



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 21 December 2006

Jeudi 21 décembre 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Copies of Hansard

Copies of Hansard can be purchased from Publications Ontario: 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. e-mail: webpubont@gov.on.ca

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Exemplaires du Journal

Des exemplaires du Journal sont en vente à Publications Ontario : 880, rue Bay Toronto (Ontario), M7A 1N8 courriel : webpubont@gov.on.ca

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 21 December 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 21 décembre 2006

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

CITY OF GUELPH

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington): I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration should designate the city of Guelph as one of Ontario's immigrant gateway cities so that Guelph can be marketed provincially and internationally as an immigrant gateway to enable Guelph to attract the investment and jobs which will ensure its future prosperity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mrs. Sandals has moved private member's notice of motion number 42. Pursuant to standing order 96, you have up to 10 minutes, Mrs. Sandals.

Mrs. Sandals: As you know, Speaker, the rules of order of the House do not allow us to actually print the whereases, so I would like to start by putting the whereases into the record, which will give people a little context for the motion and perhaps help the opposition people in where we're going here.

"Whereas the provincial government has adopted an immigrant gateway strategy which designates various cities as regional immigrant destinations for immigrant settlement and immigrant investors;

"Whereas Guelph is internationally recognized as a centre of agriculture and biotechnology innovation, Guelph is a key centre for Ontario's auto parts manufacturing industry and Guelph is already home to a strong and diverse multicultural population;

"Therefore be it resolved that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration designate the city of Guelph as one of Ontario's immigrant gateway cities."

That will give you a little bit of understanding, but we maybe need to first look at, what is an immigrant gateway? Under the Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, we have a strategy to involve municipalities in the regional marketing of immigration destinations, of trying to, I suppose, in some ways influence the immigration patterns within this province by giving immigrants information about different regions of the province. This enables municipalities and regions to put information on a website that is internationally marketed jointly by the Ontario government and the Canadian government, that

gives information about a region—its opportunities, both investment opportunities and opportunities for individual immigrants; what the strengths, interests and economic concerns are in the region; what services are available—all the information a newcomer to Ontario might be interested in in terms of locating where they want to move.

What's interesting is that the five pilot sites for this program are all what we would think of as large urban centres: Toronto, Ottawa, Windsor-Essex, London and Sudbury. I'm not saying that's a bad thing; in fact, we want to attract immigrants to all those regions of the province. But it is noteworthy that all those centres are large urban centres.

Ontario welcomed more than 140,000 immigrants last year, more than any other province. Currently, immigration accounts for an estimated 70% of Ontario's net labour force growth, and it will account for all of the net labour force growth within the next five years in Ontario, so this whole issue of immigrant settlement patterns becomes quite important. It is important for us to think not just about urban centres but also maybe to change the attitude that says immigrants go to urban centres and start to think about how we can attract immigrants to the rest of the province.

The average age, particularly when you get outside of urban areas, is going up; the birth rate, everywhere in the province, is going down; and immigration becomes really key to any region's economic prosperity.

One of my hats, with my current position as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, has been looking at education funding. As we've talked to stakeholders over the last month, one of the issues that has been consistently identified is how we deal with declining enrolment, because almost every school board in the entire province actually has declining enrolment at the elementary level. Even the Toronto boards, which we think of as benefiting from a lot of immigration—and they do—also appear to be benefiting from a lot of young urban professionals who don't have kids at all. So when you bring it all out in the wash, even the Toronto boards have elementary enrolments that are in decline. So this whole issue around where people go and how our population is going to grow in the future becomes very, very important.

I'm going to ask my colleague, Deb Matthews from London, to speak to this a little more fully. I know and many of my colleagues know, but the viewers would not be aware, that Deb, along with being an MPP and the past president of the Ontario Liberal Party, decided to

play superwoman and has completed her Ph.D. while sitting in the House. The newly minted Dr. Matthews's area of study is actually immigration settlement patterns, the study of demographics. So she's going to speak in more detail about that, as it is provincially.

But I'd like to talk a little about the city of Guelph. We are pushing 120,000 in population. Of the mid-sized urban cities—that is, in Stats Canada's definition, 100,000 to 200,000—we're the fifth-largest when it comes to the growth of mid-sized urban centres in Ontario. But what most people don't know is that if you look at the percentage of immigrants in the population, Guelph is actually placed 11th in the entire country. That doesn't occur to most people when they think about Guelph. Almost one in five people in Guelph, 19.8% of its population, are immigrants. In fact, that's more than the average in Ontario. If you look at perceptions, Guelph has a higher proportion of immigrants than places like London, but also Montreal, Edmonton or even Winnipeg, which we might have thought of traditionally as an immigrant centre.

1010

Guelph is much more a traditional immigration centre than many of the much larger cities in the country. It has quite an interesting mix of immigrants. Historically Guelph was settled by the Anglos, so the Scots and the English and the Irish are obviously represented quite handily in Guelph's population. Those were the founding fathers, if you will. But if you look at significant visible minority groups in Guelph, you would see walking around the streets of Guelph these days people from China, people from South Asia, a black community, a Filipino community, a Southeast Asian community, largely Vietnamese—a real mix of people. If you look at other groups, given the influence of Kitchener, which is a near neighbour, there's a lot of German population, and Guelph has a huge Italian population. In fact, the first destination of the family of our Minister of Finance, Mr. Sorbara, was Guelph. Some of them then moved to the GTA, but first of all they came to Guelph.

There's a village in southern Italy, in the Calabria region, by the name of San Giorgio. If you were to check, I think you would find that there are probably more people in Guelph with family roots in San Giorgio than in San Giorgio itself. A huge number of people from this village over a matter of a few decades all moved to Guelph. So historically, the Italian community in Guelph has played a huge role in the development of Guelph and a very significant role in our cultural mix. We also have significant Dutch and Polish and Ukrainian and Hungarian, so a variety of European groups.

More lately, we've seen a lot of Vietnamese. There's a huge Vietnamese community in Guelph. It probably started around the time of the boat people. It's sort of an odd welding of auto parts manufacturing and the Vietnamese, as the word got out that if you were coming from Vietnam, you could get a job in Guelph's growing auto parts sector. In fact, we have quite a significant

number of people who come from Vietnam originally and work in the auto parts sector.

Guelph has a wonderful mix already. I'm not suggesting that Guelph should be the only community designated as an immigration centre, an immigration gateway, an immigration portal, but I think it could be the first of many medium-sized cities to start to massage the immigration patterns in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I'm pleased to rise this morning and participate in the debate on the resolution brought forward by the member from Guelph–Wellington to discuss that the city of Guelph be designated as an immigration gateway city in Ontario. I will be sharing my time with the PC caucus member from Halton, who is fully eager to speak to this resolution as well.

The city of Guelph is a wonderful city. The member from Guelph–Wellington is very proud, as she should be, of the city she is from and represents. I have been to Guelph many times. It has a wonderful agricultural base, an industry I am quite familiar with in my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock in that we have the third-largest agriculture industry base in Ontario. Guelph is also a thriving base for automotive and related industries and of course is a strong engineering base. We can't forget the university either. All of this comes together. As the member has said in this resolution, it's trying to tie more of the threads together to make it a gateway.

In my riding, Fleming College—it used to be called Sir Sandford Fleming College; now it's Fleming College—has been working to attract new immigrants and people from the city to come and take the community college courses they offer, which I think is a very aggressive approach, a progressive approach. My riding is predominantly rural and, being a nurse at the local hospital in Lindsay, I see a lot of new immigrant doctors who are able to come, and we are very happy that they chose to come to our area and settle there.

So I certainly support the principle of this resolution for a number of reasons. John Tory and the PC caucus recognize the contributions that the immigrants to Ontario make to our province. They form a huge part of what makes Ontario a cultural, diverse, economic and welcoming province.

Just a few weeks ago, back in November, John Tory brought forward a discussion paper called Time for Action. In that paper, there are a number of areas with respect to working to meet expectations and fulfill responsibilities for Ontario's skilled immigrants. The fact of the matter—which quite embarrasses me, being a provincial member and just part of the whole country of Canada—is that we're definitely failing in our obligations to skilled immigrant who've come to Ontario. We have to do a much, much better job for them.

Most of us have tons of stories. We've met the qualified doctor, the engineer, the specialist in a field, working in an area where their talents and qualifications are simply not being challenged. Many newcomers to Ontario

are experienced in high-demand areas such as medicine or engineering, but without experience in Canada, are unable to find work in their area of credential. There are far too many cases where immigrants come to Canada with skills and struggle just to support their families and who can't go into the field they were trained in and add to Ontario all the skills they attained in their country of origin.

The plan we've brought forward is thoughtful and well consulted. It has been spoken about within our party for many, many years. We need to speed the process up. We have to provide assistance to newcomers long before they actually arrive and touch Ontario's soil, and that's what we're failing to do. Their expectations are high, but they come here and are on social systems. I'm embarrassed that that occurs. They have to wait for extraordinarily long periods of time to enter the country, and then they come and can't go into the field they have been trained to work in. It's important and it makes good sense that we start to accredit these future Ontarians before they arrive. We need to do that in the country they're from.

The Time for Action plan will help immigrants, in their country of origin, with English courses, bridging courses, online training. And once they're here, we then have the obligation to help immigrants and their families to ensure they're prepared for the better life they intended. That's why they chose Ontario to be the place they live, raise their families and work and contribute to society.

Newcomers need that assistance as quickly as possible when they get here, which is why I appreciate the member from Guelph-Wellington's resolution today. The plan we've brought forward will expand OSAP to include 500 skilled immigrants each and every year. It also increases support for English as a second language. It's also of vital importance that we help these immigrants enter the workforce and contribute, through taking advantage of their skills, credentials and experience.

This relates to what we're debating this morning and the relationship this motion has with establishing a base where immigrants can enter the workforce as smoothly and as quickly as possible. Lowering the barriers and the obstacles is key to helping skilled immigrants integrate themselves into the workforce and into society: establishing doctor-assisted programs and career mentoring programs, and ensuring that the funding intended for settlement and integration for newcomers actually goes to what it is intended for.

One of the major factors that relates to the issues around immigration and newcomers to Ontario is under-employment. It's the obligation of the government to ensure that opportunities are provided for immigrants to not only want to come to this great province but to want to come here because they know they'll have the opportunity to use their expertise and contribute in a positive way.

Although I think I understand the concept of the gateway city, I'm not 100% clear, but I think it's more like a pilot project that the member from Guelph has offered.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): What about Brian Desbiens and the Order of Ontario? Work that in.

Ms. Scott: The member from Peterborough makes a very good point. The past president of Fleming College, which is in Peterborough but also has campuses in Lindsay, the Frost campus, and in Haliburton and Cobourg, received the Order of Ontario last night. We are both very proud of Brian Desbiens for receiving the Order of Ontario. It was well deserved, for the contribution he has made to many of our communities throughout both of our ridings and to the whole province of Ontario. He was also chair of the Frost working committee, which was instrumental in getting the Frost Centre, we hope, open by June 2007, and I know he was chair of the Peterborough flood relief committee also—just two of the things that Brian Desbiens has done throughout his life to contribute back to his community. So the Order of Ontario that he received last night was a well-deserved award for Brian Desbiens. Thank you, Jeff.

1020

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): You're wrapping up?

Ms. Scott: I'm wrapping up because my colleague from Halton wants to participate in this debate.

The resolution from the member from Guelph-Wellington is timely and good. We need to make sure that immigrants get as qualified and as much support before they leave their country of origin, that we integrate them as quickly as possible into Ontario, get them using the skills they want and get them on track for the better life that they came to this province for.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale-High Park): It's a pleasure to speak to Ms. Sandals's resolution here. Certainly one can commend her standing up for her community. I just want to say. I know this may be our last day together this year, and we all do our best to stand up for our constituents and our communities; I do believe that. So she's standing up for Guelph and all things Guelph and what is best for Guelph. But I'd like to say that perhaps there are some ways in which this member and all of us could stand up for Guelph and other centres in Ontario a little bit better than declaring them as gateways.

To that effect, I want to throw on the record a few comments about the auto sector community in Guelph. The member raised the auto parts sector community in Guelph and how it was doing. In some ways it's not doing that well. This is like other centres where workers are facing layoffs under the McGuinty government. Unfortunately, losing good-paying jobs in the auto parts sector has become commonplace under this government, as thousands of workers have been laid off, including 25 workers as a consequence of Guelph's Dana plant closing, and the recent news that Linamar is laying off workers as well. It's particularly distressing that less than six months after the Premier committed \$44 million to Linamar for their expansion plans, Linamar is contracting out and laying off workers. Of course, we know that under the McGuinty government the manufacturing

sector has lost 136,000 such jobs, so Guelph is not alone in that aspect.

I just wanted to read into the record from the Associated Press about Dana Corp. closing two plants in Canada and one each in Missouri and Indiana, eliminating a total of 440 jobs—and guess where they're moving production? They're moving production to Mexico. "Four other plants, expected to close within the next two years, will be identified some time next year"—

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Parkdale–High Park, I think it's time you got back to the resolution.

Ms. DiNovo: Happily, Mr. Speaker, I will get back to the resolution. I understand that this member is standing up for her community, and that's what I'm hoping to do as well, to stand up for her constituents in Guelph, for their jobs and for their well-being, because after all, it's a wonderful place. In fact, the University of Guelph is one of the better universities in Ontario; we know that. It's one of the prettier places, too, I must say.

However, we do want to look at the plight of workers in Guelph. The plight of workers in Guelph is somewhat similar to the plight of workers across this province. About 25% of them are paid poverty wages of \$10 or less; about 31% of Guelph workers—women and people of colour—are found in exactly those jobs that pay less than \$10, and this government, the McGuinty Liberals, have failed those people, those constituents of Guelph, in a number of ways. This is one of them: They have failed to raise their wages. They're earning minimum wage, if they're on minimum wage, of \$7.75 an hour. The McGuinty government has said they'll raise that to \$8. Of course, that's not enough; it's not even the poverty line. So if you really wanted to do the workers in Guelph a favour at this time of year, the first thing the McGuinty Liberal government would do would be to raise the wages of those who are poorest among them. Of the workers in Guelph, 37%—we know this from Ontario statistics—

The Deputy Speaker: I know how difficult it is, but it's my job to keep you on topic. I haven't heard the word "immigration" in some time.

Ms. DiNovo: You're about to hear it, Mr. Speaker; you're about to hear it. In terms of speaking about the Guelph immigration, I was pleased to hear the number of immigrants in Guelph. I come from an area that has the most number of immigrants of anywhere in North America—Parkdale–High Park—so I know exactly whereof I speak when I speak about the plight of immigrants.

We have had Bill 124—and we know that we're both dealing with the same kind of crises of immigrants getting jobs: a Ph.D. doing Pizza Hut delivery. We've heard the jokes. We know what it means to be a recent immigrant.

Again, I think what this government could do to help the immigrants settling in Guelph, better than perhaps naming this a gateway city, is to give some teeth to Bill 124. How might they do that? They might do that by building an appeal process so that the workers who are

immigrants in Guelph could appeal the rulings that deal with their plight in terms of getting regulated.

Ms. Sandals probably has some immigrants among her constituents who are doctors and engineers and would like to get accreditation in Ontario. Naming Guelph as a gateway city is not going to help them do that. What's going to help them do that is to streamline the process to their getting that accreditation. Again, what I'm hoping for is that this government across from us actually does do what's needed for the constituents in Ms. Sandals's riding, does do what's helpful for immigrants in Guelph and actually beefs up Bill 124 so that they might become the doctors and the engineers that they were back in their home countries. There's another way in which this government could help the residents of Guelph.

I'm going to let my colleague speak about some other problems with this resolution as well.

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): I have to say that I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak to this. As the member from Guelph–Wellington mentioned, this is actually an area in which I have some expertise, having completed my doctorate on this very topic earlier this year.

I'm going to be sharing my time—it's going to be difficult for me to keep this little lecture down to the seven minutes I have been allocated. University professors are used to speaking in 50-minute spans of time, so I'm going to have to keep myself really focused here.

This is a very important demographic issue, not just for Guelph and for my community of London but for many communities in the province and across the country.

We have a wonderful culture of immigration in Canada. We're the envy of every other country in the world because of the way we attract and integrate immigrants into our country. We have a long way to go—we could do so much better than we do—but across the globe, people do look to Canada when they're studying immigration.

However, there's a very unbalanced settlement pattern across the country. We have a few cities that attract a lot of immigrants, but most of our cities attract less than our per capita share. This is an important issue because—and this is where I'll move into the lecture mode—fertility rates in Canada and throughout the developed world have been at below replacement rates for many decades now. In Canada, we went below the replacement rate of an average of 2.1 children per woman, one for the woman and one for the man and an extra 0.1 to—I won't go into that. But 2.1 is the replacement rate, and we are currently at 1.5 and seem to be stabilizing at around 1.5. What that means is, over the short term, we see the population aging. I think everyone here and everyone watching is very familiar with the notion that our population is aging. We're focused on some of the implications.

What I don't think people really understand is that we can foresee the time in which there will actually be more deaths than births. Demographers call that "natural decrease." At that point in time—expect it to be 20-or-

some-odd years from now—we actually will not only look to immigrants to increase our population, but without immigration our population will decline quite rapidly.

1030

At current fertility rates, every generation is only three-quarters the size of the previous generation. So Canadians—we're not replacing ourselves through fertility. Some countries have tried very hard to increase fertility, with not very good results. They haven't achieved those objectives. Immigration is how we will be replacing our population in the future.

I might say that there's no shortage of people in the world. The population of the globe is continuing to increase, in some parts of the world very dramatically; so our job, as Canadians, as global citizens, is to attract and integrate immigrants into our communities.

When you have a fertility rate well below replacement, immigration is how you replace the population. At the national level, we're really well-positioned. We can simply increase levels of immigration to compensate for below-replacement fertility. In fact, even at current levels of immigration, the population of Canada, unlike many European countries and Japan and other developed countries, is projected to increase, albeit at decreasing rates, over the next 50 years. But because of the unbalanced settlement patterns, what we'll have is: The cities that attract immigrants will grow rapidly; the cities that do not attract immigrants will decline rapidly.

For my doctoral thesis, I looked at population projections for 26 CMAs in Canada. A CMA is a census metropolitan area. The results were surprising to me and have been surprising to a lot of people. Fifty years from now—and everybody has to understand that these are projections based on everything staying the same, which of course we know it won't—if nothing changes, of the 26 largest metropolitan areas in Canada, only 10 will still be growing. Sixteen will have populations that are actually decreasing in size.

We're not used to thinking about cities getting smaller, but in fact, 16 of the 26 will be getting smaller and 12 will be smaller 50 years from now than they are today. That is, in very large part, driven by their inability to attract immigrants. There are other factors: the age structure of their population and internal migration; people leaving. Our friends in the north know that's an issue for those cities.

Unless we can move to a more balanced distribution of immigrants, we are going to be facing some real inequities. We'll have some rapidly growing cities, with demand for increasing infrastructure and services, and we'll have another class of cities that will actually have surplus infrastructure. We're seeing it now in schools, where there are more classroom spaces than there are students.

There's a city in Germany—and I'll wrap up very soon.

Mr. Leal: No, keep going; keep going. This is valuable information.

Ms. Matthews: There's a city in Germany—Cottbus, Germany—which has declined from about 130,000 to

100,000 people because they don't attract immigrants and they have a low fertility rate. They're actually having to replace the water mains in the city because there's not enough water being used by the reduced number of people in the community. So there is a cost to population decline. In the literature they call this "population shrinkage," and many places in Europe and other parts of the developed world are having to deal with shrinkage, something that is not on the radar screen of too many people in Canada.

Unless we can move to a more balanced distribution—and I applaud the member's initiative, standing up for her community. But many of us need to—

Interjection.

Ms. Matthews: I've been asked by the member to keep going. I could talk for hours on this topic. In fairness to my colleagues who do have something to say, I will now conclude my remarks. But congratulations to the member for really recognizing an issue in her community.

Mr. Chudleigh: We're busy over here dividing up the Christmas gifts from Mr. Levac to the pages. It's not that we don't appreciate the Christmas gifts, it's just that the pages seem to appreciate them more than we do. They like candies. They're of the age when candies can still be eaten without the obvious results on the waistline.

It's an interesting resolution that we're debating today. Immigration, of course, is essential to the economic well-being of Ontario and Canada, and indeed any country. I think we have a wonderful example of what happens when you don't have immigration or when you don't have population growth. Japan was one of the few countries, if not the only country, that didn't have a baby boom after the Second World War, and the depopulation of Japan can be traced directly—if you follow the teachings of David Foote in *Boom, Bust and Echo*, you will see that the population's decline in Japan led directly to the 10- or 15-year recession that they've had in Japan. They've had zero growth or very low growth over an extended period of time because their population has not increased and hasn't kept up with the demands.

However, I think this resolution is just a titch off centre. It's a little bit wrong-headed. We're talking about placing people in various towns around Ontario, and I think that's going at the problem backwards. What you have to do is create the jobs. People follow jobs; I don't think jobs follow people. So creating jobs in various parts of Ontario, decentralizing Ontario's job-creation engine, which is currently in the GTA, is where the solution to the creation of higher populations in these various outlying cities and towns around Ontario, outlying from the GTA—is where the success of that will lie.

If you look at the current exodus from practically all regions of Canada towards Alberta, you will see that people do follow jobs. To use the member's own example of San Giorgio, I don't think those people moved to Guelph in order to sit in their homes; I think those people moved from San Giorgio, Italy, to the city of Guelph because there were jobs there. The creation of

those jobs is what is going to create the economic opportunity for these people and the decentralization of the job growth across Ontario.

Our leader and our party have introduced a white paper, one in a series called *A Time for Action*, talking about Ontario's skilled immigrants. It's entitled *Unmet Expectations, Unfulfilled Responsibilities* and it talks to this very subject, that immigrants who come to this country aren't given the kinds of jobs that they perhaps expected when they left their homes. It's a tremendous uprooting of a person's life, that someone would move across the world and settle somewhere and then find that the credentials they have at home don't necessarily meet with the standards that we have in this country. That is something they should know about before they leave home, before they consider the uprooting experience they have gone through in their lives.

The Guelph area is one that is rich in research and innovation. I was actually somewhat shocked last week when the Premier, who is also the Minister of Research and Innovation, stood and talked about the need for research and innovation in the future of this province and how we should attract the brightest and best from around the world. I was shocked and amazed actually, because it was one of the few things the Premier said in three and a half years of being here that I agreed with. It's certainly headed in the right direction, if that was his thought. Yet you can imagine my disappointment when very shortly down the road from that, a couple of days later, we found out that this government, through the Premier's office, is thinking about selling off the Turfgrass Institute. But that not being enough, he was also considering the sale of Vineland Research in St. Catharines, which is a venerable old research station that has huge plantings of tree fruits that have been there for many years, have created untold opportunities for the tender fruit growers, the peach, pear, apple and fruit growers in the Niagara Peninsula. They have innovated with new varieties and new production methods, innovated with different pruning methods, innovated with almost every facet of fruit production at that research station. To even consider the sale of such an institution is certainly wrong-headed. The Simcoe research station was another one that was being sold.

1040

I was going to talk about the reduction of jobs in the Guelph and Kitchener areas: ABB, Guelph; Sleeman, Guelph; Imperial Tobacco; W.C. Wood—"Sanitation for the Nation"—closed, 200 jobs gone.

Certainly Guelph needs some help. I don't think this resolution is the direction to go. I think we need to create jobs in that area and those jobs will attract people, as opposed to putting people into an area that is shrinking.

I know Mr. O'Toole would like to weigh in on this subject as well. I look forward to his comments.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I'm delighted to stand and speak to a private member's bill from the member from Guelph-Wellington, but I must state that when I first looked at the motion, I was a little

puzzled. I was puzzled, not so much because I believe she wants to do what she believes is best for her community, as all members do, and not so much that she is fighting for Guelph and its environs, as she was elected to do, but I am puzzled about why it was necessary for her to do this in the first place. If you read the resolution, it is to ask the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to designate the city of Guelph as one of Ontario's immigrant gateway cities.

It would seem to me that that is the purview and prerogative of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and that she should simply have been able, at some point, to go over and say, "Mr. Colle, my colleague, don't you think Guelph should be included?" I would have thought that was the way things normally transpire within the governing party, but obviously that is not the case, because for some reason Minister Colle and his ministry have not seen fit to acknowledge the very good request that comes from the member from Guelph-Wellington. I guess that's why she's here. She is here to put some pressure on her own government colleagues, who have not seen fit, in the past or up until today, to do what would be right by the citizens and the city of Guelph.

Dealing with the topic itself, this is an issue that involves immigration, involves trying to convince people that Guelph is a place, when they first come to Canada, to settle in, to build their lives, their families in. Guelph is a wonderful little community. I don't get there as often as I should, but every time I get there I am transfixed by the beauty of its surroundings, by the churches, by the wonderful gardens and houses and the university. It is a beautiful place and it is to be commended. I would not be surprised that people would want to go and live there, not only for its wonderful settings but for the bucolic nature around Guelph.

But that is not usually what causes immigrants to settle in an area. As many members would know, I worked in the immigration department for some 20 years before being a politician. In those 20 years, I met immigrants from all over the world who were seeking to make Canada their home, some who came legally and some who came illegally, but they always had the same goal in mind. The goal was not to live in bucolic surroundings. The goal was to make money. The goal was to find a job. The goal was to fit in and acculturate themselves. The goal was that.

Immigrants, when they came to our country at one point in our history, had to sign a pledge form, in some cases, to go and work on the railroad, in other cases to work on farms, in some cases to work outside the cities for a period of three to five years. It happened within my lifetime that that was a requirement of immigrants to Canada, that they had to do that.

That is no longer the case. If you look at the Constitution of Canada, it quite clearly says there is mobility of all Canadian citizens and any resident of Canada as well. Not just Canadian citizens but any resident of Canada has freedom of mobility. Invariably, what happens is that although immigrants may come destined for one location,

they will move. If you invite them to go to Guelph, they will go to Guelph and they will stay in Guelph only so long as their needs are being met. The day that those needs are not met, they are—the same as any other citizen, the same as any other resident—entitled and free to move to where those needs might be met.

The needs are many. The needs can be schools, they can be jobs, they can be communities of interest, they can be people wanting to live with people who speak their own language or understand their own culture. All of those things are important to new immigrants. That is why you see, in a place like Toronto, immigrant communities, little clusters, even within a large city, places that we lovingly refer to as Chinatown or little India or Greek town or little Italy or Kensington, which is probably the best example of cultures living side by side.

It is important not so much to pass this resolution—and this resolution is intended, as I quote from it, “to attract investment and jobs.” It is the job losses in some parts of Ontario that are affecting immigration more than any other factor that you can think of. It is impossible: job losses related to the high costs of hydro, the northern policies of this and past governments, particularly in the industrial strategy in places like Guelph and in the 905, where 134,000 jobs are being lost. That is why immigrants are increasingly not choosing these communities. It's increasingly why, in a city like St. Catharines or in Welland or in Cornwall where the job losses have been enormous, where there just aren't jobs left to go around to the people living there, you're not going to see immigrants going there.

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): Come on down to Cornwall and see what's going on.

Mr. Prue: And I'll see all the immigrants who are lined up at the station, too; really, if that's what you want to say. They are not likely to go there, because the jobs and the opportunities for themselves and for their children are simply not there.

If you want to know where immigrants are going in this day and age, they're not so much going to Ontario. Although they have come here for a century and continue to come here, they are increasingly, in increasing numbers, going to Alberta and to British Columbia, where the jobs and the opportunity are. That's what does it all.

I go back to the resolution of the member from Guelph–Wellington. Again, I commend her for making the resolution. If there is a vote called, I will vote for your resolution. But I want to say I don't know what it is going to accomplish; I don't know what the minister, in designating the five gateway cities in Ontario already, hopes to accomplish in those cities. Is it the intention of the government to pour money into those cities? Is it the intention of the government to give them financial capital to make television and radio slots to say, “Immigrants, please come and live in these cities, because we can provide for you and this is where the opportunities are”? I don't know, because I don't know whether that is the right strategy to begin with.

The right strategy is to ensure that all of Ontario is prosperous. The right strategy is to ensure that there are not job losses, that people, if they are looking for work, can find that work. The right strategy is to point out to immigrant groups and prospective immigrants where they are most likely to find alternatives if they are looking for alternatives, because in the end, they will, as the Vietnamese so readily showed to people who worked in immigration—the Vietnamese literally came to towns all over Ontario, all over Canada, but within two years they gravitated mostly to Toronto. Although there are still Vietnamese communities spread out across Ontario, the overwhelming majority that once settled in places like Guelph or in Ottawa ended up in Toronto.

I remember the mayor of Ottawa, Marion Dewar at the time, being asked about their Vietnamese immigrant program and why they were all in Toronto. She said, “God bless them; we did our best to get them here and now they've gone,” and she wished them well. That's the reality of what's going to happen. In the end, it's all about prosperity.

1050

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? The member for Perth–Middlesex.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Merry Christmas to you and your family and to all members. I am very pleased to join in the debate for my good friend the member from Guelph–Wellington and her resolution today. I would hazard a guess that the other members who represent Wellington county, for example, my friend the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey and my friend the member from Waterloo–Wellington, will support today's resolution because I think they believe, like the member for Guelph–Wellington, that what is good for Guelph is good for Wellington.

I was surprised to hear my friend from Beaches–East York refer to the town or the city of Guelph—120,000 people—as a little community. I think you have to be from the Beach to think that 120,000 people is a little community. I can tell you, in southwestern Ontario, Guelph is a growing and large community by our standards. And I wouldn't refer to downtown Guelph as bucolic, but there are many parts of Wellington that are.

What I want to put on the record is that in my role as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Research and Innovation, I learned a very interesting fact about the University of Guelph. The University of Guelph is the seventh-leading agricultural research university, not in Ontario, not in Canada, not in North America, but in the world. They are a global leader in the world.

This resolution deals with the issue of whether or not we want to make sure that that community and the surrounding community—Guelph is nestled in the heart of Wellington county—is a welcoming community, welcoming in Wellington and Guelph, to those people from around the world who want to do leading edge research in their own profession, particularly when it comes to agricultural research. The jobs of the 21st century will be

driven by our ability and our capacity to innovate and to take the ideas that are developed on the research tables in all of our research institutes and turn them into Ontario jobs.

The last time I was in Guelph I was pleased to join the member from Guelph–Wellington and the Premier at our very good news announcement about the tremendous reinvestment of the Linamar people, the family who own Linamar, into Guelph, because they really are leaders in auto parts, and that's a very strong driver in our economy.

Because of our automotive strategy, we are receiving those echo announcements. For example, in my own riding in Stratford we welcomed Aisin Canada, which will be supplying Toyota Canada in Woodstock. I know Hayashi is coming. I know that Futaba, FIO, is tripling. All of those things I think show us that Guelph is world-class and that we need to market Guelph and its surrounding communities and let the world know that they are indeed welcome to come to Guelph.

That's why I want to support the member, and I believe all members, not just those who represent Wellington but those who have aspirations as the Liberal candidate for Perth–Wellington to represent the good people of Wellington one day in the next Legislature.

I want to just take one moment to say congratulations to the mayor of Mapleton, John Green—John Green is the new warden of Wellington county; they're very proud of him in Mapleton—our new mayor, Dave Anderson, who has replaced David Burns as the mayor of Minto, and also to Mike Broomhead, who was actually acclaimed, along with his council, as the new council and again as the mayor of Wellington North. We want to praise them. They are a vital part of Wellington, and again, Guelph is nestled in the heart of Wellington county.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I'm pleased to support the private members' business by Ms. Sandals from Guelph–Wellington and the concept that I think each of us would advocate, that our communities are places to grow.

Yesterday, the Minister of Infrastructure Renewal introduced and claimed that the Places to Grow document, a guide to the growth plans, was an important and acclaimed document. But if you look at the document, you will find, as the member from Halton mentioned, that it's really all about creating the infrastructure for human growth. More importantly, it's about growing the economy so that there are opportunities for all people, whether they're immigrants or existing residents.

There's some uncertainty in the economy just now under McGuinty's plan. So the Places to Grow document makes it very clear, and I'll just read it: "Growth is important to Ontario's economy, but we need to be strategic about it. That's what the Places to Grow plan is all about—ensuring that we have places to grow business, places to grow food, places to grow families." So important here is making sure there are opportunities for people and for the economy in that local area to grow. I

would put on the table that Durham region is certainly one of those locations that people should look for.

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): Like my colleagues before me, I want to take the opportunity to wish everyone in this Legislative Assembly and all my constituents back home the very best of the holiday, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah. It's a time for family to come together.

When someone as together as my colleague from Guelph–Wellington is, someone who is as committed to her constituents as she is, asks someone like myself to rise and say a few words, there's only one possible answer, and that is, "Of course. I'd be delighted to do that." I celebrate the member and her good work and her resolution here this morning. The member understands that she owes her constituents more than just her time and talent, but also her good judgment, her best judgment, which even on a bad day is good. So I want to celebrate that.

The resolution before us this morning is pretty simple. It's declaring that the member, who has often spoken about the brain drain, wants to acknowledge that there's a brain gain train a-comin', and she wants to make sure that Guelph is on the stop list, where people can come and invest their time, their talent, their energy and their resources in building a stronger community.

It's also, I sense, about asset management. You can't invite people to come to a community and to invest themselves in growing their families and developing that community unless and until you can find a way to properly work with the community to get them equipped for that as well. So it's not enough to say that Guelph is a wonderful community that wants to celebrate diversity and encourage diversity; you also have to advertise the fact that Guelph is a community that wants to embrace and celebrate diversity and all the advantages that come with that.

So in that sense, in the sense of asset management and beginning to get the community equipped, that is where I think the member is coming from. Developing the tools that are needed to help people to settle in and to make the kind of contribution that historically immigrants have made to this country is laudable and speaks very well for the member for Guelph–Wellington.

This is a morning to affirm the community of Guelph, its inclination to acknowledge the giftedness of immigrant populations and to embrace that community, as that community, through its wonderful member, embraces their talents. I look forward to supporting the resolution and applaud the member for Guelph–Wellington for having the foresight to bring it forward this morning.

The Deputy Speaker: Mrs. Sandals, you have two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Sandals: I'd like to thank all my colleagues who have spoken to the motion this morning and to emphasize that while Guelph is the community that is named here, this is really about a whole lot of communities in Ontario that need to be actively recruiting immigrants because, as the member for London North Centre was so eloquent in

explaining, if communities don't attract immigrants, then communities will decline, and that is not good for the health of Ontario.

However, this does specifically name Guelph, and I think with good reason. As I mentioned earlier, Guelph, if you look at all the cities in Canada, has the 11th-highest proportion of immigrants. If you look at Ontario, Guelph has the sixth-highest proportion of immigrants of any city in Ontario. So we are well equipped to welcome new immigrants. In fact, a number of the bridge training programs are located in Guelph. As my colleague from Perth–Middlesex mentioned, Guelph is one of the leading research institutes in the area of agriculture in the world. As such, the bridge training programs for veterinarians, for agrologists, for virologists are all located in Guelph because we have particular expertise in those areas.

1100

The Guelph and District Multicultural Centre, aside from creating a wonderful annual multicultural festival at Guelph's Riverside Park, does the serious work of dealing with immigrant settlement in a whole lot of different cultures, as I've already mentioned. And we have increased support for those.

I would encourage my colleagues to support this motion to recognize that we do have to change the immigrant settlement patterns in Ontario in the future.

And I wish everyone happy holidays.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to move second reading of Bill 178.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Tory has asked for unanimous consent to move second reading of Bill 178. I might just say, for those who are looking in wonderment, that it's because the bill has not been printed yet that that motion is required. So do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

TRUTH AND TRANSPARENCY
IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 SUR
LA VÉRITÉ ET LA TRANSPARENCE
AU SEIN DU SYSTÈME JURIDIQUE

Mr. Tory moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 178, An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act with respect to truth and transparency in the justice system / Projet de loi 178, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les tribunaux judiciaires en ce qui a trait à la vérité et à la transparence au sein du système juridique.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr. Tory, you have up to 10 minutes. The floor is yours.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): It's my pleasure and my privilege for the first time to rise as a member of this Legislature to move second reading and in fact to have proposed on first reading a bill that I think is very important for the people of Ontario. I thought I would just try and spend my time addressing four things:

first of all, the problem; secondly, why does it matter; thirdly, why transparency will help; and fourthly, why good will come from this as opposed to any other kind of result.

The problem: I think the problem is illustrated by the fact that we've seen in many other instances in this House, in my short time here and I'm sure for years and years before that, that what happens oftentimes is that certain cases get a disproportionate amount of attention when it comes to what people think is going on in the justice system. The cases that either get attention here or in the media or both are the cases that are taken to summarize what's going on in a justice system that is very important to citizens across the province, which causes them to conclude that in some cases things are wrong when they are, and perhaps in other cases that things are wrong when they aren't, because these cases are the exception as opposed to the rule. But the bottom line is that what we don't have in order to help people to understand how things are functioning in the justice system are the facts on the table so people can know when there is a problem, in their view, and when there isn't.

I said the other day in questioning the Premier on this that it was ironic to me—at best, ironic—that we can count the number of eggs laid in the province each year, as is required under some statute or other, and there are people who do it in the government; the number is, as a matter of interest to the public watching, about 228 million. We can count the number of calls to the bear wise hotline that are referred to a live operator; I think the number there was 10,000. Yet we don't have basic information in hand to allow the Attorney General, when someone on this side of the House gets up and says that there's a terrible problem with people violating bail or whatever, to say, "Well, in fact, we've calculated the numbers, we keep track of it, and there isn't a problem. The incident you referred to is an isolated incident." And while that doesn't mean you won't take it seriously, you also won't conclude that there is a problem. But the facts just aren't available. I believe what that has led to as well as part of this problem is that there is a perceived lack of accountability. If you don't have the facts, if people don't know what's actually going on in the justice system, then no one really feels held to account, no one really feels they have to answer at all, whoever it might be, but starting with the government of the day, and the Legislature, quite frankly, which is the place where these laws are ultimately made.

I am one of those who believes that independence of the judiciary—which I respect; I learned about it when I was a law student; I understand it as a legislator and a citizen—just to speak to that particular thing, which I will come back to at the end in talking about good and not harm that will come from this, does not mean a complete lack of accountability. Everybody has to be accountable who serves in positions of public trust in our system. I understand the difference between being independent, but I don't think that means you have a

complete lack of accountability for what you do, even if it is just to the point, which is really what this bill speaks to, of keeping track of various decisions that are made by judges and others that are just facts of things that happen in the justice system day to day.

Why does this matter? It matters, first and foremost, because confidence in our system of justice is absolutely paramount to the overall strength of our democratic system. The courts don't operate in isolation all by themselves; they operate as part of a system that says, "We meet here, elected by our constituents to make laws." Those laws are then made and duly passed, and the laws are enforced and interpreted by the courts. The courts are independent, appointed by governments, but they are a key pillar of the democratic system.

If you want to look no further than the best example in recent times of why all of this matters and why what goes on in courts and what goes on in Legislatures and so on are all part of one whole as opposed to being separate parts, you look no further than Caledonia. Caledonia has been a situation, in my view, where what I think people see is the inconsistent application of laws between one group and another. They see a failure to uphold respect for the law and the rule of law. It has shaken people's confidence. I can tell you, from having been there as recently as a week ago and spent the night, that the most unfortunate part of all is the view that is held by many of the local residents there—you can call them right or call them wrong, but it is a view they hold honestly as a result of their experiences—that they have lost confidence in the police and in the system of justice that it is working for all people, at all times, in an equitable manner. We cannot have a situation where we have that confidence lost on the part of individual citizens across the province in their system of justice, because it is their system.

Why will transparency help? I believe transparency will help because, first and foremost, like we always say—it's an expression we hear used all the time: Justice must not only be done but must be seen to be done. So by having transparency and having the facts on the table—and again, these are just facts of things that either happen or they don't happen—and having people be able to see what is going on in the justice system in terms of things that are going on and are problems or are perceived problems or aren't, to come back to where I started, where things that often get a lot of heat and light in here are things that aren't problems at all; they're individual, isolated incidents. If you put those facts on the table, then you see justice working and how it's working, as opposed to just being able to be told, "It is working." People want to see the facts so they can judge for themselves, to some extent, whether they think the system is working or not. And the remedy then becomes not for them to rush down and picket the courthouse to make judges upset; they come and picket us, quite frankly, and say, "Look, if there's a problem here, as judged by the facts, then you people in the Legislature have some obligation to deal with that and to change the law, because we think the justice system isn't working."

If you ask me, "Will this raise questions about the justice system?", I hope so. What's wrong with that? Why are we afraid of looking at the facts of what goes on in our courts and having people be able to raise questions? That's part of the democratic process too. If you believe the courts are part of that overall accountability we all have as citizens and us as legislators and people who work in the justice system for upholding and strengthening those pillars of our democratic system, I say yes. And I say, frankly, the more that people are emboldened and informed to be able to ask good questions about things that may be real issues—what's wrong with that? We want that to happen because that will cause us to pass better laws and to strengthen the justice system and to increase confidence in the justice system.

I'm asking in the bill that these facts be collected on a broader basis. I have listened carefully to what the Attorney General has said and his quotes of the former Chief Justice, who's a very good friend of mine, a friend of long standing from when he was the Attorney General of this province, one whom the current Attorney General referred to as one of the great Attorneys General of Ontario, namely Chief Justice McMurtry. He expressed a perfectly legitimate concern about making sure that what you don't do is interfere with the independence of the judiciary. So what I've provided for in the bill, by and large, is the aggregate collection of these facts across the court system as a whole, so you're not saying, "We're going to go to that particular judge or that particular courtroom and really bore down and analyze what that person is doing or whatever"; you are simply going to look at what's going on across the system and try and assess whether that indicates that there is anything that really supports concerns that people articulate from time to time, including me, or doesn't support those concerns, that it really isn't a problem; it's more of an isolated incident. So I think that's why transparency will help.

1110

The last point I want to make in the time available is why good will come from this, and not harm. Perhaps it bears repeating what I just said: By providing for the collection of this data in the aggregate across all courts in the justice system in Ontario on things like bail violations and sentencing deals and plea bargains and so on, you are not running the risk of putting pressure on individual judges, in my view, as to how they decided or what their ratio was or anything else. You are simply looking at the system as a whole and you're able to make some judgments and form some opinions and ask some questions based on the system as a whole.

Secondly, there are a couple of instances, I will say, where we've provided for specific collection of information by court location. That is on, for example, things like adjournments. If you ask me whether we'd better get a handle on what is going on with adjournments in the court system that is causing the time it's taking to get people to trial on criminal and civil matters, and find out why those adjournments are going on and if there's a

place where they're granting twice as many as somewhere else and therefore the waiting time is twice as long, we probably should be looking court by court and finding out why that would be, that some court location or other would grant twice as many adjournments for twice as long as somewhere else. I don't think, again, that interferes at all with the independence of the judiciary.

I look at this, and in the end it is about where I started. That is that the reason I think this is good is because it does not interfere in any way with the independence of the judiciary, which is the only argument that has been raised against it. The only other one I've heard mentioned is the question of cost. I say look, if we can afford to count the number of eggs, if we can afford to count the number of calls to the bear wise hotline that go to a live operator, we should be able to count the number of bail violations and sentencing deals and plea bargains that go on, because that is fundamental to the main reason I brought this forward, which is that I am determined to try to make whatever difference I can as Leader of the Opposition, as a member of the Legislature, and I hope one day as Premier, to increase confidence in the justice system, because it is such a vital part of a strong, vibrant democracy.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I am delighted to join in this debate. From what I can understand, the Leader of the Opposition is asking here, in terms of truth and transparency in the justice system, whether judges grant bail and which judge is denying bail.

Now, I kind of think there is somewhat of a connection between what the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting here and what was proposed in 2001 by the Progressive Conservative Party. I remember the bill that was introduced by Marilyn Mushinski, since the leader has quoted the chief justice of Ontario and what he has said about that particular bill. The question, of course, is, is there a connection between the bill that the Leader of the Opposition is proposing and the bill that Marilyn Mushinski wanted to pass into law. There is an interesting distinction, but there is certainly also an interesting connection. Judge McMurtry had said in 2001 about Marilyn Mushinski's bill, "All I can do is express the hope that that was not the intention despite the perception that the members of the Legislature would have the good sense not to proceed with such legislation." Even Mr. Flaherty, who was here not too long ago, acknowledged that the legislation would not go any further because of concerns that it would interfere with the judicial independence of the judiciary.

So we have to be treading here on very careful grounds. I know the leader had indicated that the judiciary must be independent, and it cannot even be seen that there is political interference in the independence of the judiciary. That's what he says. I do not wish to belabour the point, and quote what Mr. Runciman had indicated earlier, from what we have here, his indication that he wants to track the records of individual judges.

That's different maybe from what the leader wants. I'm not quite clear sure whether—

Interjection.

Mr. Ruprecht: Since the two of you are sitting very close to each other, you would probably know the difference here.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln): Tony, that's not what it says.

Mr. Ruprecht: I know. But the point is—and you must accept this—it is fair political comment. Would you not say that? It's fair political comment to indicate that, and that's what the Chief Justice wants to indicate here as well.

There are some other comments that I wish to make. We cannot accept the statement at all that Liberals are weak in terms of crime. I have a whole host of indications of how Liberals are strong against crime, whether it's an indication of proposing that we hire 1,000 police officers, whether it is a political impact statement. In fact, the member for Parkdale—High Park is here today, and I wanted to indicate that, over 16 years ago already: Parkdale "Keep Crime Out," impact statements. We have done—

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Ruprecht, please put that down.

Mr. Ruprecht: It's just an indication, Mr. Speaker—

The Deputy Speaker: Please put it down. Thank you.

Mr. Ruprecht: Community witness is a great program. It's a program that establishes a link between the police and the courts, who testify on the impact of crime on our neighbourhoods; a great program. I have about 15 other programs to discuss here, but unfortunately, I'm out of time because my colleague needs the time to wrap up.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale—High Park): It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 178 and to say right off the top that I certainly don't have any problem with this bill. It's calling for transparency. The hope is, with transparency, if you know the facts, that this leads to accountability and then, hopefully, at the end of the chain, to action. I don't hold out a lot of hope. As we've seen with the Auditor General's reports, what is necessarily transparent doesn't, just by the nature of its being, lead to accountability, and it certainly doesn't necessarily end in action, certainly not with the McGuinty Liberals.

I also want to set the bill in a little bit of context, and that is that we do live in a pretty safe situation. I don't think anyone here would say that right now we're involved in a crime wave of any sort. There was an opinion piece in the Toronto Star on August 16 that pointed this out. This was by the writer James Morton, who says:

"Whenever people read or hear attacks on Canada's justice system, they should bear in mind that our judges cannot respond when attacked about why they applied the law as they did. Crown prosecutors face similar constraints. Even defence counsel are limited in what they can say to the media."

So that's the caveat, of course, around this bill: that this should, in no way, shape, or form—and you've heard

others say this—be an attempt to bridge that independence of any sort.

Just generally, what is it like to be an Ontarian right now in terms of law and order and crime?

“Break-ins and car thefts: 7% lower than the year before. Counterfeiting, previously a growth area: down 20%. Youth crime: down 6%. Property crime by youth: down 12%.

“The homicide rate did rise by 4%, but after years of steady decline. It’s still down 30% compared with the mid-1970s.”

Canadians understand all that. In light of the context for Bill 178, we can say that a survey showed that crime and justice ranked far down the list of our worries: well below education, the economy, the environment, international issues and certainly well below health care. So law-and-order issues are not front and centre among our constituents’ concerns.

This writer goes on to say that, by and large, “Canada’s judges, crowns and defence lawyers apply the law, as written, as fully and fairly as possible.

“Our judges are famous for their balance and common sense.

“Our crowns exercise great care to see justice done,” and

“Canadian defence lawyers act vigorously to protect the accused.” He concludes, “This adds up to a pretty good system” and says it could be improved.

1120

Certainly, that’s where I would like to start with my comments, because I think we share a desire in this House to see our justice system improved. As New Democrats, one of our concerns with our justice system and the way that our justice system works is that we really have two justice systems: We have one for those with money, and we have another justice system entirely for those who don’t have money.

I drove around with 14 division. It was a pleasure to do so, an honour, and it gave me a very good first-hand experience of what law and order looks like on the ground in my riding of Parkdale–High Park. I can tell you that one of the most chilling sights I have ever laid eyes on was the computer in the police car as we were driving around. Those incidents that required a red flashing light, the serious ones where they really needed an officer on the scene, light up first, and then there are a whole series of others that were lit up with yellow that aren’t quite as pressing. Among those that were pressing that lit up while I was driving around with this particular officer were things like break and enters in progress, assaults in progress—those lit up. There were about 10 of them. He said to me, “You know, we have 20 cars on the road tonight, with 100,000 people.” He said, “There is no way we’ll even get to those 10 high-profile, high-needs incidents—no way that we’ll get to some of them until tomorrow morning.”

The McGuinty government has said that they have put 1,000 new officers—or will be, because they’re not all in place yet—on the streets of our cities and our com-

munities. But the reality is that we need a whole lot more than that to really keep up community policing. The reality is that we have a lot less police on our streets than we did when I grew up in the city of Toronto because our population has grown far, far faster than the number of police put out there.

Bill 178 talks to the transparency of the legal and justice system. Here’s the reality on the ground of the justice system, where the police try to enforce those laws: We don’t have enough police to enforce the laws we have already. So once we find out what’s going wrong, what are we going to do about it unless we have an enforcement piece in place? So we need more community police.

Then I look at Bill 178, and I see that on the very first page one of the things that Mr. Tory is asking for is information about, “the average, median and 90th percentile wait times in criminal and civil proceedings in which there is a trial, indicating, “the time from the commencement,” and so he goes.

It’s the poor people, of course, who suffer from the lack of police the most. Also, it’s the poor people who suffer from the lack of transparency and the lack of efficiency in the justice system the most. Again, I quote from the paper article—this is October 14 in the *Globe and Mail*—that summarizes about legal aid. And remember, for the poor amongst us, legal aid is their only hope at getting justice. This writer goes on to conclude: “In its recently completed 2006-07 business plan, Legal Aid Ontario warned that funding has ‘reached the point where it is no longer adequate to meet existing service requirements.’

“It said that it ‘is turning away more people than ever before—the number of people refused service has increased by 42% in less than two years.’” So if you are poor and trying to get justice in the province of Ontario, you’ve got to stand in line. And then, most of the time, this seems to indicate you’re not going to have any luck even getting a lawyer so you can defend yourself, or, for that matter, look after your own vital interests.

We all have in our constituency offices cases like the one that I’m going to just suggest—and this a closed case now—a case of property theft. This was a woman who literally ran out of money hiring lawyers and then was forced to go to legal aid, but didn’t qualify for legal aid. Then what is she to do? She was then forced to defend herself, and we know where that usually gets you. So in terms of those without money, this justice system—so-called justice system—isn’t working very well.

Again, I’m going to quote from a *Toronto Star* article about the legal aid system. “‘In his days, Ontario’s legal aid plan was the best in the world,’ Bayne said, adding McGuinty ‘cares about people’ and knows, like education and health care, a ‘quality’ legal aid plan ‘goes to the heart of a just civil society.’”

He goes on: “But in the mid-1990s the province capped legal aid funding and tightened eligibility rules, which remain unchanged, even though the cost of living

has gone up. The result: fewer people qualify for legal aid.

“A decade ago, a single person with a net income of \$18,000 a year would have automatically qualified for a legal aid certificate. Today, someone earning between \$13,000 and \$16,000 after taxes falls into a grey area. Legal aid officials look at that person’s income and living expenses before deciding whether to issue a legal aid certificate.”

Someone earning between \$13,000 and \$16,000 a year—a grey area. You can imagine how many people in Ontario don’t qualify for legal aid and still don’t have enough money to hire a lawyer by any other means. What happens to them? Where do they, and how do they, get justice?

Again, the Star, on November 24, concludes and says: “True, the Liberal government has increased base funding for legal aid since it came into office in 2003. But total funding, which comes from both Queen’s Park and Ottawa, has fallen short of keeping up with growing demand and costs over the past decade.

“In fact, after adjusting for inflation, combined federal and provincial funding for Legal Aid Ontario is still well below 1995 levels....

“Yet access to adequate legal counsel for the province’s poorest citizens is routinely undermined by tight eligibility rules that have been static for years....” It goes on to talk about the same thing, someone “earning as little as \$13,000 a year after taxes may be too rich for legal aid.”

What does this mean for justice for those in our midst? I want to draw this House’s attention to a very high profile case, the case of Rose McGroarty. Rose McGroarty was known to people in Parkdale–High Park. She was a cook at Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre. She was well loved and well liked in that community. She was a victim, a very high profile one, of domestic violence and eventually domestic homicide.

Domestic homicide, as many people who are in the justice system know, is still a growing and going concern. She was not only killed, she was also mutilated. Her body was cut up and some of her body parts were left just across from the house on Elm Grove that my husband and I are in the process of purchasing, and some in North York. It took a while, but finally they arrested her partner. Finally they prosecuted him. A whole community was in mourning. We were horrified at this barbaric act, this outrageous crime.

Rose was a victim of domestic abuse, as it came to light, for many years, as are many women. This is a crime that we need to do something about. And in light of December 6 and the Montreal massacre, this is a crime that we should all feel deeply about and want to see some action over.

I look at the Hadley commission. I look at the percentage around domestic violence and domestic abuse—again, setting the context, my drive around with 14th division, how few police we have on the ground, how little they can respond.

We know that restraining orders don’t mean anything for most women who are victimized. We know that if you’re victimized as a woman at home and you’re at high risk of being murdered, there is very little help out there. Shelters are full. There aren’t enough of them. There’s no housing. There’s no chance that you can go from your house, where abuse is happening and where murder might happen, to a safe place after shelter. Chances are, as a victim of abuse, you can’t afford the housing that you need, because there isn’t any. There are 65,000 families waiting for housing in the Toronto area. So chances are, after you get rejected by the shelter—even if you get lucky and get into the shelter, if you want to get out of the shelter and go somewhere else, into your own home, you won’t find that home.

Chances are if you’re on Ontario Works or ODSP, if you’re on one of those systems, which many victims of abuse are because they have to leave jobs for their protection, you won’t be able to afford to find living accommodation. You’ll be forced back into that system that puts you at incredible risk. So this is the context into which Bill 178 is brought, a system of justice that is really one set of laws for the wealthy and another set of laws in practice for the poor.

1130

I would suggest that what we need is not only transparency, which is what this bill speaks to, hopefully followed by accountability, but what we really need from the McGuinty Liberals is action. We need action on the justice system so that you don’t have to be wealthy to avail yourself of it, but if you are poor, if you are being abused, if you might be murdered because you are in a high-risk group, that is, women who are abused, you can actually find some justice.

I speak on behalf of all of those victims out there who are being abused right now and who can’t find justice under the current system. They can’t find housing, they can’t find a shelter place. We know that abuse goes up this time of year. It does not go down this time of year, it goes up. I see in my community those families using food banks. I see those families at risk. I know what it’s like to not be heard. I’ve stood with them in courts, watching the abuser get off yet again. That’s not the answer. The answer for them is a systematic plan of action, a systematic plan for housing, for income support, so they can get legal aid, so they can get a lawyer and the lawyer can represent them.

Again, transparency—a good thing only if followed by accountability and then only if followed by action.

On behalf of everyone who has tried to get legal aid and can’t, who has tried to make the justice system work for them and can’t, who has tried to phone a police officer and there isn’t one available, I say let’s make our justice system work. Let’s not only see what’s happening, let’s actually get something happening.

Just to close, I want to wish all of those who are watching from Parkdale–High Park and everyone else a very happy holiday and, I hope, one free from the need to use this justice system, because it ain’t working well.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax): I'm pleased to join this debate on Bill 178, the Truth and Transparency in the Justice System Act, 2006. I commend our leader, John Tory, for bringing forward this private member's bill to deal with what, in my view, is also a very important issue.

This bill would amend section 79.3 of the Courts of Justice Act to provide that the annual report of the Attorney General on the administration of the courts must include specific information, such as the number of charges for offences involving the use of firearms or violence, wait times for trial in criminal and civil proceedings, bail violations, adjournments ordered on matters under the Criminal Code and the Provincial Offences Act and credits awarded for time spent in custody before conviction.

Statistics Canada has reported that there were over 100,000 bail violations in 2004. In making an announcement in Toronto on November 23, 2006, concerning his government's intention to bring forward amendments to the Criminal Code to provide a reverse onus in bail hearings involving firearms, Prime Minister Harper noted that, "In this city, police report that almost 1,000 crimes involving firearms or restricted weapons have been committed so far this year. Nearly 40% of them were committed by someone who was on bail, parole, temporary absence or probation. Gun crime is a menace to public safety, and protecting Canadians must be the first priority of our bail system."

Premier McGuinty attended the Prime Minister's announcement and expressed his support for these amendments, stating, "Ontarians want to see action ... across party lines. I want to urge all the federal parties to continue working together to ensure this law gets speedy passage." Yet, despite this professed support, this government has steadfastly refused to track justice statistics that would be immensely helpful in identifying problems and trends that might prevent serious injury and, in some cases, even death to innocent victims.

Taking matters back a little bit, on August 24, 2006, the Attorney General endorsed the finding of a panel of justice and media experts that cameras be allowed in Ontario courts. He commented, "I think that our justice system is ready for its close-up," yet only three days before, on August 21, 2006, in clause-by-clause review of Bill 14, the so-called Access to Justice Act, the Liberal members on the committee unanimously rejected several amendments that were put forward by our party that would require tracking of justice statistics, such as offences committed while on bail, gun offences dropped through plea bargaining, bail violations and court cancellations and remands.

Similarly, in an opposition day motion which was brought before this Legislature on November 28 this year, Mr. Tory proposed that inasmuch as the public was becoming increasingly concerned about the number of crimes alleged to have been committed by people who were on bail, the government should: (1) adopt a policy

to direct crown attorneys to oppose the making of all orders for bail for violent crimes; (2) seek a review of all orders granting bail for charges involving crimes; and (3) begin providing more detailed information about the justice system, in order to inform the public about whether it is functioning well and in the best interests of public safety. In order to do that, statistics would be required to be maintained along the lines as those proposed by Bill 178. Again, this motion was defeated in this Legislature without a single Liberal member supporting it.

We in the PC Party are of the view that this is a significant issue in the public interest, and that is why we keep bringing it before this Legislature. All of us are hearing—I think every member of this House is probably hearing from the constituents who want to know why it is that among 32 people facing murder or manslaughter charges in Toronto this year, 14 of them were out on bail at the time of the offence. Now, the standard response we've been hearing from the Attorney General and the Minister of Community Safety is that any kind of record keeping or compilation of statistics regarding such justice matters would constitute interference with the judiciary.

We in the PC Party don't share that view. We know about and are extremely respectful of a need for judicial independence, but it's our position and our view that the keeping of mere statistics does not constitute any kind of judicial interference whatsoever, and that it really is vitally necessary and in the public interest that these statistics be maintained, so that people will know how the justice system is functioning. After all, as Mr. Tory has indicated, if we keep statistics on the poultry production and number of eggs produced in Ontario in a year, and we are maintaining more serious statistics such as the length of wait time for medical procedures, it indicates that statistics are kept routinely across all of the ministries. Why should the justice system's statistics be any different? They are statistics like any other, and the public has the right to know. But even more than that, it's critical that the public maintain their confidence in the justice system.

Yet it continues to be a bit of a mystery to the average person. Time and time again, I hear that from my constituents in Whitby–Ajax, and I'm sure many members hear that from their constituents as well: "What goes on in that system? Why don't we know about it?" And when they hear some of the tragic stories about crimes committed by people while out on bail, sometimes with tragic endings such as people being killed, they wonder how this could happen.

But when you look at the basic issues involving bail and you start with the question of the presumption of innocence pending trial, then you look at the situation involving bail and look at the very narrow situations, really, in which bail can be denied: The first one is to ensure that the accused does not flee from justice—that's an obvious one; to protect the public if there is a substantial likelihood that the accused will re-offend, a secondary ground; and to maintain confidence in the administration of justice, and that's equally as important.

The public has a right to know how their justice system is functioning with respect to the granting of bail and the other types of statistics that would be maintained by Bill 178.

Bill 178 will remove some of the mystery that people feel surrounds the court system and the judicial system, and will require the disclosure of certain information, thereby introducing a transparency into the system that we've all heard people want to see.

On this basis, I would commend Mr. Tory again for bringing this bill forward, and I would urge all members of this Legislature to support it.

1140

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): I appreciate the opportunity to indicate my support for the bill and the Leader of the Official Opposition, John Tory, and commend him for introducing this legislation. I think it's a strong indication to the people of Ontario of what a John Tory government would look like, in terms of dealing with so many challenges in the justice system in the province of Ontario. Transparency and truth in the justice system would be things that I think virtually every Ontarian would welcome.

I could speak on this issue for hours. There is a certain degree of crisis in the justice system in Ontario. We've seen that with the Auditor General's report last September, with the backlog of cases. We've seen it recently in a letter that both Mr. Tory and I received from the mayor of Mississauga with the challenges that the provincial offences court has, the lack of justices of the peace and the impact that's going to have on Peel region and Mississauga specifically. I'll get into that a little later.

One of the things that we always hear in this House when any of us on the opposition benches raises issues with respect to the operation of the courts or concerns surrounding the justice system—we get tossed back at us that somehow, by raising these issues and shining a light on some of the problems and challenges, we are jeopardizing this mysterious thing called “judicial independence.” The great unwashed, also known as hard-working taxpayers, who pay the salaries of judges, who pay the salaries of lawyers who are accessing the legal aid system in Ontario, apparently, under this interpretation, have no right to know what's happening inside what some would describe as an elite circle, this sort of incestuous little clique. I have to say that John Tory and the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario disagree, and strongly disagree.

I'd asked the question, why shouldn't taxpayers know? Why shouldn't they know the number of crimes committed while folks are on bail, or on probation or conditional release, while subject to a criminal deportation order? Why shouldn't we know that? Why shouldn't we know the number of remands per case by court location and categorized by Criminal Code or provincial offences, pre or post trial date being set? Adjournment: whether it was requested by the crown, the defence or the court? The Liberal government says no. Having taxpayers know

where the problems are and who's causing them is somehow a threat to the independence of the judiciary.

A couple of weeks ago, you will recall Ontario appeal court Judge Michael Moldaver—I hope I'm pronouncing that correctly—spoke out about the mess that is Ontario's justice system. It was very refreshing to hear someone of his rank talking about these challenges. His perspective was essentially—some would interpret it as an assault on the defence bar, but he also acknowledged in his comments that his fellow judges are part of the problem. With respect to that, he was referencing that, in his view, they do not put a quick enough end to what he describes as frivolous motions and fishing expeditions by defence lawyers.

Predictably, the defence bar has reacted with indignation: “We're not the problem; it's somebody else.” There was an interesting article in today's Toronto Star, co-drafted by the executive, I think the president and vice-president, of the Criminal Lawyers' Association; I recall Alan Gold's name being mentioned. There was a very interesting quote in that. I'm going to quote directly from that article: “There are no reliable statistics available to connect defence lawyers to the systemic problems that plague the system.” That's the defence bar's response to Judge Moldaver's concerns about the mess in the justice system. They're saying, “There are no statistics to prove this. We're not the problem because you don't have any statistics to back up that allegation.” So round and round we go.

Clearly, we need those statistics. The defence bar is saying it, at least, in response to an assault from an appeal court judge. But when we get into discussing it in this place, even the defence bar, or many of them, may be onside in saying, “No, we can't have this kind of annual reporting so that people who draft the laws and the people who pay the bills should have a right to know what's going on in the system and where the problems are.”

Before I get into this whole issue of judicial independence, I want to talk about the problems in the courts just briefly. Our leader, Mr. Tory, talked about it. There are so many implications to this. If you look at the victims of crime, they are on many occasions revictimized by the failure of our courts to deal in an adequate and timely manner with their challenges. Police overtime is an enormous cost burden: police going to the courts, waiting around, and there's another remand, another adjournment. That is so frequent. Talk to any police service in this province. It is a real, significant problem, not only in a cost sense, but you're taking front-line officers off the front line, sitting around in courtrooms hour after hour, day after day, week after week. That's a very, very serious problem.

I want to briefly talk about judicial independence. The speaker said we can't have some form of accountability, that this is jeopardizing judicial independence. I get worked up and irritated by this argument all the time. It's exercised all the time, and I have great problems. The

judiciary has to show a commitment to greater efficiencies in the system dealing with costs, but frequently it's not the case. When I was corrections minister, we had judges saying, "No, we can't have any connection between remand, jails and the courts." We can't even have a tunnel, because somehow that jeopardizes judicial independence. Try and figure that one out. We've had judges arbitrarily saying, "I have to have six armed police officers in my court," at \$70,000 a year, "to provide security." Talk to the chief in Owen Sound about the cost burden that's placing on municipalities.

There has to be some kind of oversight applied, some kind of accountability. What we're talking about here I think is very, very reasonable. The judges have independence. They have essentially lifetime appointments. They're guaranteed a job until the age of 75. Try to remove a judge, try to fire an incompetent judge, a judge who has misstepped. It's a very, very difficult process.

Knowing what they are doing in their courts, keeping track of what's happening, is in no way, shape or form jeopardizing judicial independence.

Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale): I'm pleased to speak to this. This is a rehash of the old Judicial Accountability Act that was a Tory private member's bill in 2001. That was entitled the Judicial Accountability Act, and that was a much milder title than the bill we have before us today. The bill we have before us today has the rather ominous title of An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act with respect to truth and transparency, the implication being that the crown attorneys and the judges in our system are untruthful, that they're not transparent. This bill goes much further than the 2001 Judicial Accountability Act.

What did distinguished chief justices and distinguished previous Attorneys General say about that bill, with the even less ominous title than the one we're dealing with today? Here's what Justice McMurtry said on January 10, 2001, when this bill was introduced: "The people of this province are best served by an independent and impartial judiciary that seeks to find a just result." There was a story in the Ottawa Citizen in January 2001 that went on to report on Justice McMurtry's comments. It said, "Judge McMurtry challenged the (Tory) government's decision to allow a private member's bill calling for the tracking of individual judges' sentencing records to proceed through the legislative process." He described it as "a rather heavy-handed and irresponsible attempt to intimidate judges in the sentencing process."

1150

The Attorney General of the day, Mr. Flaherty, acknowledged, according to this story, that having considered Justice McMurtry's comments and gone into the matter, he would "not go any further" because of concerns that it would interfere with judicial independence. Now, the Leader of the Opposition says, "This is not about interfering with judicial independence. I'm talking about aggregate statistics. I'm trying to get a general overview of what is going on in the province. We don't

want to zero in on anybody's particular record." But words have meaning, and sometimes it's a good idea just to read and absorb the clear meaning of the words. Let me refer to subclause 1(2)(h)(iii) of this act with respect to truth and transparency in the judicial system. First of all, it's not aggregate statistics or a general overview of the province; they're talking about statistics from, (i), the individual court location. Okay.

Now here is where the language becomes clear and is evident of the real intent to get into and to develop particular records of particular crown attorneys and particular judges. It's talking about tracking adjournment statistics.

"1(2)(h)(iii) whether the adjournment was requested by the crown or by the defence"—those are individuals, but here, I think, is where it gives the real intent of what this legislation is trying to get into—"or whether it was ordered on the judge's own initiative." How particular does that get? That is not a general overview. That not an aggregate look at what's going on. That's looking at an individual judge's own personal initiative and how he has disposed of a particular aspect of a case. That, by anybody's definition, by any clear reading of those words, is an interference with the independence of the judicial system.

Now, I'd like to quote a former lawyer colleague, a distinguished member of this Legislature on the Tory side and one of my predecessors in the riding of Willowdale, Charles Harnick, the Attorney General of the day. Here is what Charles Harnick said—and I have great respect for former Attorney General Harnick, as I do for Chief Justice McMurtry, a former distinguished Conservative Attorney General. Charles Harnick, quoted in an article in the Globe and Mail by Colin Freeze, and I'm quoting from the article: "Former Progressive Conservative Cabinet Minister Charles Harnick told a group of young lawyers yesterday that the Judicial Accountability Act would be bad law—and that he was 'proud to say I made it clear quickly what my position was,' when he quashed similar legislation" with the same intent several years before that.

The article goes on to quote then Attorney General Harnick saying that "judges have to make decisions based on the cases before them, not based on public pressure." Let me just address this public pressure, because I want to refer to something that came up in the opposition comments a couple of minutes ago. There was a reference to, "The taxpayers pay judges' salaries. Taxpayers want to know the problems and who's causing them," the "who" being the individual judges. That's the flaw in this private member's bill. It is going to put a chill into how judges do their work, how individual crown attorneys do their work, how individual civilian court administrators administer the process of scheduling cases. Can you imagine judges, crown attorneys, court administrators doing their work and they've got this ominous act hanging over their shoulders? An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act with respect to truth—with respect

to truth—the implication being that somehow, I suppose, they're telling lies, they're dishonest. Couple the title of that act with comments from the opposition Tory party in this Legislature today who are talking about, "If the taxpayers are paying the judges' salary, they're entitled to know who's doing what, who's deciding what."

Our common law system has been well served over the centuries by the system that we have; that is, we have an independent Legislature elected by the voters, we have an executive drawn from that Legislature, and we have an independent judiciary. They work in tandem: The judicial system is not any more independent or more superior than any of the other two elements of our governing system.

When we start to tamper with the system and say that we as legislators who are elected for a term—maybe two terms, maybe three terms; governments change. The Liberals are forming the government today; in years to come it may be one of the other opposition parties. When the political party of the day has an idea about how judges, crown attorneys, court administrators should be going about doing their work—what they should be emphasizing, what they should not be emphasizing, where they should come down hard, where they should come down a little easier—when that judicial system starts shifting following the election of the day, so that one day we might have a Liberal view of what judges should be doing and a few years later a Conservative view of what judges should be doing or an NDP view of what judges should be doing, that is, in the final analysis, politicizing the judicial system.

For centuries, democracies have depended upon, as a last refuge in many cases, an independent judicial system. An individual member of this Legislature, a citizen from the streets, someone in incarceration, a police officer who finds himself in trouble or the person who the police officer has arrested can go to that independent judicial system and have their case determined independently, without having the judges and crown attorneys looking over their shoulders with respect to being governed by something—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Tory, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Tory: I appreciate the fact that other members have participated in the debate today. What this is about is the public's right to know facts, things that actually happen in the justice system. That's about all it's about. It's about increasing transparency, which we hear a lot about from the people across the way on many other matters, with regard to what goes on in the courts. It's about building confidence in the justice system or, I might even say, rebuilding confidence in the justice system. It is about indicating where there might be problems but, frankly, eliminating a lot of other places where there aren't problems and where the facts will show that a lot of things we end up discussing in here and in the media and elsewhere really aren't problems.

What this bill is not about is individual judges, except on the matter of remands and adjournments, which have to do with the functioning of the courts. But on all the other ones that have to do with the exercise of their discretion on plea bargains, bail violations and so on, it is simply about aggregate collection of data from across the province and the reporting on that data from across the province. It's rubbish to suggest it's about somebody not being truthful. There was no suggestion of that at all, and for people to suggest that is a smokescreen.

If there's a chill coming from anywhere, it is a chill that is coming from the fact that people are losing confidence in the justice system as they see the plea bargain deals, the sentencing deals, the bail violations, the disrespect for the law, and the fact that there are things that get written up in the press in great detail or discussed in the Legislature that breed disrespect for those laws. So I say, if the Attorney General of this province has time to go down and look at a Christmas tree in a courthouse when he should have just issued a joint statement with the Chief Justice saying, "Get over this orgy of political correctness. Let's let people celebrate all the holidays," if he's got time to do that, if this government has time to count how many eggs are laid in Ontario—and probably hatched too, for that matter—then they should get on with letting the sun shine in on these facts and letting people know what's going on in the justice system to build confidence in that system.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

CITY OF GUELPH

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): We shall first deal with ballot item number 69, standing in the name of Mrs. Sandals.

Mrs. Sandals has moved private member's notice of motion number 42. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

TRUTH AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM ACT, 2006 LOI DE 2006 SUR LA VÉRITÉ ET LA TRANSPARENCE AU SEIN DU SYSTÈME JURIDIQUE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): We shall now deal with ballot item number 70, standing in the name of Mr. Tory.

Mr. Tory has moved second reading of Bill 178. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.

The Deputy Speaker: All members in favour, please stand until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Barrett, Toby	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Elliott, Christine	O'Toole, John	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Patten, Richard	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.	Yakabuski, John
Klees, Frank	Ruprecht, Tony	

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please stand until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Leal, Jeff	Racco, Mario G.
Brownell, Jim	Levac, Dave	Ramal, Khalil
Bryant, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Rinaldi, Lou
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Sandals, Liz
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Smith, Monique
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John	Van Bommel, Maria
Fonseca, Peter	Mitchell, Carol	Wilkinson, John
Jeffrey, Linda	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Zimmer, David
Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq	

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 17; the nays are 26.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been dealt with, I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1208 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I rise today on behalf of the children and families of my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock. After promising with much fanfare an initial investment for Best Start child care spaces, the Minister of Children and Youth Services decided to remove them despite other similar regions in the same circumstances not being affected. As a result of a personal vendetta, which the minister refuses to put aside, Kawartha-Victoria is not receiving one single Best Start space.

Let's not forget about the \$59,000 luxury vehicles, the trips to the Caribbean, Argentina and other exotic locations, and the \$2,000 gym memberships that she has made hard-working Ontario families pay for. While this is occurring, she has personally decided that out of nearly 15,000 Best Start spaces, Kawartha-Victoria will get zero.

Personal vendettas and political motivations are the priority of the minister and the McGuinty Liberals. They're willing to say anything and do anything, even if it means punishing innocent families and their children.

If she is really genuinely concerned, the minister will personally request the Auditor General to review the best start decisions and funding process and let us know exactly why she made the decision for zero Best Start spaces in Kawartha-Victoria. I challenge her to do that on behalf of the children and families in my riding.

Minister Chambers needs to stop pointing fingers at everyone else and stop taking out her personal vendettas on Ontario's vulnerable children. It's irresponsible and it's regrettable.

The bottom line is that you, Minister, are responsible for hurting the young children who will benefit most from the very thing you are denying them.

**LINDA BOUCHER AND
ADAM CONACHER**

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I rise in the House today to congratulate two wonderful teachers in Ottawa who recently won the Golden Apple Award as outstanding educators. Ms. Linda Boucher from Bishop Hamilton Montessori school and Mr. Adam Conacher from Henry Munro Middle School were both given the award recently.

The award was created by the Majic 100 radio station and the Alterna company, and it includes \$500 that the winners can spend on their students.

Ms. Boucher was nominated for the award by eight parents of her students, and said that she would spend the money on new material for her classroom. Mr. Conacher is known for using new technologies to enhance his students' learning experience. He plans to spend his winnings on new computer equipment for his students.

It's a pleasure for me to honour these two dedicated and outstanding educators by congratulating them in the Legislature today. Our government shares their desire to give our children the best education possible, and we've made it a priority to support teachers like these two individuals. For instance, we haven't lost a single school day to labour discord, unlike our predecessors. We've also increased provincial funding for education and hired over 7,000 new teachers. We've reduced class sizes and taken initiatives that have increased both test scores and graduation rates. We have also invested in new teaching materials for our children, and we are repairing and rebuilding schools across the province. We will continue to work alongside teachers like Ms. Boucher and Mr. Conacher to give our children an education that will help them to succeed.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): There is a growing crisis in this province due to a shortage of long-term-care beds. In October of this year, there were more than 18,000 people in Ontario on a waiting list for a bed—yes, 18,000 people. This is an increase of more than 4,000 from the year before in October.

In my community of Waterloo, 669 people are waiting. In Ottawa, the list sits at a staggering 1,349. And in North Bay, the number is over 300.

This shortage of beds is not only affecting the people waiting, but it is drastically affecting other areas of the health care system, especially hospitals, where many

beds are filled with patients waiting for a bed in a long-term-care home. As a result, surgeries are being postponed or even cancelled and patients are waiting hours or days in emergency rooms because there is no bed for them in the hospital. Yet this government has taken no action to address this critical shortage of beds.

An article in the North Bay Nugget on December 19 reinforces this fact by stating that the Ministry of Health has no “long-term or short-term vision” on how they’re going to manage this situation.

We have seen this lack of action before on the part of both the Liberal and NDP governments. No new beds were built in the province for 10 years prior to our government’s 1998 announcement and construction of 20,000 new beds. I say to the McGuinty government, it’s time for action now.

INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): I rise in the House today to discuss the issue of public infrastructure renewal and the great strides this government has made to solidify Ontario as a leader in this area.

This government recognizes that the province is growing at a spectacular rate, a breathtaking rate, and we want to ensure that with this growth comes a sustainable strategy for the future—initiatives like the McGuinty government’s Places to Grow Act, which has not only been effective in helping communities to help develop these strategies, but it is also receiving international accolades.

As the minister mentioned yesterday, our government has won accolades for our growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe area, taking home the Daniel Burnham Award from the American Planning Association. The impact this plan will have on many communities like the ones in my riding will be enormous. The creation of more compact communities will mean that my constituents will be closer to amenities that will improve their quality of life—leisure areas such as parks and community centres, but also commercial areas for work and for shopping.

Another huge issue in my riding—and you’ve all heard me talk about it—is gridlock. The plan does help to improve in this area by providing access to different forms of transportation and helping to lessen reliance on cars and their inherent evils.

I just want to say that Places to Grow is a responsible plan that will help Ontario’s growth in a responsible and sustainable way, which is necessary.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): I rise to tell members of this Legislature how the McGuinty government’s energy policy is hurting manufacturing in Ontario.

This month, OMYA Canada has laid off a small number of workers from its plant in Perth in my riding of Lanark–Carleton. It is shifting some of its production from its plant in Perth to Vermont and Alabama.

OMYA processes calcium carbonate and is the world’s leading producer of white fillers used in paper, drywall, toothpaste and other household and industrial products.

In a media release, Larry Sparks, the plant administrator, lists high energy prices as the main factor contributing to the layoffs. In this same release, he notes that steps have been taken to assist the forestry sector in northern Ontario with energy costs, while nothing has been done to help the mining sector or the manufacturing sector in eastern Ontario.

The president of OMYA, Olivier Chatillon, wrote to the Minister of Energy on June 1, 2006, supporting “an energy policy that is part of an industrial strategy for Ontario. The strategy would protect existing jobs and ensure companies are confident investing in Ontario.”

In spite of this urging of the president of this company six months ago, nothing has been done. The jobs have been lost.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): This past Tuesday, I met up with St. Nick here in the Legislature. He was taking a break from what’s a very hectic time in his work schedule to come and express his concern about the lack of action the McGuinty Liberals are taking on climate change. As a resident north of the Arctic Circle, he’s an eyewitness to the particularly pronounced impacts global warming is having.

In my meeting with St. Nick, I told him about the Ontario greenhouse gas reduction act I was introducing in the Legislature. This act obligates Ontario to reduce provincial greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol. Under the act, the minister would have to prepare a plan to reduce emissions. A plan of this nature needs to have energy efficiency and conservation at the core.

One proven way to reduce energy use is to retrofit older buildings. When I was a city councillor in Toronto, I founded the Better Buildings Partnership, a building retrofit program that to date has reduced CO₂ emissions in Toronto by 173,000 tonnes per year.

In 2005, a resolution was passed in this Legislature to expand the program province-wide. However, the funding to make this a reality has not happened. Likewise, a suite of aggressive conservation and efficiency programs have not been carried through.

The clock is ticking down on the existence of the North Pole, just as it’s ticking down on this presentation. This province needs to take action.

THIRD PARTY'S RECORD

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I rise in the House today to speak about the hard work the McGuinty government is doing while the third party continues to remain inconsistent on a number of issues that directly benefit Ontarians.

The leader of the third party has a tendency to say one thing while doing quite another. After saying that we need to protect our drinking water from source to tap, the honourable member then voted against the clean water legislation that would do the very thing he was advocating for. Also, after extolling the virtues of mandating renewable energy, such as solar and wind, he then came out against wind energy, saying it was too expensive.

These inconsistencies are not a new occurrence for the third party, and they continue to prevent progress for Ontarians through voting against valuable legislation like insulation pumps for diabetic children, ending the 60-hour work week and raising rates for those on social assistance, to name but a few. It seems that the third party would like to remain holier than thou, while still voting against valuable services that would change the lives of Ontarians for the better. The McGuinty government is proud of the legislation it has passed, and will continue to create new legislation that has a positive impact on Ontarians and their hard-working families.

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION'S RECORD

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): As another year ends, I'd like to spend a moment and talk about some of the things that just don't seem to change. The official opposition is now on its third leader in the last five years, and despite the fact that he's a new face from the old back rooms, the Progressive Conservative Party stands for the same tired, cynical approach that the people of Ontario rejected just a few short years ago.

While we on this side of the House invest in public health care in an effort to strengthen our greatest competitive advantage, they want to cut \$2.4 billion from the system. While we make public education the best education, they want to take hundreds of millions of dollars out so they can give it to private schools. While we pass legislation that ensures that all municipalities, big and small, urban and rural, are treated with the respect they deserve, they vote against it. And while we work to make Ontario an even better place to live, they vote against clean water, against insulin pumps for diabetic children and against investing in infrastructure. While we're working to make Ontario a leader in the knowledge economy, they travel the province mocking research on climate change as simply useless.

There is one other thing that won't change as we move forward, and that is that the people of Ontario can continue to count on the McGuinty government to always move forward, never backward.

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): This being the last day in the Legislature before heading home to our ridings, I'd like to remind all Ontarians of what this government has done to move health care and education forward in recent months. To ensure that Ontarians have access to safe, quality services provided by the health professionals of their choice, we introduced legislation to regulate the profession of traditional Chinese medicine. Members of the TCM community have been diligently pursuing this legislation for years to ensure the health and safety of Ontarians. Well, this government has delivered. This is one way we moved our health care system forward this fall.

We didn't stop there. Not only do we want healthy people in the province of Ontario, we also want well-educated people. To have well-educated people, you have to provide the right opportunities. That's why we passed learning-to-18 legislation. Amongst other things, this bill gives young people, particularly those who are struggling in our classrooms or those who have given up altogether, a renewed sense of hope. It provides for new learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom. Providing hands-on experience outside the classroom allows certain students to fulfill their full potential. Giving them academic flexibility affords them more opportunity to succeed. When youth succeed, we all succeed, because children quite literally are our future.

By creating a healthy and well-educated population, we're strengthening the foundation of the province and providing a climate for prosperity.

Merry Christmas to everyone here in this Legislature.

VISITORS

Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I rise today to recognize somebody in our gallery: Mrs. Farida Merchant. Mrs. Merchant is one of those unfortunate people who lost her husband to cancer. She had to send him down to the United States for treatment that could not be achieved here, and spent tremendous amounts of money on that treatment. But then when she came back to Canada with her husband, she has reached out to the Credit Valley Hospital and helped them raise a lot of money to improve the health care system here. I think it's very appropriate at Christmastime that we recognize the generosity of people like Farida Merchant.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I don't want to mow the lawn of my good friend the member from Northumberland, but I do want to remind members, if you'll give me a moment, that Rotary International is the oldest and largest service club around the world, and there is a Canadian, for the first time in 57 years, who is the president-elect. That is my father, who is visiting today: Wilf Wilkinson from Trenton, Ontario.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I believe we have unanimous consent to move a motion related to a committee of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has asked for unanimous consent to move a motion related to a committee of the Legislature. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that the following committee be authorized to meet during the winter adjournment: the standing committee on justice policy for the purpose of public hearings and clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 103, An Act to establish an Independent Police Review Director and create a new public complaints process by amending the Police Services Act, at the call of the Chair.

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

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RENDEMENT SCOLAIRE

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): Our government, the McGuinty government, knows that it is important for our students to develop a high level of literacy and numeracy in the early years. If we can help a child do well in reading, writing and math in elementary school, he or she is much more likely to do well in high school and beyond.

That's why I'm pleased today to announce that we're investing an additional \$10 million. About half a million students in grades 4 to 6 are expected to benefit from this investment.

Ces fonds supplémentaires aideront les conseils scolaires à se doter de ressources et de matériel d'apprentissage pour renforcer l'enseignement de la littératie et de la numératie au cycle moyen.

These resources include books, magazines, computer software and multimedia resources such as CD-ROMs and DVDs, so we're not just talking about textbooks, but a much broader range of materials. It's not just about putting books on desks; it's about reaching every student and breaking down the barriers to education and making sure all of them have the tools they need to learn. This \$10 million in funding is in addition to the \$15 million we provided earlier this year for library books.

We have two goals: We want to make sure that our outstanding teachers and education support staff have the materials they need to deliver their lessons and support to students. As well, we want to ensure that our students

have the resources they need to help them develop these core skills and to be successful.

L'an dernier, 64 % des élèves de 3^e et de 6^e année de l'Ontario ont atteint ou dépassé la norme provinciale en lecture, écriture et mathématiques, ce qui représente une hausse de 10 points de pourcentage par rapport au taux de 54 % en 2002-2003. Nous avons pour but de voir 75 % des élèves atteindre ou dépasser la norme provinciale d'ici 2008.

These results show us that we are reaching every student and helping them achieve higher levels of literacy and numeracy, and that means that more students have a solid foundation for future success.

I hope all members will agree that every single thing we can do to raise the bar on student achievement is good for our children and good for Ontario, and I hope that over the holidays we'll all be reading and our students in the province will be reading as well.

1350

HEALTHY LIVING

HABITUDES DE VIE SAINE

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): As the holiday season enters into full swing, I want to take this opportunity to wish all members the very best at this special time, happy holidays and merry Christmas.

This week, the Ministry of Health Promotion has partnered with a number of groups to bring the message regarding healthy holiday habits to all citizens of Ontario.

Earlier this week, I was pleased to visit George Brown College with Chef James Smith and Lynn Roblin, a well-known cookbook author and registered dietitian. Chef Smith and Ms. Roblin provided helpful tips on how Ontarians can enjoy a great holiday meal and do it with an eye to good nutrition and moderation.

My ministry's own website, EatRight Ontario, is a good place to get good, reliable information on nutrition, portion size, healthy weights and more. You can access this website through healthyontario.com. EatRight Ontario supports the ministry's mandate to help Ontarians lead healthier lives. It's one of the new programs that have come out of Ontario's action plan for healthy eating and active living launched by the government in June. The action plan responds to key findings in the chief medical officer of health's report, Healthy Weights, Healthy Lives. At this time, we want to thank Dr. Sheela Basrur, the author of that report, and wish her the very best during this difficult time in her life. The report called for a province-wide effort to combat obesity.

Le plan d'action du gouvernement propose de nouveaux programmes et de nouvelles stratégies en plus de tirer parti de ceux actuellement en place pour promouvoir la saine alimentation et la vie active en Ontario.

Second, as my colleague the Minister of Tourism will be able to attest, Ontario's a great place to visit in winter. That's because of our tremendous outdoor winter sporting facilities. Winter sports are an excellent way to be

active while seeing the natural beauty of our province. Be it snowshoeing in Algonquin Park, skiing on one of the many hills, taking your family out to the Rideau Canal—although not until February’s Winterlude—in my own hometown of Ottawa, or simply taking a brisk walk with family or friends, getting outdoors is a great way to exercise and enjoy the season.

Through the work of our ministry, we have made it easier for Ontarians to gain access to both indoor and outdoor recreational activities.

Our Ontario trails strategy is a \$3.5-million long-term plan that establishes strategic directions for planning, managing, promoting and using trails in our province. The executive director of the Ontario Trails Council, Mr. Patrick Connor, has said that the “economic benefits of the Ontario trails strategy will be felt right across Ontario. The recognition that trails are a multifaceted piece of infrastructure that helps people in so many ways is a significant milestone.” I know Rob Benzie is getting down every word of this as I speak.

Through our communities in action fund, more than \$15.8 million in the last three years has been awarded to over 550 organizations at the provincial and local levels to increase access to sport and recreational activities regardless of age, ability or income—more than \$15.8 million into activities such as the North Bay Canoe Club, the Peel-Halton Youth Basketball Association in Mississauga, and Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre in Kenora, which I had the opportunity to visit.

Mon ministère et moi-même sommes fiers du rôle que nous jouons dans la promotion d’un Ontario en santé et d’une vie meilleure pour tous les Ontariens.

According to Statistics Canada, 59% of Canadians and almost 26% of children are either overweight or obese. The McGuinty government is on the side of families who want to see their children grow up to lead healthy, active lives, and we’ve made significant investments to help them do that.

Third and finally, as we pass the six-month mark with respect to the implementation of the Smoke Free Ontario Act, our government is proud of its accomplishments and recognizes the significant benefits inherent to a smoke-free Ontario. Smoking is responsible for more than \$2.6 billion in lost productivity each year and creates an added burden of at least \$1.7 billion. The province has recognized that when you invest in preventive measures such as the Smoke Free Ontario Act, you help Ontarians lead healthier lives with a reduced risk of lung cancer, heart disease and other physical ailments.

Specific to youth, the Ministry of Health Promotion has allocated \$8.8 million in youth prevention programs and expanded the Youth Action Alliance while also strengthening our cessation strategy with all the public health units across the province.

Members would be proud to note that our ministry’s stupid.ca advertisement and website have won numerous awards and recognition from the advertising community, including Marketing Magazine’s best pick and recognition by the International Academy of Digital Arts and

Sciences and the gold award at the Digital Marketing Awards just last year.

Through these three mechanisms, we have reminded Ontarians about the need to consider their health during the holidays. We’re targeting the youngest of Ontarians in order to get the message out and make the biggest impact for the sustainability of our health care system.

I’m proud of our proactive support to wellness and the work that the men and women of our ministry have accomplished in just one short year. I want to also point out what a positive relationship we have developed and nurtured with our many and diverse stakeholders, from health NGOs to sport and recreation groups to public health units.

We are doing some tremendous work that I’m proud of. I want to thank members for their interest in the work that we’ve done and the announcements they’ve made on our behalf, whether it’s the communities in action fund or the Quest for Gold program. To all members, in particular my two critics, Mr. Sterling and Ms. Martel, thank you very much for your constructive advice, particularly at the estimates committee.

Happy new year to all members of the House. Merci beaucoup.

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

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): In response to the statement by the Minister of Education, this is yet another attempt by this government to deflect attention from the education funding shell game by the successive Liberal Ministers of Education. Hiding behind this latest dribble of funding, this government continues to ignore the single most important issue facing education in Ontario today, and that is the updating of the basic education funding formula, a promise that Dalton McGuinty made and that he and three successive ministers have failed to address.

The Minister of Education is the third minister in a row to ignore the appeals from every stakeholder in education to keep the Dalton McGuinty promise to update the funding formula. So I ask the minister, when you know that school boards across this province are in a funding crisis, why do you continue to ignore them? I remind you that your stakeholders, Minister, are abandoning you very rapidly.

At their press conference on October 20, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation voiced their ongoing concerns about the funding crisis facing school boards across the province. They challenged you, Minister, and pointed out that school boards across this province are dipping into reserves and cutting programs and services from front-line education to meet your program announcements that you and previous Ministers of Education failed to address with serious funding.

The words of Desiree Francis, the executive officer for the province of the OSSTF, are worth repeating: “We are now into the fourth year of the McGuinty government’s

mandate and this government has still not addressed fundamental problems with the education funding formula. Three successive Ministers of Education have acknowledged the problems, but none has made the changes necessary to ensure school boards have adequate, stable funding to meet the needs of their students and communities.”

Ms. Francis continues: “A substantial portion of all new education funding has been earmarked for specific ministry initiatives and has not helped boards cover the funding shortfall for core operating expenses. Even when the government did add \$600 million to the education budget last spring to bridge the funding gap for teacher salaries”—which, I remind you, you unilaterally negotiated and forced on boards—“it did so at the expense of the local priorities and learning opportunities grants. You put in \$600 million, but a total of \$511 million was removed from these grants. With the loss of this money, boards also lost what little flexibility they had to address local needs.”

I continue with this quote: “Recently, Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne suggested that her government has taken a step-by-step approach to funding” and to changes in the funding formula. “We say, look again.” Minister, this is the OSSTF talking to you. “As Hugh Mackenzie’s recent analysis of education funding shows, in the 905 area alone the government’s funding shell game has meant that two of the largest urban public boards, Peel and Toronto, actually have less funding per student in 2006-07 than in 1997. The chair of the Durham board says his board must tap into their reserves for the \$5 million they need to meet the costs of special education. In Niagara, transportation funding is still based on pre-1998 data.”

That’s the end of the quote from the OSSTF.

Minister, you guys have made a lot of announcements. You’ve failed to correct the fundamental flaws in the funding formula. You said you would. Get on with the job so boards can get on with their jobs.

HEALTHY LIVING

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): I want to tell the minister I forgive him for not giving me a copy of his statement. In the spirit of the season, I did not rise on a point of privilege, even though it made it difficult for me to respond.

I call his attention to an article in the Toronto Star, given all of the platitudes which he heaped upon the McGuinty government with regard to what has been accomplished in the last year. That article is called “Dying Smoker Left Out in the Cold.” It talks about Suzanne Penny, who’s preparing for death, and one of her few remaining pleasures in her life are her cigarettes. She likely will die alone, and cigarettes are her only partner as she goes towards her death. The article clearly points out the point I made both in estimates and in this Legislature: There should have been some accommodation for those near death to continue smoking and not

be exposed to the elements, particularly this winter. Ms. Penny talks about—and this is her quote in the article: “It is quite delightful when it’s dark and raining” to go out and have a cigarette.

1400

Unfortunately, this government would not listen, would not act with compassion when it was passing this particular law—a law which I support in many ways; I supported the bulk of it. I think it could have been done in a more genuine and compassionate way. That’s a clear mark of failure of the McGuinty government during the last year.

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): In response to the statement that was made by the Minister of Health Promotion, I want to put on the record and give the minister some concrete recommendations that his government could and should implement if they really want to foster healthy habits in the province of Ontario:

(1) The government could give enough funding to the school system so that every school would have a qualified physical education teacher and every student in both the elementary and secondary panel would have access to regularly scheduled physical education classes.

(2) The government could accept all of the recommendations that were already made by the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health in March 2000 regarding healthy eating environments at school. The government should accept and implement all of those nine recommendations in the report entitled Call to Action: Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment.

(3) The minister and his government could ban over-the-counter and behind-the-counter displays of cigarette packages in convenience stores now so that young people will not see them, will not be led to believe that smoking is normal and will not be enticed to start smoking in the first place.

(4) The government could pass Bill 164, the Community Right to Know Act, put forward by my colleague Peter Tabuns, so that consumers could be informed about labelling and about those products that contain known or suspected carcinogens.

(5) The government could pass my Bill 30, Safe Needles Save Lives Act, to ensure that Ontario workers can have access to safe needles and safe medical sharps in their workplaces and they won’t contract serious or deadly diseases because they are forced to use conventional needles and sharps.

(6) The government could build the 20,000 affordable housing units that it promised in the last election. Only 1,638 have actually been built and most of these are just below market rate, so they can hardly be described as affordable.

(7) The government can remove the arbitrary and unfair restrictions they’ve imposed on ODSP recipients who are applying for a special diet supplement so those recipients can actually receive the supplements and nutritional food they medically need.

(8) The government could tie ODSP rates to the real cost of living so that the disabled in Ontario aren’t forced

to fall further and further behind and face more and more serious financial hardship in the province.

(9) The government could raise the minimum wage to \$10 an hour so that minimum wage workers can actually earn a living wage in Ontario. It's unacceptable that minimum wage workers working full time, 40 hours a week, are still living below the poverty line in Ontario. There are over 200,000 Ontarians who work for minimum wage; two thirds of them are women, and they and their families are living in poverty in this province.

(10) The government could fully stop the clawback of the national child benefit from Ontario's poorest families. In the fourth year of the McGuinty Liberal mandate, it is unacceptable that this government continues to clawback \$250 million of federal money from Ontario's poorest families. It's no accident that child poverty in Ontario is up from 16.1% last year to 17.4% this year. Over 330,000 Ontarians were forced to use food banks last year, and many of them were families who rely on the minimum wage and who continue to have federal money clawed back by this government despite the government's promise in the last election to end this disgusting practice. There are some concrete recommendations for the government if the government was truly interested in ensuring that everybody—everybody—was in a position to benefit from healthy habits in the province.

SAFER INTERNET DAY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to ask for unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Internet safety and that the question be put on the motion without debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Runciman has asked for unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Runciman: I move, on behalf of the Liberal, Progressive Conservative and NDP caucuses, that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognize February 7, 2007, as Safer Internet Day as part of ongoing efforts to combat Internet crimes against children.

The Speaker: Mr. Runciman has moved, on behalf of the Liberal, Progressive Conservative and NDP caucuses, that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognize February 7, 2007, as Safer Internet Day as part of ongoing efforts to combat Internet crimes against children. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I beg the indulgence of our House to thank our hard-working, enthusiastic pages, who have served us here for an additional week.

Applause.

ORAL QUESTIONS

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I don't suppose, in that spirit, there's any chance I can move a motion that the Premier give me his BlackBerry e-mail address so I could send him questions over the Christmas break. I'm willing to try it.

My question today is for the Premier. Today, the House voted on a bill that I introduced, Bill 178, the Truth and Transparency in the Justice System Act. Those in the McGuinty cabinet charged with taking care of the justice system voted against it. This is unfortunate because, had this bill proceeded, it would have shone some light on the justice system without compromising judicial independence. It would help us to know, on a province-wide basis, where we might have a problem and, frankly, where we don't. Even Alan Young, a professor at Osgoode Hall Law School, says, "We don't know if the current regime is effective."

My question to Premier is this: Will the Premier please advise the House why he clearly gave orders to the vast majority of his MPPs to vote against transparency in the justice system?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'm delighted to have the opportunity to explain to the leader of the official opposition why it is that we do not support this initiative. This is designed to get tough on judges. We choose to get tough on crime. There's big difference. Instead of Americanizing our justice system by some veiled attempt to intimidate judges, we're attacking crime. We have 1,000 new police officers, 63 new judges, 83 new crown attorneys; we have a guns and gangs task force; we've provided \$5 million in addition to combat child pornography; we've introduced the only legislation of its kind to Canada on mandatory gunshot wound reporting, and it's been passed; the Attorney General recently opened up a new major crime court here; and we've been working with the federal government to toughen our bail and sentencing provisions throughout the country. It seems to me those are positive, proactive, constructive ways to deal with crime. We'll attack crime; we'll let them attack judges.

1410

Mr. Tory: Only the Premier could construe the notion of putting province-wide facts on the table about bail violations and about sentencing deals and plea bargains as intimidating anybody. The only people who are intimidated here are the government of Dalton McGuinty, who are intimidated by putting these facts on the table. This bill would do nothing more than allow people to see how well the system is operating on an aggregate basis across the province. How often, across the province, are people violating bail conditions? How often are sureties collected, or not, across the province for people who violate their bail? How often, across the province, are we seeing

sweetheart sentencing deals and sentencing credits? That is the information we sought to see collected and sought to see put into the public domain on a province-wide basis so that we could maintain respect for the law and the justice system.

It seems your government has time for committees and commissions and all kinds of things on decorations in courtrooms, but no time at all for making facts available to the public. Why are you opposed to having a transparent justice system so people can see justice done, see how it's done and understand how the system works?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: You know, the Conservative Party leader says that this is about collecting province-wide data, but his colleague and justice critic Mr. Runciman says, "I think ... the public has a right to know what's going on in individual courts." The Tories have tried this in the past. They introduced a bill, and this is how Chief Justice McMurtry himself responded. He said, it's "a rather heavy-handed and irresponsible attempt to intimidate judges in the sentencing process. All I can do is express the hope that ... the members of the Legislature would have the good sense to not proceed with such legislation." That legislation is of the same variety as this particular initiative. This wolf has now been dressed up in sheep's clothing, but underneath it's the same wolf and the same fundamental attempt to intimidate judges. We choose to attack crime; we'll let them attack the judges.

Mr. Tory: To suggest that this bill, which seeks to put information on the table of what goes in courts, attacks judges is absolute rubbish. It's absolute rubbish. The public have the right to know, collected on a province-wide basis, this information about what actually goes on in courtrooms. We should have that information here, as people who are charged with the responsibility of making the laws that are being interpreted and enforced in those courtroom. But this government cannot tell us and will not tell us how many people skip bail. They can't tell us and they won't tell us how long people are waiting for a trial. This is information the people of Ontario have a right to know so we'll know if there's a problem or not, and, quite frankly, so that if there isn't a problem, we won't concern ourselves with it and we can bolster confidence in the justice system. It is not an attack on judges, it's an attack on secrecy. It is a bill that is in favour of putting the information in the public's hands so they can judge.

My question is this: The Attorney General says the justice system is ready for its close-up. Part of that close-up should be province-wide facts on how the system is working and what's going on. Why did you order this shot down?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: You know, suddenly the leader of the official opposition has become a champion of transparency. He represents a government that chose to hide wait times. He represents a government that chose to hide a deficit. He represents a government that chose to hide expenditures at the children's aid societies. He represents a government that chose to hide Hydro sal-

aries. Suddenly, today, he proclaims himself to be a champion of transparency and openness and accountability, which is a new thing.

Again, I choose to be with Mr. Chief Justice McMurtry, who said it's "a rather heavy-handed and irresponsible attempt to intimidate judges in the sentencing process." There may be some small politics to be found in that kind of an approach. We choose to attack crime; let them attack the judges of Ontario.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, Premier, I stood in this House and we raised 45 specific instances—based on your own website, the website on which you based your television ads—where wait times for priority treatments are on the rise. One of those was Southlake hospital. I see the minister was there for a photo op today. It has seen a 51% increase in cancer surgery wait times. Yesterday we had 45 specific instances where wait times are on the rise. The TV ads have been found by Advertising Standards Canada to be inaccurate and to omit relevant information. And, of course, the website information, on the shy side, has been found to be misleading by the Auditor General. As the advertising standards council indicated in its letter, wait times have not been reduced for all procedures across the province.

Why do you continue to refuse to apologize for the fact that you put these ads on television, paid for with taxpayers' money, and that you put inaccurate information on television and withheld relevant data from the public? Why won't you apologize?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): The leader of the official opposition enjoys barking up this particular tree, but there is nothing to be found. He will know that all the advertising that we put forward in Ontario has been subject to approval by the Provincial Auditor. He will know that waits in fact have come down for angiography, for angioplasty, for cataract surgeries, for hip replacement, for knee replacements, for MRIs and CT scans.

He may not know that there are 10 cancer surgeries that are now being tracked. They chose to hide all this information in the past. We've chosen to make it public because we think it's important. He may not know that seven of 10 different types of cancer surgeries have seen decreases across the board, and we are experiencing three areas of increase.

What we can now do on the basis of this information is target our resources. The minister has asked for a plan from Cancer Care Ontario. He's received that plan and we look forward to acting on that information.

Mr. Tory: I challenge the Premier to have the auditor come forward and say he passed any judgment whatsoever on the accuracy of those ads, because he didn't, and you know it.

Yesterday, the Premier claimed there were 160 hospitals reporting on the wait times website, the one the

Auditor General found contained misleading information. This is yet one more inflated claim from the Premier with respect to wait times. The fact is that there is nowhere near that number of hospitals reporting on the website. Only 45 of 68 hospitals that perform cancer surgeries report their wait times. Only 41 of 70 hospitals that do CT scans are reporting their wait times.

One that isn't reporting is Kemptville District Hospital. A recent CBC report says their operating rooms are being rented out for for-profit facelifts for out-of-the-country customers while patients in Ottawa wait 105 days for cancer surgery, 309 days for cataracts, 431 days for hip and knee replacements, 100 days for an MRI. Why do you allow these operating rooms to be rented out for for-profit facelifts when you have people in Ottawa, very close by, waiting hundreds of days to get treatment?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Just so we can introduce a bit of the other side of the picture—and I understand that the job of the leader of the official opposition is to bring a rather one-dimensional approach to this—we've got a responsibility to ensure Ontarians have all the information.

There have been some successes in cancer, and I've talked about how they have seen real successes in seven of 10 areas: At the Guelph General Hospital they've had a 35.1% decrease in wait time; Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, down by 24.6%; Queensway Carleton, down by 26.8%; Peterborough Regional hospital, down by 38%; Mount Sinai, down by 53.4%.

The leader of the official opposition stands in this House and says that we've got some challenges with respect to cancer wait times, and we do. The reason we know this is because we've actually collected this information and made it public for the very first time. On the basis of that collected information, we can now focus our energies, focus our resources and make a real difference. That's how we've addressed other areas where wait times have advanced and that's why we're going to continue to—

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

Mr. Tory: The information that you have made public has been described by the Auditor General to be misleading and to be taken with a grain of salt. So there's a big commendation for that. The advertising standards council goes on to say that the ads that promoted that same information are inaccurate and leave people with mistaken impressions about wait times.

You talked about three or four hospitals. Let me give you the aggregate numbers: 40% of the hospitals reporting wait times for cancer surgeries have seen an increase since August 2005; 45% of the hospitals reporting MRI wait times have seen an increase since August 2005—we're not talking about a couple of hospitals here—64% of the hospitals reporting wait times for bypass surgery have seen an increase since August 2005.

You started to admit the truth on this yesterday when you said that in cancer surgery wait times they were going up. It's the first glimmer of hope we've had after

the misleading information as described by the auditor, after the inaccurate ads. Finally, yesterday, you started to come clean. Why don't you come clean on the rest of this and admit these ads and these numbers have been creating a false impression for the people of Ontario and that you should apologize, especially for those ads that you wasted the taxpayers' money on?

1420

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Never have the people of Ontario been subjected to so much doom and gloom. To listen to the leader of the official opposition, you would think the entire province was going to heck in a hand-basket.

We're proud of the fact that we're collecting information which makes the leader of the official opposition a little bit uncomfortable. They chose to hide deficits. We're going to make sure that there's a new law—in fact, we've made sure that that kind of information is never hidden from Ontarians again. We're collecting wait time information. We're collecting information about hydro salaries and making that public. We're collecting information about children's aid societies and making that information public as well. Does this create challenges for the government of the day? You're darn right it does. But we're prepared roll up our sleeves and take this on. The only thing I would ask the leader of the official opposition to do is to give us a little bit of credit for being pioneers in this area, for getting wait times down in a number of areas, for acknowledging that we've got some difficulties in continuing areas and that we're going to keep moving and we will be relentless in our pursuit of getting more wait times down throughout our health care system.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): A question for Premier: Over the last two years under McGuinty government, over 140,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs have been lost in Ontario. New Democrats have called for affordable hydro rates to help sustain jobs in the forest sector and we've called for the creation of a job commissioner's office, someone who can work with manufacturers and forest product companies to sustain and protect jobs. Your government has responded by simply holding one PR exercise after another. Premier, as more and more manufacturing jobs continue to be lost, why is the McGuinty government continuing to be missing in action in terms of sustaining and protecting good-paying jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): The leader of the NDP, of course, holds himself out as being a champion of working families in Ontario and he has brought a particular focus of late on job opportunities. But let's take a look at the record, understanding, of course, that 270,000 net new jobs have been created in our province, something the leader of the NDP has failed to acknowledge yet. When it came to insulin pumps for diabetic children—

that would have helped families—they voted against that. When it came to lowering auto insurance rates—again, that would help families—they voted against that. Ending the 60-hour workweek: voted against. Ending mandatory retirement: voted against. Some 15,000 new affordable child care spaces: voted against. Ending the national child benefit clawback on a go-forward basis: voted against. Raising rates for those on social assistance: voted against. Raising rates for those on ODSP: voted against. Keeping out two-tier health care: voted against. Ending the private school giveaway: voted against. They say one thing and they do another.

Mr. Hampton: I don't know what world the Premier is living in, but your government is still clawing back \$250 million a year from the lowest-income kids in the province. At the same time that you've found the time to give yourself a 31% pay increase, you continue to take money away from the lowest-income kids in the province. I don't know what world you're living in, but you're not living in the world of working families, that's for sure.

But I want to ask you about other workers, health care workers, who continue to face health and safety risks in their workplaces because we do not employ safe needles in Ontario's health care facilities. The member for Nickel Belt has proposed legislation that would see safe needles introduced into our health care facilities so that workers wouldn't put their lives at risk from needle-stick injuries. Your government has refused to act on that front as well. Can you tell health care workers across Ontario how you found time to raise your own pay by 31% but you don't have time to address their health and safety needs?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It's a privilege to have a chance to speak to the issues of health and safety related to health care workers.

Everybody agrees that it's crucial that health care environments be safe places. Indeed, we know that there's more progress to be made, but we're proud of the steps that we've been able to take. We've invested approximately \$100 million of the people's money to install, as an example, ceiling-mounted bed lifts, which we know have eased significantly the strain for many of our nurses. We have spent more than \$10 million on the implementation associated with new technology related to needle sticks.

The Minister of Labour has also taken initiatives through a council which involves many health care organizations and representatives of workers with a view toward doing more to make these environments safer.

I think that this is an area where there's an acknowledgement that good steps have been taken. Indeed, there will always be more that can be done to make these environments safe, and we work with all of those partners, especially the representative front-line workers, to do so.

Mr. Hampton: The reality is that there are 33,000 needle-stick injuries in our health care facilities every

year, and many of those are life-threatening in terms of the diseases or the infections that can be communicated as a result of those needle-stick injuries.

But I want to ask about the minimum wage. When my colleague the member for Parkdale–High Park introduced legislation calling for a \$10 minimum wage, members of the McGuinty government were very quick to condemn it, but you were also very quick to pass your own 31% pay increase, something that amounts to about \$28,000 a year.

Premier, can you tell all of those hard-working people out there who work for a minimum wage that is not a living wage how it is that your government can ram through a 31% pay increase for MPPs but you can't do anything for workers who want simply a \$10 minimum wage?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: To the Premier.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The NDP again raised their violent objection to this pay hike, but of course they're going to take it. I guess Mr. Hampton has yet to make the announcement—I look forward to that provision in their platform—that specifically says they're going to roll back this pay hike. I look very much forward to seeing that in their platform as yet further demonstration of their commitment to putting their money where their mouths actually are. They maintain that they're interested in working people, but again I would ask them: Why did they oppose raising rates for those on social assistance? Why did they oppose raising rates for those on ODSP? Why did they oppose ending the 60-hour workweek in Ontario? Why did they oppose lowering auto insurance rates? Why did they oppose bringing in insulin pumps for our diabetic children?

Again, I would ask the Ontario public to take a long, hard, close look at the NDP and notice the tremendous gap between what they say and what they actually do.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): New question. The leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: The question is to the Premier. I do invite people to take a long look, because I'll contrast my record with keeping my word with your record of breaking your promises anywhere across Ontario, Premier; anywhere. And I will contrast my record of donating the MPP pay increase to charities to your record of putting it in your pocket any day as well.

But I want to ask about some other workers—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Order.

Leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: I want to ask the Premier about some other workers. Firefighters, we know, contract cancers as a result of chemicals and compounds that they come in contact with in terms of their daily work.

My colleague for Hamilton East, Andrea Horwath, introduced legislation which would do what other jurisdictions have done: Presume that, where certain cancers occur in the lives of firefighters, it is a result of workplace health and safety contact, workplace health and safety risk.

Once again, Premier, the McGuinty government found the time to ram through a pay increase for itself, but you have no time, it seems, to ensure that firefighters who risk their lives on an almost daily basis have these cancers and these working conditions recognized in terms of workers' compensation. Why are you in such a hurry to ram through the pay increase, but you have no time for the health and safety risks of those firefighters?

1430

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): We as a government value the good work that our firefighters have done, and we've certainly recognized that as a government since we have taken office.

As an example, as the firefighters advocated for OMERS autonomy in this province, we moved forward with that. The NDP voted against that. We moved forward with \$30 million in providing front-line assistance to our firefighters in this province. There was no acknowledgement from the NDP on that. As well, we're working very closely with our firefighters. My parliamentary assistant, Mario Racco, conducted a comprehensive review of occupational disease within firefighters' ranks.

We're working very closely with the firefighters on a number of fronts; we have the WSIB working group. It amazes me that we've moved forward. When this individual was in government—right now they talk the talk, but we walk the walk. We're committed to our firefighters. They never demonstrated any commitment to our firefighters. We'll continue to work with them.

Mr. Hampton: The McGuinty government talks about comprehensive review. What it's been, in terms of workers' compensation, is nothing other than comprehensive delay.

But I want to ask about another issue that is very important for working families. Increasingly, working families, especially in larger urban areas, are having trouble dealing with skyrocketing property tax assessment. The response of the McGuinty government has been to delay the issue until after the next election.

New Democrats have put forward a proposal, which was followed in a number of other jurisdictions, which ensures greater fairness in terms of the property tax assessment system—

Interjections.

The Speaker: I'm trying to relate the supplementary to the original question. I'm sure you'll do that for me.

Mr. Hampton: I will, Speaker. This is a very important issue for working families across the province. It's another one that the McGuinty government has failed to respond to. Can the Premier tell us why?

Hon. Mr. Peters: I'll continue the pinball game and forward this to the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Lots of people have looked at the proposal that the NDP has put forward on property tax, and I should tell my friends in this House and the people who are watching that it is

universally described as one that would only create greater and more severe inequities.

What we have done in light of the Ombudsman's report is to cancel the next two property assessments because we believe that the Ombudsman put forward recommendations that are worthy of implementation. We have an obligation as well, I tell my friend the leader of the third party, to give the people of Ontario a property tax assessment system that is fair, transparent, equitable, workable and reasonable for municipalities right across Ontario, and that is precisely what we are doing.

Mr. Hampton: I think people across Ontario, especially working people, recognize that what the McGuinty government's going to do is hit people with a triple whammy in terms of property tax assessment increases after the next election.

My question is for the Premier. I've outlined five areas where New Democrats have put forward workable, practical proposals to improve the lives of working people. You've spent the greater part of the last week and a half simply ramming through a 31% pay increase for yourself. Can you tell us, please: When did the issues that matter to working families—like sustaining jobs, having a higher minimum wage, ensuring greater health and safety in our health care facilities—all become unimportant issues while the McGuinty government rams through a pay increase for itself?

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: Let me just try and deal with the preamble to my friend's question, because it's right there that we find the reason why the leader of the third party lacks credibility on so many issues in absolutely every corner of the province.

Let me complete the matter on property taxes. What he proposes on property taxes would have the most detrimental impact on young families who buy new homes in communities that are well established. What he wants is for one ratepayer to pay property tax at a very low rate and families who come into those communities and buy a new house on a property that has been revalued to pay a much higher level of property tax—about as inequitable and unfair and inappropriate as you could do in redesigning the system. It's those kinds of preposterous proposals that deny that member credibility on all the other issues that he cares to lecture us about in this Parliament or around the province.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Today, Premier, the Toronto Star republished an editorial from the St. Catharines Standard entitled "Time for a Reality Check on Caledonia." They suggested first of all, interestingly enough, that you and your minister need to get down to Caledonia, as I've done, to see the situation on the ground. They say that "people on both sides of this dispute are living ... a reality of tension teetering on the brink of violence."

They go on to say, "It's shameful that the province would be proud" of their record. They say, "There cannot be different classes of law for different classes of people. That undermines the very equality we strive for and cherish in Canada."

They go on to say, "The rule of law is paramount in Canada's society and must be upheld."

This is the very message we've been bringing to this House for months and months and months: one standard, one set of laws we all respect at all times.

Today is the first day of winter. That was the time beyond which you said it would be unacceptable for this occupation to continue. Do you maintain that view or have you changed your mind, as you've done on so many other things?

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

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): When this occurrence happened and we were first getting questions in the House, I had asked for the assistance of all the members of the Legislature, as we thought this was obviously a province-wide concern and challenge. But we took an approach, and then of course we had a judicial action that questioned our approach. So we had to take a pause on that approach, and we appealed it. The appeal court of Ontario has basically supported the approach that we've taken and said that the approach is legitimate, that it's lawful within the rule of law, and that we should proceed with that to try to settle this dispute. That's what we're doing.

Mr. Tory: In fact, it was the Premier of Ontario who said it would not be acceptable for these people to remain on the land past the first day of winter. He said it. He set that standard. He set that deadline—not us, not the courts, not anybody else—and now clearly he has changed his mind, as he does on just about everything. It's no wonder that the people of Caledonia have no confidence left in this government. It's no wonder that the occupiers of the disputed land feel no compunction to leave—not while the government says one thing on one day and another thing on another day.

Another example of this is the promise from your colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to provide compensation for homeowners. That was on June 16. At that time, he said he would ask an existing committee to look into it. Six months have passed and nothing has happened. The other day, we hear you, the minister of aboriginal affairs, saying, "It's time for another committee to look into this." We already had a committee looking into it six months ago. Maybe by spring you'll have a subcommittee or a joint committee. Self-imposed deadlines come and go with this government.

I have sat and listened to these people, who, I can assure you, have genuinely suffered. When are you going to stop appointing committees and subcommittees and

joint committees and actually do something for them? Get on with it.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I've been working with my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on this. He and I are of the same mind: that we want to get this right. We've talked to the community at large, besides the specific homeowners who have been directly impacted by this, and decided that this is not just an issue for those immediately impacted homeowners but also an issue for the community as a whole. So, in working with the community, they want some input on this and to have a say on this. This is an approach consistent with what we've been doing with the federal government.

You have to remember that now the federal government has the lead role at the table. The federal government supports what we've been doing in our actions with them, so we have Minister Jim Prentice and Prime Minister Stephen Harper onside with this approach.

1440

COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): My question is to the Premier. Ontarians are well aware of your broken promises to close the coal plants. Those plants continue to spew greenhouse gases and smog-causing chemicals into the air. Yet few are aware that in 2005, while you were promising to close those plants come hell or high water, greenhouse gas emissions at both Nanticoke and Lambton increased by 20%.

Ontarians expect real action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Will you move today, Premier, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in this province and put Bill 179, the Ontario Climate Change Act, forward for second reading and to committee for public hearings? Will you make that commitment?

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): The member cites some statistics that were released yesterday. I would remind him that since 2003, the complete time frame of this government, coal emissions are down 17%; SO_x is down 28%; NO_x is down 33%; CO₂ is down 15%; mercury is down 32%.

Worldwide, there will be 249 new coal plants coming online by 2009. This is the only jurisdiction in the world that is moving to replace coal-fired generation. It has proven to be an enormous challenge, but it's one this government is up to and one we will continue to push.

The amount of emissions that we have cut from coal today is the equivalent of taking 1.1 million vehicles off the road. No government anywhere has a record as good as the McGuinty government when it comes to dealing with the emissions at coal-fired plants.

Mr. Tabuns: It's interesting that the Minister of Energy essentially replicates what was said by the Premier the other day. But the reality is that Environment Canada, the body charged with reporting greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, reported yesterday that greenhouse

gas emissions in Ontario increased in 2005, the last year for which data is available. So a beacon of hope? A leading body? No. In fact, this is a jurisdiction where greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. You've got a record that's as wonderful as the federal Liberals on this one.

Premier, you're supposed to be taking action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. That's not happening. They're going up. When will you take real action? When will you bring forward the Ontario Climate Change Act to this Legislature for debate? When will you bring it forward so it can be adopted?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: The member likes to selectively use statistics. He cites only 2005, the summer that we had the worst heat wave. When you look at the three-year trend, all the numbers are down.

That is consistent with his and his party's position. He says, "Close the coal plants." His leader goes to northern Ontario and says, "Keep them open." Now he's not only saying, "Keep the northern plants open," his leader now says, "Keep the plants in southern Ontario open as backup."

I was proud to use the same numbers my Premier used in this House. I'm proud to be part of a government that's doing more than any government anywhere to reduce its reliance on coal, to reduce CO₂, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Ontario is the leader. This government and this Premier are leaders. That party and that leader have different positions in different parts of the province on every day of the week—

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

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): My question is for the Minister of Health. One of the key components of the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act was the co-operation and the dialogue that had been fostered with pharmaceutical companies. As the member for Mississauga West—or, as we're sometimes known, pill hill—it's very important for residents of western Mississauga that Ontario maintains a strong working relationship with pharmacists, with generic manufacturers and with big pharma. There's been a lot of discussion in the Legislature about funding new and innovative drugs, but we all know that these drugs don't come cheap. Yesterday, you mentioned in the House that 23 new brand-name drugs were listed on the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary. I'm glad to see that your ministry is working to get new products to market quickly, and I'm also concerned about how patients are going to benefit from these additions to the Ontario drug formulary. Minister, what type of impact will these products have on patients' lives?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): If I might, I want to thank the member from pill hill for the excellent question. Anyone who has driven up Mississauga Road in the

area the honourable member speaks of has seen, as an example, at GlaxoSmithKline, one of the largest global pharmaceutical companies, tremendous new investment.

We're very proud that, as a result of the initiatives we've been able to undertake more recently, Avandia, a featured product of GlaxoSmithKline, is now available to people with type 2 diabetes, alongside Actos, another diabetes product. We know anemia has a significant impact on quality of life for cancer patients and can also delay treatment. That's why two cancer chemo-related drugs to treat anemia have been added to the Ontario drug formulary.

In addition, drugs related to cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, osteoporosis, HIV/AIDS, cystic fibrosis and transplantation are all part of a package of 23 new research-based pharmaceutical industry product that has been made available to enhance the quality of care for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Delaney: This type of increased access to drugs for cancer and diabetes are undoubtedly going to mean happier holidays for countless Ontarians, including many in western Mississauga.

Another objective of the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act was to do away with the dreaded section 8 process. Many physicians have met and spoken with me about the burden of paperwork associated with section 8 applications. The time required to submit these requests meant valuable time that they could have spent on patient care but instead spent on filling out forms and working on process.

Minister, now that this law has been in effect for a little more than two months, have the changes that were put in place started to show new results?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: In Ontario, obviously, pharmaceutical product is an important part of the health care system for people. Indeed, one of the things we found when we came to office was that our doctors and patients were together burdened by a lot of bureaucratic process, which was referred to as section 8.

Through initiatives that we've undertaken so far to move product from a listing which required a bunch of paperwork, we've made it more accessible. The implication of this is that we've reduced, so far, 25% of the section 8 requests. What that really means is that on 40,000 distinct occasions, doctors and patients together have been freed from the burden of some bureaucratic process and, instead, the doctors, through their good conscience, have been able to provide the prescriptions to individual Ontarians. This is a tangible example of the improvement to access for patients, and at the same time, reducing a tremendous bureaucratic burden from Ontario's hard-working doctors.

LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. As you know, the softwood lumber dispute has been hard on Ontario's lumber industry. Just this week, Bowater said

the softwood lumber deal was a contributing factor in the closure of their Ignace sawmill. But the deal has been particularly difficult for Ontario's small and medium-sized lumber remanufacturers. These exporters add value to Ontario's lumber resources. Between 2001 and 2006, during the course of the dispute, small and medium-sized Ontario lumber producers lost 65% of their exports to the United States. Now I understand that you forwarded an opinion to the federal government regarding softwood lumber quota allocations that will result in less for remanufacturers, because you are proposing a 5% claw-back. Why are you and your government abandoning Ontario's small and medium-sized lumber producers? Why won't you stand up for Ontario's value-added lumber exporters right now and support a set-aside for our remanufacturers?

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): We want to make sure that all our lumber manufacturers have equal opportunity to produce and export lumber around the world, especially to the United States. I would just correct the member to say that I do not have any clawback at all. All the quota available has been allocated or, rather, I should say recommended to the federal government to allocate. The member has to realize that the federal government owns the quota. They are taking our recommendations only, but it will be the federal government that owns the quota and manages the running rules over the next seven years of the agreement of how the quota is finally allocated.

1450

Mr. Miller: In the spring, the federal trade minister said that Ontario's "Independent remanufacturers have been very seriously hit by the softwood lumber dispute.... They've been disproportionately hurt. What we have to focus on is how they benefit disproportionately going forward." That was David Emerson in May 2006.

Minister, why is Ontario abandoning its lumber remanufacturers and not working with the federal government to ensure that our remanufacturers benefit moving forward? At a time when the minister should be offering a hand up to Ontario's small and medium-sized producers, why aren't you willing to support the establishment of a set-aside to assist remanufacturers' return to traditional export volumes? Minister, will you take steps today to advise the federal government accordingly?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: We have made our final recommendations to the federal government, but obviously the federal government, as the final decision-maker, has the ability to adjust the recommendations that come from Ontario, and if they see fit to make any recommendations, being the owner of the quota and being in charge of the running rules of that quota, they can do that.

I would also like to say to the member that maybe we're a little too dependent on that one particular market. I was in Ottawa, with the great assistance of my colleague the member from London-Fanshawe, and had a meeting with 16 diplomats from the Middle East to talk about opening up new markets for Ontario. I've talked to

our manufacturers about that, and we're going to start to open some doors so that we can start exporting our good Ontario lumber to the rest of the world.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Minister of Labour. On November 10, Shela Mirza, a health and safety inspector, went to Humber River Regional Hospital, Finch site, in response to a complaint involving the safe use and disposal of safety-engineered medical devices in the birthing unit. She issued four orders requiring the hospital to provide safe needles to workers in the ICU, the OR, the birthing unit and in complex continuing care by February 12, 2007. The hospital has applied to the Ontario Labour Relations Board to suspend the orders, and the hospital's main argument is, "If the use of needles and sharps poses a serious danger to the health and safety of workers, it is presumed that the Ministry of Labour would not allow thousands of workers at hospitals and medical facilities across Ontario to continue to use these instruments without requiring the implementation of safety-engineered medical devices."

Minister, your lack of action on safe needles is now undermining your own health and safety inspectors. More importantly, your lack of action is putting workers at risk. Why don't you adopt my bill on safe needles so your inspectors can do their job without being undermined and workers can finally be protected?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I thank the member for the question. One thing that we have put forward that has not been done in the province of Ontario is that we recognize the importance of establishment of a section 21 health and safety committee. For the first time ever in the history of this province, we have brought both sides to the table to discuss issues of concern within the health care facilities in this province. We've got good individuals on that committee. I have met that committee and I can tell you, one of the first things that they are looking at are safety-engineered needles. They're going to be looking at that and I look forward to the recommendations that will come back to me and the Minister of Health.

But as well, we've invested \$11.6 million through the Ministry of Health in the medical safety-engineered sharps initiative. As well, we've made an unprecedented commitment to hire an additional 200 health and safety inspectors for this province, something that was severely lacking in Ontario. Many of those inspectors are dedicated strictly for the health care sector. When it comes to her specific question, the member should know I can't comment on any specific issue.

Ms. Martel: Because of the minister's lack of action on safe needles, his own health and safety inspectors are being undermined when they're trying to do their job. This issue is a top priority for the four unions that represent more than 175,000 health care workers in

Ontario, those who are most at risk of suffering a needle-stick injury.

By September 2004, those same unions had already participated in three meetings with the Ministry of Labour's health care health and safety group and told the former Minister of Labour that safe needles was their number one priority. That message was repeated again in July 2005-06, when the four unions again wrote to the minister, the Premier and the Minister of Health asking for action on safe needles. Five other provinces have already moved to protect workers with safe needles. Why won't Ontario adopt my bill, protect the public and ensure that your health and safety inspectors aren't undermined by your inaction?

Hon. Mr. Peters: I reiterate: The commitment that we made to hire 200 additional health and safety inspectors is unprecedented in this province, and I think it demonstrates that our goal is to ensure that we have safe workplaces for our health care workers.

As well, when the member made reference to the former minister, that the former minister listened to those concerns that were brought forward at that time—the former minister met with the Ministry of Health, and that's why we moved forward with the unprecedented \$11.5-million investment into safety medically engineered devices.

As well, we listened as a government. We listened to both sides: We listened to management and we listened to labour. One of the things that they said was sorely lacking in this province was a section 21 committee for health care workers. That had not been in place in this province. I'm proud to say that we listened to both sides. We listened to what had been brought forward, and this past fall, for the first time in the history of Ontario, a section 21 committee has been established. I look forward to hearing those recommendations.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, as you are well aware, garbage is a big concern for my constituents in London. They have real concerns about the disposal and diversion of municipal garbage. One problem appears to be that each municipality has a different approach to how they plan to deal with their waste. There's a real patchwork approach to planning for waste disposal and diversion across the province. This means, Minister, that municipalities often do not have an open and transparent long-term plan on how they will deal with future waste issues.

Minister, waste management is a fact of life. It affects municipalities, large and small, across the province, but what is the province's role and responsibility in this issue?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): I want to thank the member for London North Centre for her advocacy on behalf of her community and those in and around the area of the London community. I

want to assure the member that our government, unlike past governments, is taking a different approach. Unlike the NDP, who sought to impose waste on 59 municipalities through an interim waste authority, we're not taking that direction. Unlike the former Tory government who hid away on the issue, that's not the direction we're taking either. In fact, our government continues to provide, and will do so in the future, real leadership to tackle waste produced by our society and to increase diversion. We've done things like announce an LCBO bottle return initiative where tonnes and tonnes of glass will now be diverted from landfills. Just last week, I directed Waste Diversion Ontario to develop a plan for household hazardous waste. We will be dealing with e-waste and now I am taking the leadership on behalf of all ministers of environment through the CCME to further reduce packaging that we create.

Ms. Matthews: As I've said, this is a very important issue to my community of London North Centre, which is why I'm glad to know that we finally have a government in Ontario that's prepared to provide leadership on this important issue. This is the only way municipalities will have the help they need in the future when planning for all forms of waste.

Minister, when residents in the London area heard that the city of Toronto bought the Green Lane landfill site in our community, we resented the thought that Toronto's sewage sludge was going to be dumped in our region. Londoners agreed with me when I said that London was not Toronto's toilet. We're all relieved to hear that Toronto has confirmed that they will, in fact, not be sending their sewage sludge to London. Minister, this is very good news. Can you please tell me how your initiatives will help my community of London North Centre?

1500

Hon. Ms. Broten: Green Lane landfill, as you know, has existed since the mid-1970s and has always been a good neighbour. I again spoke to Mayor Miller yesterday, and he reiterated his intention for the city of Toronto to continue to be a good neighbour to that community. As Minister of the Environment, I'm absolutely committed to ensuring that the community around Green Lane is protected and that the local environment won't be compromised.

On so many fronts, we continue to work with municipalities in ongoing dialogue for long-term, more sustainable plans for dealing with garbage. We want to encourage those municipalities to work within their communities and share their best practices beyond their community to increase waste diversion, to look at new technologies. Other initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of the Environment include new rules to remove restrictions on recycling, working on the environmental assessment requirements, and ensuring that we see more construction of recycling and composting facilities across the province.

HIGHWAY 407

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, over a year ago you would know that the region of Durham passed a resolution calling on you for the rapid expansion of the Highway 407 east project. For your information, I'll read that resolution here: "That the Highway 407 east extension through Durham be expedited without further delays, including the completion of the ongoing environmental assessment, detailed design and construction."

Minister, your own Places to Grow document clearly stresses the importance of economic infrastructure such as the 407. In fact, if your plan right now is in gridlock on that file—even today, in the media, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority is unravelling, as you know, with the governance model.

Minister, the municipalities of Durham region, the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce, the Clarington Board of Trade and business and agricultural leaders are calling for your action on this file. What will you do to fast-track the 407 east completion?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Transportation): I'm pleased to be able to respond to the member. The government is proceeding with the 407 east environmental assessment study. It is under way and moving forward. The first phase of the study, the evaluation of transportation alternatives, has been completed, and it was presented to the public in May and June 2006. The recommended alternative confirmed the need for a new east-west transportation corridor, and that's from 407 to Highway 35/115.

The recommended transportation corridor has been carried to the next phase, the route planning. The second of four rounds of public consultations were held in November and December 2006, where the alternative routes were shown to the public. There were no adverse concerns raised by the public. The next round of public information is scheduled for 2007 in the late spring, and they are going to actually present the preferred route.

So the study will continue. It is under way. We are completing the public consultation—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you, Minister. Supplementary? The member for Whitby–Ajax.

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax): Minister, the fact of the matter is that your government refuses to make the eastward extension of the 407 a priority, and now the businesses and residents of Durham region are paying the price for your lack of action.

At the 2006 AGM of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce it was reported that "the negative economic and capital investment impact, to Ontario, of not proceeding to complete Highway 407 eastward ... is real. Major industrial and commercial organizations located east of Toronto have confirmed that the inadequate level of 400 series highways on the east side of the GTA severely affects their businesses." They indicate that the tourism and manufacturing sectors of the economy will suffer as well.

We heard just about a month ago that the Sobeys distribution centre located in my riding, in Whitby, which employs 750 people, is being downsized to build a new system in Vaughan. Also, this past summer, 1,000 jobs were lost at General Motors in Oshawa.

Minister, you know that enhancing the infrastructure to move goods and labour through the markets is vital for economic growth. Why won't you make the—

The Speaker: The question has been asked.

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: I'm pleased to respond. Possibly, if the previous government hadn't sold the 407, things might be a bit different. But having said that, we are proceeding. We are going through the public consultation. Yes, it does take some time. We've had to do the alternative routes. But to suggest that we have not invested in transportation in Durham—in the last three years we've put over \$217 million into Durham in transportation.

We are moving forward on the 407 corridor. It is a priority for this government. The EAs have been completed. The preferred and alternative routes have gone through their public consultation. The rest, the actual preferred route, will be presented in the spring, and then we will continue on. It is a priority for this government; we will continue.

There is no question that we have made a very significant contribution to the transportation system in Durham, not only with what we're proceeding with but with what we've actually already invested in that region.

WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): I have a non-partisan question for the Minister of Natural Resources, and fittingly the last question of this session. For the past 35 years, the Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary has nursed injured wildlife back to health for release to the wild.

In exceptional circumstances, wildlife cared for at the sanctuary cannot be entirely rehabilitated and released. One such animal is Lucky, a young doe and surrogate mother to 12 orphaned fawns. But luck is running out for Lucky in this holiday season, because two months ago your officials informed the sanctuary that Lucky and others, including a three-legged fox, have to be destroyed. Professional wildlife rehabilitators and veterinarians strongly disagree.

Minister, will you assure Ontarians that Lucky and other threatened wildlife at the Aspen Valley sanctuary will not be destroyed?

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): Deer, deer, deer.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. Order. The Minister of Natural Resources, the Premier will have to move; thank you.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I want it on the record that it was the Speaker who ordered the Premier to move, not the Minister of Natural Resources.

I appreciate the question from the member. As you know, we've had some other cases that have been in the news lately. The member knows that we really highly value the wildlife rehabilitation organizations in the province and the very important work they do. I know that they make every effort, in their professionalism, to heal and to repair the wounds and injuries so that wildlife can retain their position, back in nature where they belong. We certainly support that, so we'll continue to work with these organizations and with the member on this particular issue.

Mr. Tabuns: I appreciate the direction that the minister is going in and I'm just—

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: What direction?

Mr. Tabuns: The minister shouldn't undermine confidence in his statement.

I'm hoping that, given that he sees it's a good thing to work with these organizations and it's a good thing to protect the lives of animals that have been given rehabilitation, and given that sanctuaries found that wildlife that can't be released can play an important educational role with children and as surrogates, he will provide Aspen Valley with authorization, under section 40 of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, to retain Lucky and others for educational purposes. You have the authority. Will you use it?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: We have quite a few of these requests before us. Like I said on the other situation that the member from Nepean previously had brought up, we will take that into consideration. I appreciate the member's interest in this.

BIRTH OF MEMBER'S GRANDCHILD

Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I know that persons in this House would like to know the good news that my daughter Erin, along with her husband, Scott, provided the first grandchild to our family yesterday. He's a little bit early, but he didn't want to miss Christmas. We're the proud grandparents of Trent Patrick Agnello.

1510

PETITIONS

PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have another petition to do with the Mary Lake dam, and it reads as follows:

“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.

MEMBERS' COMPENSATION

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government's 31% pay hike to MPPs is out of touch with the reality that working families across this province are feeling;

“Whereas the McGuinty government promised open and transparent government and yet has gone ahead and broken another promise by covertly attempting to increase the pay of MPPs;

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

“To not implement this astronomical 31% increase and in future to employ a consultative process allowing Ontarians to provide their opinions and concerns with respect to the pay of the Premier, cabinet ministers and MPPs.”

I am in agreement and would affix my signature thereto, and send it down with page Gloria.

ADULT LITERACY

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly. It has to do with literacy initiatives in the province of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas investing in adult literacy initiatives will give more Ontarians the opportunity to upgrade their skills and gain the training they need to reach their full potential; and

“Whereas through these funding initiatives, Ontarians will have greater accessibility to post-secondary education and valuable apprenticeship programs that will put them on the right track to gaining the jobs in their field of choice; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government is providing new support for adult literacy by expanding academic upgrading services to help workers build stronger literacy and numeracy skills so they are able to perform at a

higher level, thereby enhancing our workforce and our economy; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government is investing \$6.2 billion more into post-secondary education and training by 2009-10;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the McGuinty government’s efforts in providing funding to adult literacy initiatives in order to both help Ontarians to meet their full potential as well as to strengthen Ontario’s economy.”

Since I agree with this petition, I’m delighted to put my name to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I would just ask members to quiet down the private conversations.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly to end discrimination.

“Whereas the Ontario government already fully funds 93% of faith-based schools in Ontario, but the remaining 7% receive no funding, solely because they are not Catholic;

“Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled in 1999 and again in 2005 that this arrangement is discriminatory and violates basic international human rights law that Ontario formally agreed to uphold;

“Whereas all three parties represented in the Legislature support Catholic separate school funding, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Canada, so that the only fair and viable solution to the discrimination is to extend funding to the small religious minorities that are currently excluded;

“Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Ontario has the constitutional power to provide funding to non-Catholic faith-based schools;

“Whereas Ontario is the only Western democracy that fully funds faith-based schools of one religion to the total exclusion of all other religions, while all other provinces except the Atlantic provinces fund faith-based schools and have thriving public school systems;

“Whereas the cultural survival of the affected minority groups is at stake;

“Whereas faith-based schools produce responsible and productive citizens; and

“Whereas the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Religious Schools in December 2004 submitted to the Minister of Education a detailed proposal for the funding of non-Catholic faith-based schools in a manner that is fair and accountable and protects and enhances the public interest;

“We call on the Ontario Legislature to pass legislation to provide equitable funding in respect of all faith-based schools in Ontario without religious discrimination and without any reduction in funding for public education, with accountability requirements and standards in place to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded.”

Because I fully support the principle behind this petition, I’m prepared to affix my signature in support and give it to page Mackenzie to deliver to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I want to present the last of the petitions that I’ve received from SEIU. I thank them for their work in this regard. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): This is a petition to do with transit in Scarborough and it’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It is signed by several people in Scarborough. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario in its last budget allocated in excess of \$2 billion for public transit expansion across Ontario;

“Whereas the majority of these funds are slated for subway expansion to York University up to the city of Vaughan;

“Whereas the city of Toronto has not yet acted on determining what it plans to do with the antiquated Scarborough LRT;

“Whereas the issue of resolving Scarborough’s LRT, along with a transit growth strategy for Scarborough, was not adequately addressed in the TTC’s latest transit growth strategy document;

“Whereas the current transit regime designed for Scarborough does not actively promote nor encourage increased ridership;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure that new provincial monies received by the TTC for transit upgrades and expansion go towards addressing the transit shortcomings in Scarborough.”

I’m pleased to sign this petition—and I know many of my colleagues from Scarborough are as well—and to give a copy of this petition to page Or, who’s with me today.

LONG-TERM CARE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As I am in agreement, I’ve affixed my signature and I’m happy to give it to Arianne.

1520

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to present on behalf of my seatmate, the member for Niagara Falls, who sends his greetings to everyone in the House. 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 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.”

It’s signed by more than 100,000 people from the Niagara Falls area. I’ll autograph it and give it to page Simon to deliver for me, and Speaker, Merry Christmas to you.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature to end discrimination:

“Whereas the Ontario government already fully funds 93% of faith-based schools in Ontario, but the remaining 7% receive no funding, solely because they are not Catholic;

“Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled in 1999 and again in 2005 that this arrangement is discriminatory and violates basic international human rights law that Ontario formally agreed to uphold;

“Whereas all three parties represented in the Legislature support Catholic separate school funding, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Canada, so that the only fair and viable solution to the discrimination is to extend funding to the small religious minorities that are currently excluded;

“Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Ontario has the constitutional power to provide funding to non-Catholic faith-based schools;

“Whereas Ontario is the only Western democracy that fully funds faith-based schools of one religion to the total exclusion of all other religions, while all other provinces except the Atlantic provinces fund faith-based schools and have thriving public school systems;

“Whereas the cultural survival of the affected minority groups is at stake;

“Whereas faith-based schools produce responsible and productive citizens; and

“Whereas the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Religious Schools in December 2004 submitted to the Minister of Education a detailed proposal for the funding of non-Catholic faith-based schools in a manner that is fair and accountable and protects and enhances the public interest;

“We call on the Ontario Legislature to pass legislation to provide equitable funding in respect of all faith-based schools in Ontario without religious discrimination and without any reduction in funding for public education, with accountability requirements and standards in place to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded.”

I support this petition, and I send it to the table with Colby. Merry Christmas, Colby.

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your recognizing me, because I know this will be the last petition that I give in 2006, so thank you very much.

Applause.

Mr. Ruprecht: I don't know whether that means that there's agreement here.

This petition is to the Parliament of Ontario—

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): Can you do something about identity theft?

Mr. Ruprecht:—and specifically about government services, and it has to do with identity theft. It reads as follows:

“Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

“Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

“Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

“Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature on December 8, 2005, be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

“(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information such as SIN and credit card numbers.

“(2) Should a credit bureau discover that there has been a breach of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the victimized consumer.

“(3) Credit bureaus should only report inquiries resulting out of actual applications for credit and for no other reasons.

“(4) Credit bureaus should investigate any complaints within 30 days and correct or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed or inaccurate.”

Since I agree with this petition, and I know you do too—I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your recognition—I'll sign this document.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent to call orders for second and third reading of Pr bills concurrently and that the questions be put without debate or amendment, and that Ms. Horwath be permitted to move Bill Pr29 on behalf of Mr. Marchese.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has asked for unanimous consent to call orders for second and third reading of Pr bills concurrently and that the questions be put without debate or amendment, and that Ms. Horwath be permitted to move Bill Pr29 on behalf of Mr. Marchese. Agreed? Agreed.

SHEENA'S PLACE ACT, 2006

Ms. Horwath, on behalf of Mr. Marchese, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr29, An Act respecting Sheena's Place.

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

Ms. Horwath, on behalf of Mr. Marchese, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr29, An Act respecting Sheena's Place.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

RED LEAVES RESORT
ASSOCIATION ACT, 2006

Mr. Miller moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr30, An Act respecting Red Leaves Resort Association.

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

Mr. Miller moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr30, An Act respecting Red Leaves Resort Association.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

PERIMETER INSTITUTE ACT, 2006

Mrs. Witmer moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr31, An Act respecting the Perimeter Institute.

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

Mrs. Witmer moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr31, An Act respecting the Perimeter Institute.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL
GOVERNANCE INNOVATION ACT, 2006

Mrs. Witmer moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr32, An Act respecting The Centre for International Governance Innovation.

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

Mrs. Witmer moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr32, An Act respecting The Centre for International Governance Innovation.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Cansfield, Donna H.
Caplan, David
Chambers, Mary Anne V.
Chudleigh, Ted
Colle, Mike
Crozier, Bruce
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Di Cocco, Caroline
Dombrowsky, Leona
Duguid, Brad
Duncan, Dwight
Elliott, Christine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fonseca, Peter

Martiniuk, Gerry
Matthews, Deborah
McGuinty, Dalton
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil
Meilleur, Madeleine
Miller, Norm
Milloy, John
Mitchell, Carol
Mossop, Jennifer F.
Munro, Julia
O'Toole, John
Peters, Steve
Peterson, Tim
Phillips, Gerry

Smith, Monique
Smitherman, George
Sorbara, Gregory S.
Sterling, Norman W.
Takhar, Harinder S.
Tory, John
Van Bommel, Maria
Watson, Jim
Wilkinson, John
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Zimmer, David

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

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

Mrs. Bountrogianni moved third reading of the following bill:

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): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1531 to 1541.

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

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra
Balkissoon, Bas	Hardeman, Ernie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Barrett, Toby	Hoy, Pat	Racco, Mario G.
Bartolucci, Rick	Hudak, Tim	Ramal, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Klees, Frank	Rinaldi, Lou
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kular, Kuldip	Runciman, Robert W.
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Brownell, Jim	Levac, Dave	Scott, Laurie
Bryant, Michael	Marsales, Judy	Sergio, Mario

Nays

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

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 77; the nays are 7.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Orders of the day.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker: When a motion to adjourn the House carries before the usual 6 p.m. adjournment time, a scheduled adjournment debate—the late show—is automatically carried over to the next sessional day on which such debates are held. Therefore, the late show originally scheduled for today will be carried over to Tuesday, March 20, in the event of passage of the motion to adjourn.

Mr. Bradley has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock, Monday, March 19, 2007.

Merry Christmas. Happy new year. Season's greetings.

The House adjourned at 1545.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Waterloo–Wellington	First Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Premier Vice-Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
Balkissoon, Bas (L)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services (Community Safety) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels (Sécurité communautaire)
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)	Sudbury	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)	St. Catharines	Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, government House leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L)	Algoma–Manitoulin	Speaker / Président
Brownell, Jim (L)	Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	St. Paul's	Attorney General / procureur général
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)	Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L)	Eglinton–Lawrence	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Craiton, Kim (L)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services (Correctional and Emergency Services) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels (Services correctionnels et situations d'urgence)
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	Deputy Speaker, Chair of the committee of the whole House / Vice-Président, Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Delaney, Bob (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for seniors / adjoint parlementaire au ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dhillon, Vic (L)	Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest–Mississauga	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L)	Sarnia–Lambton	Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture
DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Duguid, Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Municipal Affairs) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Affaires municipales)
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Ajax	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie
Fonseca, Peter (L)	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health Promotion / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham–Kent Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Erie–Lincoln	
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and minister responsible for democratic renewal / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales et ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Klees, Frank (PC)	Oak Ridges	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and to the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce et au ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Environnement
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	Chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	
Marsales, Judy (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	
Martel, Shelley (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services and minister responsible for women's issues / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires et ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Éducation
McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa–Orléans	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Transports
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	Chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Milloy, John (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron–Bruce	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / adjointe parlementaire au ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)	Stoney Creek	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture and minister responsible for francophone affairs / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Culture et ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / York-Nord	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	Deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and minister responsible for aboriginal affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Richesses naturelles et ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services (Disabilities) / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires (Personnes handicapées)
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjoint parlementaire au premier ministre
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Peterson, Tim (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health Promotion / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Racco, Mario G. (L)	Thornhill	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (Rural Affairs) / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales (Affaires rurales)

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Runciman, Robert W. (PC) Ruprecht, Tony (L) Sandals, Liz (L)	Leeds–Grenville Davenport Guelph–Wellington	Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de l'Éducation
Scott, Laurie (PC) Sergio, Mario (L)	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock York West / York-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Housing) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Logement)
Smith, Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice- premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (ND) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)	Lanark–Carleton Toronto–Danforth Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tory, John (PC) Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (Agriculture and Food) / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales (Agriculture et Alimentation)
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Wilkinson, John (L)	Perth–Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Research and Innovation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Deputy opposition House leader / leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L)	Kitchener–Waterloo Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC) Zimmer, David (L)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Willowdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général
Vacant	Burlington	
Vacant	Markham	
Vacant	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Kim Craiton, Bob Delaney,
Garfield Dunlop, Andrea Horwath,
Tim Hudak, Linda Jeffrey, Phil McNeely,
Jim Wilson, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely
Ted Arnott, Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett,
Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,
Deborah Matthews, Phil McNeely,
Carol Mitchell, Michael Prue
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jim Brownell
Jim Brownell, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Jerry J. Ouellette,
Tim Peterson, Lou Rinaldi,
Peter Tabuns, John Yakabuski
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Présidente: Julia Munro
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Cheri DiNovo, Brad Duguid,
Michael Gravelle, John Milloy, Carol Mitchell,
Julia Munro, Laurie Scott,
Monique M. Smith, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Maria Van Bommel
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti,
Christine Elliott, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,
David Oraziotti, Shafiq Qaadri,
Maria Van Bommel, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco
Ernie Hardeman, Linda Jeffrey, Rosario Marchese,
Ted McMeekin, Norm Miller, Jennifer F. Mossop,
Tim Peterson, Shafiq Qaadri, Mario G. Racco
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ernie Hardeman
Wayne Arthurs, Ernie Hardeman, Lisa MacLeod,
Shelley Martel, John Milloy,
Richard Patten, Liz Sandals,
Monique M. Smith, Norman W. Sterling
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Andrea Horwath
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jeff Leal
Gilles Bisson, Bob Delaney,
Andrea Horwath, Jeff Leal, Dave Levac,
Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,
Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Social Policy / Politique sociale

Chair / Président: Ernie Parsons
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal
Ted Chudleigh, Peter Fonseca,
Kuldip Kular, Jeff Leal,
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro, John O'Toole,
Ernie Parsons, Khalil Ramal
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

Continued from overleaf

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors	
Mr. Peterson	7132
Mr. Wilkinson	7132
Safer Internet Day	
Mr. Runciman	7136
Agreed to	7136
Legislative pages	
The Speaker.....	7136
Birth of member's grandchild	
Mr. Hoy	7146
Order of business	
Mr. Bradley	7149

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 21 décembre 2006

AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

Loi de 2006 sur la vérité et la transparence au sein du système juridique, projet de loi 178, <i>M. Tory</i>	
Rejetée	7130

DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Rendement scolaire	
M ^{me} Wynne.....	7133
M. Wilson.....	7134
Habitudes de vie saine	
M. Watson	7133
M. Sterling	7135
M ^{me} Martel	7135

TROISIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 2006 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne l'Assemblée législative, projet de loi 173, <i>M^{me} Bountrogianni</i>	
Adoptée.....	7150

CONTENTS

Thursday 21 December 2006

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

City of Guelph , private member's notice of motion number 42, <i>Mrs. Sandals</i>	
Mrs. Sandals	7113, 7120
Ms. Scott	7114
Ms. DiNovo	7115
Ms. Matthews	7116
Mr. Chudleigh	7117
Mr. Prue	7118
Mr. Wilkinson	7119
Mr. O'Toole	7120
Mr. McMeekin	7120
Agreed to	7129
Truth and Transparency in the Justice System Act, 2006 , Bill 178, <i>Mr. Tory</i>	
Mr. Tory	7121, 7129
Mr. Ruprecht	7123
Ms. DiNovo	7123
Mrs. Elliott	7126
Mr. Runciman	7127
Mr. Zimmer	7128
Negated	7130

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Early childhood education	
Ms. Scott	7130
Linda Boucher and Adam Conacher	
Mr. McNeely	7130
Long-term care	
Mrs. Witmer	7130
Infrastructure renewal	
Ms. Mossop	7131
Hydro rates	
Mr. Sterling	7131
Greenhouse gas emissions	
Mr. Tabuns	7131
Third party's record	
Mr. Leal	7132
Official opposition's record	
Mr. Wilkinson	7132
Government's record	
Mr. Duguid	7132

MOTIONS

Committee sittings	
Mr. Bradley	7133
Agreed to	7133

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Student achievement	
Ms. Wynne	7133
Healthy living	
Mr. Watson	7133
Student achievement	
Mr. Wilson	7134
Healthy living	
Mr. Sterling	7134
Ms. Martel	7135

ORAL QUESTIONS

Justice system	
Mr. Tory	7136
Mr. McGuinty	7136
Government advertising	
Mr. Tory	7137
Mr. McGuinty	7137
Government's record	
Mr. Hampton	7138, 7139
Mr. McGuinty	7138
Mr. Smitherman	7139
Mr. Peters	7140
Mr. Sorbara	7140
Native land dispute	
Mr. Tory	7140
Mr. Ramsay	7141
Coal-fired generating stations	
Mr. Tabuns	7141
Mr. Duncan	7141
Ontario drug benefit program	
Mr. Delaney	7142
Mr. Smitherman	7142
Lumber industry	
Mr. Miller	7142
Mr. Ramsay	7143
Occupational health and safety	
Ms. Martel	7143
Mr. Peters	7143
Waste disposal	
Ms. Matthews	7144
Ms. Broten	7144
Highway 407	
Mr. O'Toole	7145
Mrs. Cansfield	7145
Mrs. Elliott	7145
Wildlife protection	
Mr. Tabuns	7145
Mr. Ramsay	7145

PETITIONS

Pedestrian walkway	
Mr. Miller	7146
Members' compensation	
Mr. Prue	7146
Adult literacy	
Mr. Ruprecht	7146
Education funding	
Mr. Klees	7147
Mr. Yakabuski	7148
Long-term care	
Ms. Martel	7147
Mrs. Munro	7148
Public transportation	
Mr. Berardinetti	7147
Macular degeneration	
Mr. Delaney	7148
Identity theft	
Mr. Ruprecht	7149

SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

Sheena's Place Act, 2006 , Bill Pr29, <i>Mr. Marchese</i>	
Agreed to	7149
Red Leaves Resort Association Act, 2006 , Bill Pr30, <i>Mr. Miller</i>	
Agreed to	7149
Perimeter Institute Act, 2006 , Bill Pr31, <i>Mrs. Witmer</i>	
Agreed to	7149
Centre for International Governance Innovation Act, 2006 , Bill Pr32, <i>Mrs. Witmer</i>	
Agreed to	7150

THIRD READINGS

Legislative Assembly Statute Law Amendment Act, 2006 , Bill 173, <i>Mrs. Bountrogianni</i>	
Agreed to	7150

Continued overleaf