservative government and is now revitalized and thriving in the town of Mattawa.

We've moving forward with our hospital in North Bay. The North Bay Regional Health Centre has been a project long discussed. It is the co-location of the Northeast Mental Health Centre and the North Bay regional hospital. They will be co-locating on a new site.

It has gone to tender. The proposals have been accepted. We are presently reviewing those tenders and should have the new proponent announced in the very new year. We'll see shovels in the ground on that project in March, if not sooner. Given the weather that we've had up north of late, it could be very much sooner, given that we haven't had much freezing nor much ground frost.

This too is a project that has been long discussed and long-awaited, and our community is delighted to see progress being made on that front. It's a huge infrastructure project, the largest construction project that my community will see, and we are delighted to see it moving forward. It will benefit all of our area, our region, and in fact the entire northeast of Ontario, as the Northeast Mental Health Centre will be housed there in a co-location.

1630

We saw as well the opening of the OPP communications centre this fall. The communications centre is a \$4-million state-of-the-art facility that provides a communication hub for all of northeastern Ontario, an important facility and infrastructure in my community. Certainly, the OPP and the great staff who are there—I haven't been out on the RIDE program yet. I usually get out on the coldest night of the year; we haven't had the coldest night of the year, so I guess that's why we haven't been out yet. But I know that they're out there every night on the RIDE program working hard on our behalf. I thank the OPP officers and congratulate them on that new infrastructure and the new building that they now have to work in.

As well, the water treatment plant for the city of North Bay is moving forward again. That's a partnership between the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government. Our provincial government is in for \$19 million. There is much construction going on on Lakeside Drive in North Bay and we are seeing that moving forward.

My students in the riding of Nipissing are benefiting from the resources and the investments that this government has made in our secondary and elementary schools. We have seen class sizes declining. We had the Minister of Education visiting our riding this fall, and she had a great visit at Almaguin school—a school that is much in need of upgrade and a new build. They were able to show the minister why it is that they are so deserving of a new school. We hope to be able to move forward with that in the near future.

We also visited a brand new school in Callander, as well as a very small rural school in Astorville. The minister had a great experience visiting with the students and the teachers, as well as visiting a brand new French high school in the city of North Bay. It was a great day. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to highlight the great work that our teachers are doing in my area, that our schools are doing in the four different boards that we have, and to see the results of the investments that we as a government have made in education across the province.

Right outside my office in downtown North Bay, out the back door, is the new transit centre, which is well under way and in the midst of construction. This is a result of the gas tax that the province has been forwarding to our municipalities. The new transit centre will be a hub for North Bay transit and also will attract more people to downtown North Bay and to our wonderful waterfront, which continues to be developed and is being worked on as we speak.

These are just some of the investments that we have seen in my riding of Nipissing over the last few months. We've seen such great progress; we've seen such great strides made. We've seen investment in economic development in Rahn Plastics, one of my local employers which, through a northern Ontario heritage fund grant, was able to move into a new office space and expand their work force by 10 employees—again, a great investment in a great employer in our community. That investment will allow that employer to develop its business to a point where it will be able to compete on a North American scale, which is so terribly important for some of our businesses in the north that need to broaden their markets. This is one example of where strategic investment on behalf of the government through the northern Ontario heritage fund is seeing growth and development in the north.

That's just one of the many examples of economic development and growth that we're seeing in my region. Of course, the mining industry is thriving across the north, and we have many mining suppliers in my community which are also benefiting from the growth of that sector.

We are not, of course, protected from the downturn in the lumber industry that has hit the industry North America-wide. We do have some communities that are hit by the impact of that. We are working hard, especially in Bonfield-Mattawa, where we've seen some downturn at Columbia. We're working hard with them through their economic development group to assist those workers who have been displaced as well as those communities in seeking out new economic opportunities. We are working on a number of projects with them at the moment that I'm hoping in the new year will prove to be a great success for those communities.

I am delighted to stand here today and say that I support Bill 173, the bill that we are discussing today. I believe that it is a question of fairness. I believe that it is appropriate that we be receiving, at a minimum, 75% of what our federal counterparts are making. We represent the same ridings, more or less, we represent the same constituents, and certainly we do at least the same amount of work. To be at 60% of those wages is inappropriate. I do believe it is a public policy question, though I disagree with the leader of the third party, who argued that it was bad public policy. I think it is good public policy to attract good people to this Legislature.

I know many people in this Legislature have taken pay cuts to be here. I am one of them. I make no bones about that. But I'm here to do the public service that my father

did so proudly for 12 years. I strive every day to fill those large footprints and to serve the people of Nipissing as best I can. I think the majority of people in this House are here for the same reason: to serve their constituents; to serve the people we have been elected by and have the privilege to represent here in this Legislature; to serve the public interest and the greater public interest of Ontario citizens.

I appreciate the opportunity today to speak to this motion and of course I will be supporting the motion. I'm going to be sharing my time with the member for Perth-Middlesex.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): This afternoon the House is debating a time allocation motion. I can only say that this particular motion before us today is not the first time the government, which was outraged when we were government, has used time allocation.

I just want to draw to mind, more recently, a very difficult decision on our side of the House under our leader, John Tory, when Bill 107, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code, was time-allocated, after it was agreed by the subcommittee that the hearings would continue and there would be time allocated for that. In fact, the government went forward with the advice of that committee, an all-party committee, to advertise that there would indeed be public hearings, and many people were left on the waiting list, another waiting list, if you will, not unlike the health care waiting list which was the subject of many questions by our leader today. That bill typifies to some extent what we're dealing with at an emotional level, I suppose, not allowing full debate on an issue. This issue on Bill 107 took away the voice of the most vulnerable people of society, which was quite unforgivable, quite frankly, on an issue that affects people who are exposed to risks in their own lives and often tragedy in their own lives. This time allocation motion is basically doing similar things.

But in my view on this bill, I think it's important to look at the order paper, and I have done just that. Looking at the order paper, there could be and should be more time given and more voice given to some of the important bills. I won't just dwell this afternoon, in the little time I have, on a number of my own personal bills. Just looking around at members who have submitted very worthwhile bills, Andrea Horwath from Hamilton East this week introduced a bill that—I can tell you that for the last several years, I personally have written to the Minister of Finance several times and have always received the standard pulled-out-of-the-binder reply. The answer was no. I commend her for advocating for her constituents, indeed for the seniors of Ontario, many of whom are finding it difficult at this time to access their own funds.

If you look at that particular bill—and Ms. Horwath would know from her consultations—often what happens, the way the rule works, you can qualify under very prescriptive rules, the father-knows-best approach. Quite frankly, there are exceptions made. You have to appear before a bureaucratic panel and disclose all of your

frailties in life—that you're destitute, roughly, before you can access your own money, although if the person who had the resources to have some money tucked away in a RIF or an annuity were to pass away, the spouse would get the money, which makes it a little bit tragic when they couldn't have a quality life together using their own money. I understand there are risks going forward in that whole debate about making sure they don't draw down all their funds to preclude having a smooth horizon of income with some predictability. It is controversial, but nonetheless other provinces, the point has been made, have done the right thing and reviewed it. I think setting the regulations, some kind of assessment of expenditures and things like that, some of it could be to support their needs for help as they age, for having support in the home, other things that would otherwise flow to the government to take care of. So I think there's some room there.

1640

I quite frankly link it to the whole debate around Bill 140, which is the long-term-care act. Our critic and former Minister of Health, Elizabeth Witmer, spoke on it. Under Bill 140, there's a really serious gap, because there are four types of homes, as we would know. The A type home is the newer version, built under our government, when 20,000 new long-term-care beds were built, about 900 in my riding of Durham. Now, the D homes are also addressed in Bill 140. These are the least preferable. These homes will, over time, I gather, qualify for some provincial funding on capital. Obviously, that means some increased funding on the operating side as well.

But who gets left out are roughly 35,000 beds in the B and C class homes. These are homes where individuals, family members, our loved ones, would find themselves in more or less a ward, perhaps up to four beds. They probably wouldn't have an accessible bathroom in their own room. Many of them would have difficulties in mobility. Many are in walkers or wheelchairs or, even worse still, have to be carried, to receive personal support. I think of the difficulty not just for the patients and their families under that issue—although certainly the loved ones are primarily, hopefully, engaged in the issue—but the staff themselves working in these rather cluttered rooms, often without the lifting devices and the room to move these devices around in the facilities. It's just not conscionable. There's no plan. In fact, what I'm hearing in my riding—I think of Fosterbrooke, which is a nice, family-type setting. I believe it's a C type home. They do their very best, I must say, and I commend the staff for making it as homelike as possible. Many people choose to live there because they enjoy the companionship and the company. It is, after all, their home.

For them to modernize on their own—this is the private type of home. Mind you, they are all under the same standards and regulations of care etc. They're doing it rather frugally. But if they were to go to a financial institution to access funds, they would find that the licensing process which would assure their revenue stream is maybe at risk, because they could be shut down

at the whim of the minister. That, quite frankly, is another bill that I'm glad is under pressure from the opposition and will go out for hearings during the winter session. That's the kind of voice that should be here: "Take your time to get things right."

But I look at other pieces of legislation, and they don't get the time. If you look at some of the private members' bills—I mentioned Ms. Horwath's bill, but I would also mention, for instance, Jim Wilson, who has obviously made much to-do about preserving the heritage of the homestead, in his riding, of Sir Frederick Banting. I credit him for relentlessly, even with little support from the minister when questioned, working to preserve a heritage of Canada's first winner of the Nobel Prize, I believe, and also recognized at every level. Not preserving that heritage is a statement that perhaps they don't care. I wouldn't want to imply that, but my conclusion on that remark is that Jim Wilson has done a commendable job of bringing voice to an issue important to his riding, one that should be important in a broader sense to each of us here.

I would say that, if you look at it, there have been a number of private members' bills by all members, and really, all they're asking for is time to have it debated, to influence the government or perhaps the civil service, what we often call bureaucrats, many of whom are simply that: hard-working professionals. Quite frankly, if there's political or policy will on the side of the government to recognize that, they would move forward. But when you shut down the debate on private members' business or other initiatives by the opposition—I'm anxious with our leader talking tomorrow about the access to justice. His issue will be debated tomorrow morning, and he really is quite sincere about making sure we don't have—Mr. Ouellette raised a question today about a predator in his riding, Oshawa, and the threat it constitutes, potentially, to children and others in the community.

What the government needs to do here is to listen in question period and respond. Often we can shuffle this stuff off and say, "It's before the courts. We can't do anything about it." But quite frankly, they have a responsibility to influence policy and the interpretation of policy in the civil service itself. They have to take direction from government, or should take direction from government. Really, you look even deeper; you probe into this. The point I'm making is simply listening and taking the time to respond in a thoughtful manner. Things won't change, but at least the issue gets reviewed with some thoroughness.

I look at the recent report from the auditor. Part of what he said was quite insightful, looking at not just the Hydro One issue and that misuse of trust and misuse of public funding—that's quite troubling. Scrutiny at all levels is extremely important in the public debate. I think that when our finance critic, Tim Hudak, responded and drew a fair amount of attention to the issue of the expedited spending by the McGuinty government in the dying hours of their mandate—money that was never

forecast in their last budget. This was the most troubling part: when you saw this almost trying to buy votes. I'm not sure if that's correct, but I'd say that the impression out there is that they're just flushing money into the system with, quite conceivably, not-very-well-developed plans.

In fact, the consultation itself is something that we weren't made aware of in this House. The end result of that taxpayers' money—will it have good outcomes? The final measurement is not the amount, but are things better? People should ask themselves continuously, when they see the photo op and the press release—go out and actually see what's going on in your community; go out and actually listen. Is there still gridlock? Are there still wait lists? Are there still problems in our schools? Are there still issues that need to be dealt with? The auditor, on the issue of wait times—when he used the term "misleading" I thought it would be ruled out of order. But he said it in the report, and therefore it's been used several times here. In that case, if you're looking at an independent, qualified individual like the Auditor General of Ontario, it needs to have debate and attention; it should be paid very close attention to.

Minister Chambers in the children's aid issue I believe is well-intentioned. I have spoken to her; I think she is very well-intended. But it is her responsibility and indeed Premier McGuinty's responsibility to direct very specifically in the children's aid case, in the Tom Parkinson case, and to intervene, even at great risk—because this stuff ends up in the courts at any account. That's the lesson to be learned with the use of time allocation. Minister Chambers would probably benefit from those interventions, if not by herself, then certainly by the Premier. It is his duty, whether he's—in fact, the Leader of the Opposition, in the debate tomorrow on the whole issue of bail and hearings and time served—these are issues that I hope the Attorney General will be listening to tomorrow.

I see the Minister of Transportation here today. I missed this afternoon only, but I know she was out at a press release this morning. It was some kind of good news of the federal Stephen Harper government coming to the rescue with a few dollars. She was there for the photo op, and I hope it's a partnership arrangement, but does it do anything for my riding? I'm appalled, quite frankly. I met with them.

Interjection.

Mr. O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I'm actually trying to draw attention to the importance of listening.

What I'm looking for is speedy, expeditious, efficient progress on Highway 407 east. It is the number one priority for the region of Durham. Its economic vitality is dependent on good, balanced, fair treatment. The mid-peninsula corridor is another area that's often mentioned. I can only say today that I put the maximum number of questions on the order paper for the Minister of Transportation to be—these are genuine, straightforward questions that have come from stakeholders that I think deserve attention and need reasoned and thoughtful

responses, not just the political rhetoric stuff. The people do get frustrated with us, I'm sure with all members from all sides of the House, for not paying attention to the important decisions that are before the government.

1650

They are the government. This gets to the salient point here. They moved time allocation. It wasn't John Tory and it wasn't John O'Toole or Tim Hudak or whoever else is in the legislative precinct. In fact, it wasn't even members of the government side, I don't think. I think there are other things at play here.

As I said, I could go through a number of private members' notices of motions as well as private members' business. I would say that the bills that are important and need time are not even specific to the Conservative side. I'm looking at the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. It has some bills before it, and they are bills that are, I believe, important to members regardless of their political stripe.

The very first one I'm looking at here is Bill 9, An Act to prohibit price discrimination on the basis of gender, by Mr. Berardinetti. That's before that committee. It will probably never see the light of day. I'm loath to say that, but quite frankly, it is up to the House leaders to give these things a breath of fresh air.

Another one that I know has been argued and debated—at first reading it was well received—is Bill 42, An Act to establish the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corporation. It's Mr. Sterling's. He is quite serious. The Lanark-Carleton member is always trying to advocate, most of the time when he's here, to bring that to the attention of the House.

Bill 49, An Act to celebrate and recognize rural Ontario, is another one, by Ms. Mitchell, who I think is here today. I was speaking to her earlier. I think of the work done by Bert Johnson when he was here. He was a Deputy Speaker of some note. He declared agricultural heritage day, and it's celebrated as we speak. There's a private member's bill that, under the leadership I believe of Mike Harris at the time, did get assent into law.

Bill 74, An Act respecting safety around swimming pools, is by Mr. Rinaldi, who is here today. I know that he's intent on that. We had a couple of children a couple of weeks ago in one of those detention ponds in community development zones. That could have come into that debate. Should they be fenced? Is that not part of the developer's responsibility, to ensure against liability, or does that liability fall to the municipality? That's an unresolved issue. I remember on council myself that people used to say to me, "Gee, that big hole there—what's that for?" Pretty soon in the winter it was a skating rink. It wasn't safe. Those are the issues that are important to constituents, but in the broader sense they're important for public safety and they should be discussed.

Bill 115, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to improve air quality by reducing truck emissions, is by Ms. Scott. I know Ms. Scott, from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, is completely committed to road safety. In fact, the environment for her is of paramount concern.

I could go on listing these bills, but the point I'm making is that if we do all of the energized and informed input, discussion and comment with respect to legislative initiatives, private or government initiatives, there has to be two-way communication. I put it to the government and I put it to the members here today: Express the views not necessarily from the party handbook but the views that your constituents have offered you. That's what I call the full debate on democratic renewal.

Earlier this week, I spoke at a couple of high schools—to the man-in-society class, or a political class, I guess it was, in a general sense—about Bill 155, which is the referendum act. I tried to explain to them that there was another bill prior to it—I think it was Bill 211 or Bill 214, I'm not too sure which—that changed the fixed-term election date and also changed the number of members. There will be 107 members standing in the election on October 4, 2007. What I was saying to the class is that you've got to look at what the legislation is amending. This referendum and this citizens' assembly and in fact the student assemblies—one of the student presidents was in that class and had asked for this dialogue. I was very happy to be there and did read the select committee's report. In fact, I was familiar with the bill, of course. That bill is going for hearings because it is an important policy direction, perhaps a change. But when I looked at the bill and I pointed out what I thought were frailties in that bill, the young students asked very intelligent questions. I was quite impressed, as I am with some of the pages here. But the question they asked was, "Well, if only 30% of the people vote, but the threshold"—I pointed out in the opening definition clauses that the threshold is 60%. Now, there are some members here who get 60% of the votes cast, but there are a lot of members who don't. In fact, if you do the numbers, a lot of them have way less than 50%. That's part of this referendum issue. Trying to get more people to participate is the laudable goal, but in some fairer way to make sure you have representation from all the various bodies within the province, the mosaic of people who live in the province from different cultures, backgrounds and perspectives.

One bill that I am particularly interested in, that I've been working on, maybe ineffectively—that's a self-criticism—is Bill 68, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit the use of phones and other portable equipment to drivers while driving on a highway. That bill is intended to draw attention in the public debate so that persons should not be driving while they're holding their phone, talking and yakking. That would include me, you and everyone else. It's about driver education. It's about taking responsibility for your actions.

Even in that debate I've said that the most growing use of technology isn't necessarily the phone; it's the on-board camera. It's the text messaging. It's searching the Internet. Some of the tools and devices today, and if you just blink your eyes—I worked in the technology sector for 10 or 15 years, and in a few years that BlackBerry or other device will be all of the electronic gadgets. It will

be the phone, the camera, the scheduler and the computer. It will be your iPod. It will be a television. It will be everything you want. In fact, many of them are today. The new BlackBerry device has many of those. It has an iPod in it, and that's the future. Those distractions—the debate is not just about the cellphone: the debate is about driver responsibility, about modifying driver education so that people recognize that the privilege of driving is tied to some regulatory oversight.

That would be what's appropriate, no different than the debate held for many years on the impaired driving issue. Quite frankly, whether it's 0.08, 0.05 or zero tolerance, whatever the debate, it serves the initial purpose to educate the public—not just members here, but the broader public.

All I'm saying here is that in these debates, whether it's on the current issue of Bill 173 or the current issues before the Legislature on some of the bills I've mentioned, take the time and get it right.

I look at some of the other bills. Another one here, very commendable, is Ms. DiNovo's Bill 150, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act—this is also before the standing committee on estimates—about trying to find an appropriate time. I wouldn't mind her bill getting time if my bill gets time. It's up to the House leaders to work this kind of stuff out.

As I'm looking here, another very, very good bill that I think deserves some attention here, under the standing committee on justice policy—I'm going to read three or four bills here. They're all from different sectors. In fact, one of the minister's bills is here. This is Bill 3, An Act to amend the Public Transportation Highway Improvement Act with respect to the assistance that the Minister provides to municipalities. This was moved by Mr. Yakubuski, whose father served many years here. He's very committed to the Ottawa Valley community and he recognized one of the seniors there today. Bill 3 is referred to that committee and there it sits. Bill 4—Mr. Mauro's, who I believe is from the Thunder Bay area—An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act.

1700

Bill 60, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 to regulate the promotion and advertising of Internet gaming in Ontario, is another bill that was introduced by Mr. Leal. In fact, you could say that we just dealt with a bill on consumer protection, Bill 152. There was an aspect of Internet gambling in that bill and there may be some suggestion of Mr. Leal's influence as a member of the government side—inside baseball, if you will; I've used that term on some occasions. I believe very strongly in that, protecting young people. In fact, there were questions raised yesterday in members' statements about persons, young people especially—not the gaming part but the whole Internet issue. Those Internet issues are emerging issues, they are new issues. There needs to be policy leadership involved in this debate on issues specific to the technology sector.

I would say that the minister has an important bill. I don't know where it is, but I'm going to watch this bill,

because it's kind of tied to Bill 14, which is the Access to Justice Act. But this is Bill 103, An Act to establish an Independent Police Review Director and create a new public complaints process by amending the Police Services Act. That thing has been sitting there and it's been in this House for a couple of years. I could almost bet that if you look at the Legislature now—we're going to be finished some time in the next couple of weeks, maybe a couple of days. Who knows? The chief government whip is smiling, because he may know; he may not, though. I don't know. But at least he's in a good mood, which is good. But that bill is an example, if we don't come back here—we're not coming back, I believe, until March 19. In the intersession there will be hearings. There will be four or five committees. There was a motion filed today by the government House leader saying that there were going to be several committees permitted to sit. Our finance critic is excited, I'm sure, that the finance and economic affairs committee will be meeting for a couple of months across the province. He'll probably be in Timmins and Timbuktu and all the other places—

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): Kenora.

Mr. O'Toole: And Kenora. He loves travelling north in the winter. He loves the outdoors. He loves the cold.

But on a more serious note, that budget discussion—important, no question. I've done it for several years, enjoy it, and I'll try to join him on that committee. But Legislative Assembly is going to deal with Bill 155, and government agencies is permitted to sit, as well as the public accounts committee. Norm Sterling will be happy to hear that, because he's sat on public accounts for some time.

The other part that I did want to mention in the very brief time that I have left here is the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly. This is more of a technical bill. I think—but I know some members may not—that it's absolutely critical; in fact, it's quite controversial, although it's public safety. Mrs. Jeffrey introduced Bill 2, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 respecting home fire sprinklers. That bill would conceivably save lives, and it would also conceivably up the price of houses, because eventually the builders aren't just going to plug one in for free, but I think—

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Maybe reduce insurance.

Mr. O'Toole: There is a good point being made, and the point is made by the insurance industry: As with the people who use anti-theft devices in their cars, they get a consideration on their insurance premium.

So there are ways, if the debate is held, where the public is first educated and members themselves are educated. In fact, the policy implications, if the minister is actually listening—it can actually be implemented in a respectful and timely manner.

The debate is about time allocation. I understand that. The debate, specifically, is something that we'll probably be hearing more about, if we're not already, each day. I would only say that there are a couple of more minutes so

I do have a couple of other bills myself, without trying to point fingers. But there is the one act that I think is going to be the concluding remark. I'm looking to the member for Erie–Lincoln, who might tell me. What's the bill number? Is it 143—the Homestead Act?

Mr. Hudak: It's 75.

Mr. O'Toole: It's 175?

Mr. Hudak: No, 75.

Mr. O'Toole: Oh, my goodness, I missed it. I leaped over it without really giving it—Bill 75 is the Homestead Act. This act demonstrates the point I've been trying to make rather relentlessly here: The minister was listening, because the very next day, roughly, he froze the Assessment Act. He froze the assessment, that whole process now. The fact is, they've frozen it at a time when they are the highest in history. So I think I might save a minute or two for the member for Erie–Lincoln, who may want to—I know he's engaged now.

Interjection.

Mr. O'Toole: In fact, he's engaged, all right; he's engaged in a whole different issue.

But that bill, members here would know, is one of the more serious issues for persons on fixed income, seniors, and with the whole housing market on a kind of upward rise. The public should be well aware that what he was trying to do is to provide some certainty and stability in this very volatile area of public policy, the current value assessment issue. I believe it is a responsible thing to do. But the government's response is to put a moratorium on it for a couple of years and wait for the firecracker in two years when your assessment goes from 200—

Mr. Hudak: Triple whammy.

Mr. O'Toole: It's called the triple whammy. It's like double-dipping, in a way—

Mr. Hudak: Triple-dipping.

Mr. O'Toole: Triple-dipping. That's the whole point of the very little time I've had to discuss on this time allocation. These are just examples from all sides of the House of well-intended, considered and thoughtful private members' bills or resolutions. And I'm waiting for Mr. Tory's speech tomorrow on the whole issue of people out of jail when they should be in jail. That should be interesting. The courts have decided—I would say that—

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Be careful; remember the Runciman ruling.

Mr. O'Toole: No, there are no names being mentioned. What it's saying is, if the courts determined—like what Mr. Ouellette said today: A person with nine convictions, a known pedophile—these are convictions—served, I believe, nine weeks or nine months of house arrest. It's just unacceptable. So I'd encourage members to participate in the debate and listen carefully, because often good comments are made.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the brief remarks I've been allowed.

Ms. Horwath: I certainly am pleased to join the debate on the motion for closure of debate on Bill 173. It's interesting, because I just happened to have the chance to speak to the actual bill yesterday, so there

aren't too many things that I really needed to add to my remarks.

Yesterday when I was making my remarks on the bill, I was looking frantically for an article from the *Spectator* because there was something in it that I really wanted to share. Unfortunately, it wasn't in my package of various notes. So I went back and got it because I thought it was something that people might get a chuckle out of, the same way that I did. Yesterday I was reflecting on some of the editorial comments that have come forward in the *Hamilton Spectator* and spent some time talking about an article by Howard Elliott that talked about the ways that the government could have perhaps brought a raise forward that was more palatable and more appropriate in terms of what people in the province of Ontario were willing to accept. In fact, I made the point yesterday that many people actually are—and I've certainly received maybe not hundreds, but at the very least dozens and dozens and dozens of calls—

Mr. Kormos: Scores.

Ms. Horwath: "Scores" is a better word, Mr. Kormos. I can rely on my friend from Niagara Centre for a better word. Nonetheless, the article I was looking for was the next piece in the analysis, because we've heard from a number of members from the government side and from the official opposition who talk about how the increased salary is going to increase the quality of members that run for office and therefore the quality of members around this chamber.

So the article actually reminds me—when I was on regional council for the city of Hamilton, the regional municipality of Hamilton–Wentworth prior to amalgamation, there was a woman who served there, and I just went over and asked my friend Ted McMeekin from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot a question about her because I was trying to make sure I get the stats right on this woman. Her name was Ann Sloat. Ann had served as the mayor and deputy mayor of Ancaster. I got to know her when she was on regional council with me in that capacity, as I was a city representative and she was from Ancaster as a representative on regional council.

Ann used to say—she was a no-bones-about-it type of woman. Mr. McMeekin, my friend from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot, reminded me—in fact, informed me, because I didn't know this—that Ann Sloat actually sat in this chamber for four days. She prides herself on the fact that she's the shortest-serving member of this Legislature. That's what Ted tells me, and I don't know if that's true or not, but that's certainly something that he told me about.

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But nonetheless, when Ann would come to these council meetings and listen to what she would describe as things that are a little bit suspicious, that didn't pass the smell test, she would shake her head and say, "You guys just send me into fits of girlish giggles." Well, if you saw Ann Sloat and heard some of the things she used to say, she was a no-bones-about-her woman. She was a very down-to-earth and a very clear woman in thought. When

she used to say that things sent her into fits of girlish giggles, it just brings to mind a vision of total balderdash in terms of what she would be describing as sending her into fits of girlish giggles.

When I read this article by well-known opinion columnist Andrew Dreschel in the *Spectator*—a person who has certainly a very wry way about his wit, a very satirical and sometimes merciless wit as he describes the various goings-on in the political realm in the city of Hamilton. Here's how he describes this idea, this supposition that a higher salary is going to translate into a better quality member:

“But even if you ignore the hoggish numbers, the arguments”—these are Andrew Dreschel's words—“that a bigger take-home cheque will either deter MPPs from running federally or attract better candidates is nothing but bilge water.

“Politics at any level will always appeal to the same kinds of people.

“You'll always get those who can't hack it elsewhere.

“Those who love the cut and thrust of a council chamber or Legislature.

“The idealists and the powermongers.

“Those who get off on possessing inside information.

“Policy wonks. Glad-handing geeks. The hard-headed and the soft-hearted.

“Forget the platitudes and party smokescreens. Obscene salary hikes only ensure that politicians will be better paid, not of a better calibre.”

I have to say, when I read that article, I did dissolve into a fit of girlish giggles, because he very succinctly put how many people were feeling, although I don't think many people in Ontario, certainly not the ones who have called me, find this to be a laughing matter whatsoever.

There are a number of people who have written letters to the editor of our illustrious *Spectator* in Hamilton. I'm not going to read them out loud, but I did want to make the point that the members of the government side continue to raise the idea here that one of our local federal members is supporting their move. In fact, that's not exactly quite the case. My discussions with that federal member are very clear that a theoretical discussion—much before this particular move was made by this McGuinty Liberal government to increase the salaries by such a huge amount all in one fell swoop—took place in which the member for Hamilton Centre, David Christopherson, indicated that perhaps it would be appropriate to increase their salaries. In fact, since this move came in by the government, he has indicated to me that he thinks certainly the NDP caucus and myself personally are doing exactly the right thing in the position we're taking in regards to this move by the McGuinty Liberal government to increase salaries by such a huge amount in one fell swoop.

I have received, again, scores of letters and e-mails. I was hoping to read some of them into the record today, but I know that my friend from Niagara Centre is wanting to raise some issues himself today, so I will avoid doing that.

I do want to take the time, though, to thank all those people who have called me and who have voiced their thoughts—in most cases their anger, their concern. I know that for the most part, as I said yesterday, many of them are quite willing to say that a reasonable increase is something that should be expected and supported, but they don't see this as being reasonable. So I just want to thank them for having taken the time to pick up the phone and put their thoughts and their concerns at least on record with me, and some of them also through the editorial pages of our local newspaper.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to the closure motion, and really to the bill.

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): First, before we move to the time allocation motion, I want to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Speaker, along with the table clerks, who work diligently all the time. I didn't see them wear the hats today. I'm a little disappointed, but we'll get that tomorrow. Anyway, Merry Christmas to my colleagues and Happy New Year, and the best to each and every one of you during the break.

Time allocation: We talked about this before. The leader of the third party wants to talk to us about context, and that's the new theme that each one of them wants to do, put things into context. I tried to do that once before, and now I'll do it again.

The time allocation is being condemned—a little bit by both opposition parties, actually—but, as we heard, the trend was set. The first time this type of time allocation was used to squash debate it was by the NDP. They used time allocation five times more than the previous Liberal government did under David Peterson. There were absolutely no public hearings when the NDP gave us the social contract, no time was allocated for third reading—none—and there were no public hearings.

Here's the one that gets me a little bit, because they get on their high horse about gas prices: There were no public hearings when the NDP raised the gas tax 3.4 cents a litre—raised the gas tax 3.4 cents a litre, with no public hearings. Do you know what I hear? I hear the glass breaking from a stone being thrown. This attitude that they've got us in a corner and that they've done nothing that's anything close to what they profess only we are doing is unbelievable; the fact that they've done these things and then turn around and say that we're the only ones who do these reprehensible things in this place. There are no reprehensible things being done in this place except for the fact that each of us is challenged to try to come up with the best legislation, and each government is challenged to come up with the best pieces of legislation they can to help guide our province to prosperity.

The other characterization that was made that I think is unfair is—let's ask some simple questions in this time allocation situation. If Bill 173 did not exist, would there still be layoffs? Would there still be plant closures? Would there still be difficult times? Would there still be child poverty? Would there still be anything else that we

continue to work towards to try to improve the lot of everyone in Ontario? I think we know the answer to that.

Is it something that we should be working towards collectively, multi-tasking and trying to move towards all of the issues that we've tried to set forth? Can you say that there's one issue that we should stop everything and do it for? No, we continue to work on all these other issues. There continue to be champions—not just in this House—of child poverty, welfare, jobs being lost, legislation being passed to try to help to employ people.

One last comment that I would make is that in a 16-year average—here's something I did a little bit of work on—the annual pay increase, cumulatively, was 5.8%. That means a 0.3% increase a year for 16 years. Now, let's add the 17th year, as we're fond of being reminded, and I'll even take the highest number that's being referenced—30%. So if we add that in, over a 17-year period that's a 2.8% increase per annum. I think in terms of context, let's make sure it's in the right context, because in those 16 years there were two decreases in pay of 5% each. There was a freeze for a vast number of the rest of the years, and then cost-of-living increases to that point. In terms of context, let's be fair with the analogy of a 17-year period, a 2.8% increase per annum over 17 years.

I leave on a positive note. I said it today, and I'll say it again today, I am so happy for the riding of Brant, because in the hard work that MPPs have done across their riding I was proud to announce that yesterday the Minister of Health came into the riding of Brant and made an important announcement that our entire community—our entire community and even beyond—was asking for since 1999, and that was an MRI. We got our MRI, and that means an awful lot in our community. That means one more thing that is a commitment that this government has said and will continue to do, and that is to bring down wait times. We're going to help Hamilton with this announcement because it's going to help Hamilton with its wait time. It's going to help the people in Brantford to stop travelling to Hamilton and also help Hamilton with the wait times in getting an MRI. I'm very proud of that, and I support this time allocation motion. Thank you very much.

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M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James): Je veux prendre l'opportunité de mettre un couple de mots sur ce débat faisant affaire avec cette motion d'attribution de temps.

Écoutez, il n'y a pas un temps dans cette Assemblée, y inclus aujourd'hui, où une allocation de temps est quelque chose dont nous, les députés, devons être fiers. D'habitude, l'idée derrière notre Parlement est de s'assurer qu'on a un débat sur n'importe quel projet de loi et que les députés qui sont intéressés à parler ont le droit de se prononcer sur un projet de loi tel que le projet de loi 173, qui donne une augmentation de salaire aux députés, ou sur n'importe quel autre projet de loi.

Depuis que je suis ici, en tant que député, toute la question d'allocation de temps est quelque chose que j'ai toujours trouvé très difficile. Je n'accepte pas à ce point-

ci que l'allocation de temps soit quelque chose que le gouvernement doit utiliser.

Je veux aussi dire qu'on a l'opportunité à travers cette motion—parce qu'on peut parler du projet de loi 173—de parler un peu des raisons pour lesquelles on est ici ce soir et comment on s'organise, d'une manière ou d'une autre, pour le vote.

Comme on le sait, aujourd'hui les membres du Nouveau Parti démocratique se sont levés pour voter contre le projet de loi à la deuxième lecture. La raison pour laquelle nous avons fait ça est très simple : c'était pour dire qu'il y a beaucoup de monde dans nos communautés qui regardent le Parlement de l'Ontario pour trouver des solutions à leurs problèmes individuels et collectifs.

On regarde, par exemple, tous les travailleurs qui ont été mis à pied au nord-est et au nord-ouest de l'Ontario : à Thunder Bay, avec Bowater; à Smooth Rock Falls, avec Tembec; et d'autres endroits. Ce monde-là nous regarde pour trouver des solutions à leurs problèmes et les réactiver dans l'emploi de leurs employeurs qui étaient là avant.

Ils regardent le gouvernement, mais ils n'entendent rien. Tout ce qu'ils entendent, c'est, « Il n'y a rien que je puisse faire. C'est le marché qui va déterminer. » On sait tous que le gouvernement peut faire quelque chose d'intéressant pour réactiver ses emplois-là au nord de la province.

Pourquoi le gouvernement ne se prononce-t-il pas sur ces questions-là du monde dans nos communautés qui ont besoin d'aide? Le gouvernement dit plutôt, « Ah, non, on va se donner une augmentation salariale. Ceux qui sont mis à pied, on ne peut rien faire. » Je dis, comme député, que ça c'est quelque chose que je ne peux pas accepter.

Je comprends que les députés travaillent fort. Je dis, premièrement et deuxièmement et troisièmement, que j'accepte que tous les députés de l'Assemblée travaillent fort. J'accepte qu'ils ont une valeur pour l'ouvrage qu'ils font. Mais on a une opportunité dans ce débat d'envoyer un message, et le message que je veux envoyer, c'est qu'il y a beaucoup de monde chez nous et à travers la province de l'Ontario qui regardent le gouvernement pour avoir de l'aide. Quand un gouvernement provincial se dit, « On est préparés à nous aider avec nos salaires » mais « non » aux autres qui ont besoin d'aide, ça passe mal.

Ça donne une opportunité de mettre en débat que ce gouvernement doit faire plus pour accepter leur responsabilité et, deuxièmement, qu'il doit prendre des actions qui peuvent avoir pour résultat des actions positives pour ce monde-là qui sont les plus démunis dans notre société. Je regarde ceux qui travaillent pour un salaire minimum. Je regarde les assistés sociaux dans notre province. Je regarde ceux qui reçoivent des pensions d'invalidité.

Quelqu'un est entré dans mon bureau de comté l'autre jour pour dire qu'avec sa pension fédérale du « Canada Pension Plan » il n'a pas eu une augmentation autre que moins de 1 % l'année passée. Comme député, c'est pas

mal difficile de dire, « Oui, je vais voter pour mon augmentation salariale » quand on a ce monde-là qui viennent dans nos bureaux.

Donc, je ne dis pas que les autres qui vont voter pour sont du monde méchant. Ce n'est pas du tout le point. Mais je pense que nous avons l'opportunité d'envoyer un message et de dire à nos citoyens, à nos commettants chez nous et aux autres dans nos comtés, « On est avec vous. On comprend que vous avez des problèmes et que vous regardez à ce gouvernement pour avoir de l'aide. Le gouvernement ne vous a pas aidé, et nous, on ne va pas nous aider avant qu'ils aident vous autres. »

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): My comments today on the time allocation motion on Bill 173 are simple. Are all MPPs created equal? The heart of parliamentary democracy is that, at heart, each and every member here is equal. There are none of us who are somehow superior to others, as MPPs. Now, there are some of us who have more responsibilities. There are some who have to govern in prose, and others who get to oppose in poetry. But at the heart, we are all created equal. It is the heart of parliamentary—my riding is no more important or less important than any other riding. I think, first, we agree on that.

I know that when this first came up, the leader of the third party said that he felt that the increase that was proposed by the Premier and supported by the leader of the official opposition was excessive. I said to myself, “Maybe he’s right. Maybe there are some members in this House who really are only worth 60% of their federal counterparts.” But then I paused and I said, “No, we are all created equal. All members are equal in this place, and all ridings are equal and deserve equal representation.”

I know that it is unparliamentary to castigate some members and to use unparliamentary terms. But I am reminded first about something that my friend the member from Lanark–Carleton, the dean of this Legislature, said. I follow this debate with quite a bit of interest. I know that he said, “Unfortunately, members of the Legislature—us, ourselves—have been very, very cynical about this whole process. Whenever a member or a person stands up about the needs of members, we attack each other. Those attacks are duly recorded in the media because they raise great attention and great relish. I have great respect for people who give their life to this Legislature and to all democratic institutions, and I believe that we can only keep the level of MPPs coming to this place up if we are willing to deal in reality with what the competing forces are.” That was stated by someone who has been in this Legislature more than any other member, and I agree with him.

I was reading in the paper, the Toronto Sun, where Christina Blizzard said, “Let’s not be hypocritical here. The NDP can rant all they like about the hike. They can pledge they’ll give it to charity. A year from now, we’ll all have forgotten those pledges. And who knows who’ll have given what to the food bank?”

The question here is very simple. We are all called to account in this place as equal members. There are some who, in this debate, I believe have practised trying to be holier-than-thou, that somehow they are more equal than others. I reject that. I know I can say, and I say to you, Mr. Speaker, when you are in your own seat—I remember the quote when you were speaking about it. You said, and I quote—you didn’t know about this, I think was what you were saying: “You can imagine my shock. You could have knocked me down—and probably you did—on that day last week when I walked into the House and one of the staff members from the NDP said, ‘Congratulations, you’re getting a huge raise today; congratulations, your pension is going up; and congratulations, the severance package is going to be enormous.’ I couldn’t believe that that was in fact what was true.”

I guess the question I ask is, why? Why, if Mr. Campbell from the Globe and Mail is right that a senior member of our government reached out to a senior member of the third party, were you not told of that? That’s the question. Why were you not told? Because you obviously have said quite clearly on the record that no one told you that two weeks before this debate happened, this was on the table amongst the parties. Maybe that’s a question you may want to take up with your leader, Mr. Speaker.

There are people here who are trying to make this issue distinctly partisan. I know other people see it from an opportunistic point of view. I believe that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. The contention from my friend from Nickel Belt that somehow I should vote in favour of this so that she has the luxury of voting against it, so that she will receive a pay raise which she will then refuse not to take, so that she can therefore give it to charity, is mendacious at best. The simple thing is, if you want to give the money to charity, vote yes, take the money, give it to charity. Don’t rely on others. I find it interesting—

Interjection.

Mr. Wilkinson: —I say to the leader of the third party, who seems to be quite interested in this, that first it was, “We’re not going to take the money.” Then it was, “We’re going to vote against the bill but take the money.” And then, “We’re not going to not take the money. We’re going to take the money and we’re going to give it to charity. But not all of us are going to give it to charity, and not all of us are going to give all of it to charity. Some of us are only going to do it between now and the end of the mandate.” And not one has stood in their place and said, “I will give the raise to charity, I will give the increase in my pension contribution to charity and I will pledge to give the severance increase to charity.” There seem to be very different levels of generosity just in one party, I say to Mr. Speaker.

1730

People talk about this raise, but they refuse to look at the question of relativity. Many of us have talked for many years about the 15 years, and I believe, if you’re being partisan, that you won’t be relative about it and I

can understand that. I believe that it's somewhat passing strange that people can insult the independent Integrity Commissioner of this place. It's convenient for them to say, "Well, the Auditor General is independent. Oh, the Ombudsman, that's independent. We believe those two guys." But when the Integrity Commissioner, an officer of this Legislature, says and writes a report for the third time, all of a sudden he has no credibility. He is never mentioned by the members who are opposed to this. How convenient that only some officers of the Legislature seem to have credibility here and there but not everywhere.

I want to say to my friend Ms. DiNovo, I quote from her directly: "First of all, I want to say that this is the time of year when all of our faiths, and I know there are at least one or two people of faith in this chamber..." I know no member who is an atheist; I know no member of this Legislature who is agnostic. I don't know whether you were trying to be funny, because if you were, you were not. I don't know whether you were trying to be sarcastic, and I know very few members of the United Church who are sarcastic from the pulpit. If you are trying to insult all of the other members in this House, you did a fine job of doing that by saying there are only one or two people of faith in this House. I find that repugnant that you would do that. Really, I would say that that would be sanctimonious.

Finally, I say, why are there some members of this House who feel that they cannot say to their supporters that they're worth this? Why? Are you worried that you cannot say to your constituents that the work you have and the work we all have is of value? Are you concerned that your stakeholders will have some problem with that? I know there are some words that are not parliamentary, but "H" is for holier than thou. "Y" is, why didn't your leader tell you about this when he had the opportunity? "P" is for people who are purely partisan. Some here are—

The Acting Speaker: I'm going to ask you not to do this, because you cannot do what you are doing to spell out a word that you cannot use here.

Mr. Wilkinson: I just want to finish because I know that I've raised many issues about the raise, about the insult, about sanctimonious people and yet another question of why. I say to the people, and all of the good grade school students, they know how to spell the word.

ROYAL ASSENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Before recognizing further debate, I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in his office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 28, An Act to require the taking and analysing of blood samples to protect victims of crime, emergency

service workers, good Samaritans and other persons and to make consequential amendments to the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 and the Health Protection and Promotion Act / Projet de loi 28, Loi exigeant le prélèvement et l'analyse d'échantillons de sang afin de protéger les victimes d'actes criminels, le personnel des services d'urgence, les bons samaritains et d'autres personnes et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé et à la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé.

Bill 50, An Act respecting the regulation of the profession of traditional Chinese medicine, and making complementary amendments to certain Acts / Projet de loi 50, Loi concernant la réglementation de la profession de praticienne ou de praticien en médecine traditionnelle chinoise et apportant des modifications complémentaires à certaines lois.

Bill 52, An Act to amend the Education Act respecting pupil learning to the age of 18 and equivalent learning / Projet de loi 52, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation concernant l'apprentissage des élèves jusqu'à l'âge de 18 ans et l'apprentissage équivalent.

Bill 65, An Act respecting mortgage brokerages, lenders and administrators / Projet de loi 65, Loi concernant les maisons de courtage d'hypothèques, les prêteurs hypothécaires et les administrateurs d'hypothèques.

Bill 107, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code / Projet de loi 107, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne.

Bill 124, An Act to provide for fair registration practices in Ontario's regulated professions / Projet de loi 124, Loi prévoyant des pratiques d'inscription équitables dans les professions réglementées de l'Ontario.

Bill 130, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to municipalities / Projet de loi 130, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les municipalités.

Bill 151, An Act to enact various 2006 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant diverses mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2006 et édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois.

Bill 152, An Act to modernize various Acts administered by or affecting the Ministry of Government Services / Projet de loi 152, Loi visant à moderniser diverses lois qui relèvent du ministère des Services gouvernementaux ou qui le touchent.

Bill 158, An Act to revise legislation relating to the public service of Ontario by repealing the Public Service Act, enacting the Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006 and the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, 2006 and making complementary amendments to various Acts and by amending various Acts in respect of the successor rights of certain public servants / Projet de loi 158, Loi visant à réviser des lois ayant trait à la fonction publique de l'Ontario en abrogeant la Loi sur la fonction publique, en édictant la Loi de 2006 sur la fonction publique de l'Ontario et la Loi de 2006 sur la négociation collective relative à la Police provinciale de l'Ontario, en apportant des modifications complémentaires à diverses

lois et en modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la succession aux qualités pour certains fonctionnaires.

TIME ALLOCATION
ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS
(continued / suite)

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Kormos: I never relish time allocation motions here at Queen's Park; never have. This is a particularly repugnant one. When I hear the shrill of porcine squealing coming from the government benches this afternoon, I understand their enthusiasm to shut down debate, to shut down the committee process and to ensure that this bill is called back promptly for third reading: no debate, no public consultation, no public participation.

Understand that this is a most exceptional time allocation motion, being presented after less than two sessional days of debate during which Liberals and Conservatives would not participate. They wouldn't take their place in this chamber and tell their constituents why they, Liberals and Conservatives, were prepared to give the finger to minimum wage workers here in Christmas 2006, but oh, spend an extra week at Queen's Park to use time allocation to ram through a 25% salary alone increase, and when you add up the enhanced severance package and the Parkinsonian pension deal, you've got yourself 31%. Government members say it's defensible. Then why didn't you have the guts and the gumption to defend it in committee? The porcine squealing coming from the government benches—it's the type of embarrassment that one of them has when they're caught in the porno section of the video store, but they're not embarrassed to be there the very next week on the same Friday night.

It's just too compelling. The prospect of that cash-on-bash is sufficiently luring to overcome any embarrassment that the Liberals and Conservatives might have about explaining to their constituents—their constituents are working for minimum wage here in the province of Ontario, earning \$7.75 an hour. The government grants itself a 25% salary alone increase, yet it tells minimum wage workers, "You wait until February for a mere 25-cent increase."

I had occasion to say yesterday, and I'm going to say it again, because it's true, that the people of Ontario are prepared to be very fair with their elected representatives—municipal members, provincial members, federal members, all of whom are well paid here in the province of Ontario, make no mistake about it. Folks in this province are prepared to be very fair to you. They ask that you be fair to them.

1740

How is it that the Liberals and Conservatives can drop their partisan differences, circle the wagons, hammer together this backroom deal—and oh, they would have been delighted, they would have wet their pants if the New Democrats had joined them in the exercise. It would

have been a Linda Blair moment had New Democrats participated in that late-night, backroom exercise to ram this bill through with no public viewing of it.

New Democrats used procedural motions to prevent the bill being called for second reading on either Wednesday or Thursday of last week. We did. New Democrats ensured that, notwithstanding that the Conservatives and the Liberals had no interest whatsoever—refused to, failed to. Heck, you couldn't debate the bill, and you want a salary increase? Conservatives and Liberals couldn't, wouldn't, refused to stand in their place and explain why they support this legislation, why they're prepared to sit an exceptional extra week here in the Legislature so as to fatten their wallets and to feather their nests when those minimum wage workers are told to wait, when people with disabilities on ODSP are told, "It's not your time yet. It's ours; oh, yeah." You've got it made in the shade if you're an elected member at Queen's Park. Just kick away the disabled; shove them away, slam the door in their face and tell them to wait. But members of this Legislature—Conservatives and Liberals—weren't prepared to wait through the winter months for public hearings around the issue.

Social assistance recipients, most of them hungry kids, children—you know it—being told to wait; Liberals and Conservatives at Queen's Park telling moms and their kids on social assistance to wait because those Liberals and Conservatives are too busy passing legislation giving themselves an overall 31% salary/severance/pension increase. Those parents, the poorest parents in this province, who are receiving the federal child benefit—which is being clawed back to the tune of \$250 million a year by Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, notwithstanding the promise they made before the last election—are being told to wait, because Liberals and Conservatives are too darn busy at Queen's Park ramming through a bill that will fatten their wallets and feather their nests to the tune of 31%.

I am exceptionally proud of Howard Hampton and my colleagues, who made sure that there wasn't going to be any backroom deal, who made sure that the people of Ontario were going to be told about this dirty deal, who made sure that there was going to be public exposure of the contents of this dirty deal by virtue of our participation in debate here in this chamber.

And oh, the leader of the Conservative Party: Now Mr. Tory is indeed Preston Manning in Stornoway. He is no longer that breath of fresh air, is he, Mr. Leal? He's just like the others. When it came to self-interest, Mr. Tory, the leader of the Conservative Party, was prepared to hunker down in that backroom, huh, Mr. Hampton? Hunkered down in that backroom, Mr. Tory was. Why, I'd be surprised—the imagery is of John Tory and Dalton McGuinty sharing the same chocolate sundae, and Dalton saying, "No, John, you have the cherry," and John saying, "No, Dalton, I insist. You have the cherry," and Dalton saying, "No, John, you have the cherry because we're friends now, we're intimates, and this is what friends do for each other: They scratch each other's

backs." Well, there's been some back-scratching going on here. "Dalton, you scratch my back," John says, and John says, "Dalton, I'll scratch yours."

Today, Conservative leader John Tory defended the government's closure motion. John Tory, the leader of the Conservative Party, defends the cessation of debate, the termination of debate here in this chamber. John Tory, the leader of the Conservative Party, defends pulling the bill out of committee. It was in committee for all of an hour. It never even got a chance to have a sub-committee hearing to decide when the public was going to have access to it. John Tory defends the government's time allocation motion. "Listen to this," John Tory says, "I think in this case, given the timing, when we're right up against Christmas, it's appropriate to pass the bill." Right up against the wall at Christmastime, it's appropriate to rush through, use time allocation to pass a bill that fattens the wallets of John Tory, his caucus, Dalton McGuinty and his. Do you all, up against the wall at Christmastime, going to sit an extra week, want to show some compassion? Do you want to show some of the compassion that Ms. DiNovo talked about being demanded of us as people, as members of a community, as sisters, brothers, parents, neighbours?

Why wasn't there a backroom deal to increase minimum wage? Why wasn't there a backroom deal to increase ODSP, disability pension benefits? Why wasn't there a backroom deal to restore the 21%-plus cut from social assistance benefits? Why wasn't there a backroom deal to aid seniors, who in increasing numbers across this province are at risk of being homeless, of not being able to afford to live in their own homes because of electricity costs that are skyrocketing and because of pensions that are being eroded? Why weren't those backroom deals made? Why is it that the only backroom deal that was made here at Queen's Park between the Conservatives and the Liberals was a backroom deal to fatten their own wallets and to feather their own nests?

People in this province feel betrayed by you, are already hurting and feel hurt more by you. You talk about people being cynical. Damn right they are. It's precisely this sort of thing that makes them very cynical—precisely this sort of thing. There are going to be kids this Christmas in homeless shelters here in the province of Ontario. There are going to be kids this Christmas at soup kitchens here in the province of Ontario. There are going to be kids this Christmas who not only won't have any toys under a Christmas tree, but who will be eating saltine crackers and sardines for Christmas dinner—and

you've betrayed them. You've turned your back on them. You've given them the back of your hand. I say shame on every single one of you.

The Acting Speaker: The time for debate has now ended. It is now time to call the question.

Mr. Caplan has moved government motion number 286. 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.

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

The division bells rang from 1749 to 1759.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please stand and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Gerretsen, John	Peterson, Tim
Arthurs, Wayne	Hudak, Tim	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Barrett, Toby	Kular, Kuldip	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bartolucci, Rick	Kwinter, Monte	Ramal, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Leal, Jeff	Ramsay, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Levac, Dave	Rinaldi, Lou
Bountrogianni, Marie	Marsales, Judy	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sandals, Liz
Brotten, Laurel C.	Matthews, Deborah	Scott, Laurie
Brownell, Jim	McMeekin, Ted	Sergio, Mario
Bryant, Michael	McNeely, Phil	Smith, Monique
Cansfield, Donna H.	Meilleur, Madeleine	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	Milloy, John	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Mitchell, Carol	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	Murdoch, Bill	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	O'Toole, John	Wilson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Oraziotti, David	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Patten, Richard	Yakabuski, John
Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve	Zimmer, David

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Kormos, Peter	
Hampton, Howard	Martel, Shelley	

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 66; the nays are 7.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It now being after 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1802.

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Ernie Parsons, Khalil Ramal
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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