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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 8 May 2007

Mardi 8 mai 2007

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 8 May 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 8 mai 2007

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CONSERVATION OFFICERS

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): It is not often I go to rallies with OPSEU members, but I joined them this week in Owen Sound because it was for a very good cause. It was a fundraiser for conservation officers' gas money.

As you know, our COs, whose role it is to protect our resources, have no money to put gas in their trucks, ATVs and boats, because this government prefers them working behind a desk. Instead of patrolling our land, water and wildlife, the COs are being forced to shuffle paper.

There are only 110 MNR trucks left in service today. There used to be over 257 in 1992. Law and regulation enforcement targets have been cut by 40%. For 15 years, governments of all stripes have been trimming the MNR, and look where it got us. Today, we hold fundraisers, cookie and bake sales to keep the essential services alive.

Comparing to last year, in 2006 alone, almost 300 seasonal contracts for staff started a week later; 319 seasonal contracts ended a week earlier; 61 seasonal contracts had working hours reduced to 36 from 40 hours a week; 47 vacant seasonal positions from last year were not filled; and 82 regular, full-time student positions were not filled.

We know that cuts in staffing and operating budgets have resulted in MNR's declining enforcement statistics. Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller too warns that these cuts will lead to a catastrophe.

Save the MNR. Give back patrol time. Let's save the MNR.

DON MONTGOMERY

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): I rise today to pay tribute to Don Montgomery, who passed away this past April 13, 2007.

As a Scarborough hockey player and coach myself, as the father of a young Scarborough hockey player, like so many in our community, Don Montgomery touched my life in many, many ways.

Don was president of the Scarborough Hockey Association for 40 years, founding president of the Scar-

borough Girls Hockey League, and instrumental in local softball in Scarborough. He started the J.J. Keay hockey tournament that has provided fun and enjoyment for thousands of young hockey players throughout the years but has also raised significant dollars for our local hospitals.

Those involved in sports will tell you that running a successful minor hockey organization can be a thankless task. But Don never complained, never lost his composure, never asked for anything for himself. He knew that what he was doing had an impact on the lives of our young people and simply did his job. He was strong, he was resilient, he was a true community leader.

Don never lost his passion for young people. I'll never forget seeing Don at Mid-Scarborough Arena, where his office was located, in the wee hours of the morning while I took my son Kennedy there skating during the week. Kennedy knew that as soon as he got his little skates off, Don would be waiting for him in the office to offer words of encouragement and limitless jelly beans from the jar he kept on his desk.

On behalf of the Ontario Legislature, I extend condolences to Don's wife, Mary, and his children. Knowing that Don Montgomery's legacy will go on forever in the hearts, minds and endeavours of each and every one of the young Scarborough boys and girls whose lives have been influenced and whose character has been built through the joy of playing hockey thanks to the love and passion of Don Montgomery.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Following on the incompetence of the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and his Lottogate scandal and the embarrassing position the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has put the McGuinty Liberals in with the slush fund scam, we now have another \$330,000 being wasted with the so-called replacement of Liberal-appointed Jane Stewart as a negotiator in the Caledonia occupation. Imagine being paid \$1,300 per day and ending up with no results.

As Janie Jamieson, spokesperson for the aboriginal protestors, says, "Having Jane Stewart at the table ... all the time and money spent on her. How much is there to show for that? Not much at all."

The citizens of Ontario are frustrated, humiliated and outraged with the fiasco in Caledonia. We are now on day 433 of the land occupation. It has cost the OPP tens of millions of taxpayer dollars out of their budget. It has cost the Ontario taxpayer millions of dollars in land

purchases—lands that are still under occupation. The McGuinty Liberals have promised compensation for Caledonia residents and broken those promises. What have we achieved? Absolutely nothing.

Ontario taxpayers deserve much better use of their valuable tax dollars, but what is one to expect when the captain of the slush fund team is also the part-time Minister of Finance and chair of the Liberal re-election campaign?

We have seen no leadership from Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government. They don't even have the courage to visit Caledonia, unlike our leader, John Tory. Somebody over there on the Liberal side should have remembered that the Chrétien human resources minister responsible for the billion-dollar boondoggle was probably a poor choice as a negotiator in the very beginning.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): Today, Ontarians learned more about the full scale of Liberals' mega nuclear plan. Up to eight new reactors are under consideration, not two, a figure the Liberals referred to when they tried to downplay their nuclear ambitions. I have to point out that the irony is not lost on many of us that the latest details about the Liberals' nuclear plan come on the heels of them attacking the Conservatives for their endorsement of nuclear.

The Liberals again turned to the message of nuclear being clean energy and a solution to climate change. Nuclear, like fossil fuels, is environmentally unsustainable. Emissions from fossil fuels have put us in the climate situation we face today. Nuclear generates dangerous radioactive waste that poses a threat for centuries. And nuclear doesn't mesh with Kyoto timelines: It takes 10 to 12 years to build a reactor.

Sustainable energy experts like Amory Lovins, from the Rocky Mountain Institute, whose analysis on major energy issues has proven to be prescient time and again, writes that cost alone should sideline nuclear as an option as we develop our next generation of energy sources: geothermal, solar, wind, cogeneration, distributed generation, efficiency and conservation. Spending on nuclear power will keep us from a sustainable, fossil fuel-free energy future, and will starve green solutions of the funds they need.

DEFIBRILLATION EQUIPMENT

Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex): I can't understand why the members opposite can't bring good, positive news, like I'm going to do today, to bring you up to date on the government's continued efforts to save lives by making automated external heart defibrillators more readily available. As an MPP who has been advocating for the increased availability and use of defibrillators, I was thrilled with Minister Watson's recent announcement to commit \$3 million to an Ontario-wide program allowing municipalities to apply for automated external defibril-

lators and related training for their communities. Studies show that using an AED, combined with CPR within the first few minutes of a cardiac arrest can improve survival rates from 5% to 50% or more. Our government will continue to work closely with Rocco Rossi and the rest of the Heart and Stroke Foundation to put 1,000 defibrillators in communities across this province. Letters are being sent to all municipal emergency management services, paramedics and other relevant service providers, explaining the application process, but I encourage all members to work with other community leaders in their ridings to ensure that their constituents benefit from this historic investment.

1340

I plan on doing just that, because the people of my riding of Essex deserve the security offered by having AEDs readily available—with EMS services in your community to put defibrillators where they're needed most.

Of course, my bill, in the larger health bill, the Chase McEachern Act, will definitely be well—

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

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): For weeks now, the Legislature has been consumed with Lottogate and now the McGuinty Liberal government's slush fund scandal. As we now know, up to \$32 million was handed out to 110 groups without the normal accountability provisions which taxpayers would expect and have every right to demand. In fact, it appears that some of the groups didn't even make an application to justify their need. They simply had to establish their Liberal Party credentials and connections to get the cash—up to a quarter of a million dollars, in some cases.

In his initial defence of his slush fund, the Minister of Citizenship attempted to spread the blame for his ministry's year-end spending spree to his cabinet colleagues, and in particular, the Minister of Finance. It's no wonder, because day by day, we're learning new details of Liberal insiders working in various ministers' offices, receiving these cheques intended to purchase support for the Ontario Liberal Party. Today's Toronto Star reveals that a former assistant to the Minister of Health is now a director of the Iranian-Canadian organization which received \$200,000 from the Minister of Citizenship's slush fund. How convenient.

Now it appears that the Minister of Citizenship, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, the Minister of Culture, and now the Minister of Health, are all implicated in this growing scandal. With Liberal MPPs getting more nervous by the day, the Minister of Citizenship has had more than 200 opportunities in this House to keep his commitment to release the criteria and explain the process as to how this money was allocated. He has refused to do so and implicated the

entire government in the scandal. He must resign and call in the Auditor General.

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I rise today to share the McGuinty government record on agriculture and to speak proudly of our continued commitment to rural Ontario and our farmers.

Our government believes that supply-managed commodities not only help to stabilize income for Ontario's farmers, but also serve to ensure a reliable supply of Ontario-based foods. Our government recognizes the need for long-term planning and the importance of putting the tools in place to help ensure the future success of our agri-food sector. That is why farmers all across Ontario are expressing concern about the weekend nomination of Randy Hillier as a candidate for the PC Party. A right-wing radical extremist, Hillier is an outspoken critic of supply management and Ontario's nutrient management strategy—something the previous government introduced, never delivered on and failed to fund. In contrast, our government has delivered some \$23.7 million in nutrient management support.

While the new Conservative candidate brags openly in the *Colborne Chronicle* of his intent to shape Tory agricultural policy, for many farmers this is a frightening thought. It is clear that no one wants to see a return to the regressive tax cuts of the Harris regime. It's our duty to continue moving forward and to work with our agricultural partners to embrace positive change.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): My phone has been ringing off the hook since about Saturday afternoon. The supply-managed farmers in my riding just want to know what's up. They want to know if the party opposite is in support of supply management, or are they in support of their new candidate in the grand riding of Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox–Addington? They have a candidate who has been very clear about being opposed to supply management. He said that many times on the record. I heard the members opposite talk about how they were for supply management. I heard them all get up here and vote about it. They all bragged about the fact that they had signed FarmGate5, but I wonder whether or not their new candidate has done that.

Do you know the interesting thing about that nomination speech? Do you know whom he didn't mention, not even once? Why, the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey, their leader, Mr. Tory. And what party did he fail to recognize when he got the Progressive Conservative nomination? He failed to recognize the Progressive Conservative Party. Not even once was he willing to stand in his place at a nomination meeting for his party and say the words "Progressive Conservative," to say the words "My leader, John Tory."

We need to know, and my supply-managed farmers need to know, who is driving the bus over there. Is it their new candidate, who says their platform is still a

work in progress and he's going to influence it, or is it their leader? Time will tell.

NURSES

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): I rise in the House today to talk about the incredible work that is being done by Ontario nurses. Nurses are the heart of our health care system, and we want to have the supports in place to make sure Ontario is their location of choice. The McGuinty Liberals have already invested \$317 million for nursing to date, and there are now 5,400 new confirmed positions in place.

We also know that nurses are on the front lines every day, working for the health of all Ontarians. We now have 10% more nurses working full-time, or 61.4%. That's real progress.

We're also focusing on creating more opportunities for nurses. Two new roles are being developed by HealthForceOntario: nurse endoscopists and surgical first assistants. We believe, like Doris Grinspun said in February 2007, that "Ontario has the real potential to become the first North American jurisdiction to make nursing shortage history."

While under the previous government there were 8,000 fewer nurses working in their first three years, we are creating a climate to help nurses enjoy their profession again. We won't let the member opposite take \$2.5 billion from our health care system and put it into private, for-profit care.

I had the incredible privilege of going out to the Trillium hospital and joining our nurses for a day. They do incredible work. We respect them and we look forward to working with them in time to come.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Yesterday marked the beginning of Children's Mental Health Week, and today we have some visitors from Children's Mental Health Ontario here. I thought, in support of Children's Mental Health Ontario and children with mental illness, that I could receive unanimous consent from all members of the Legislative Assembly to wear this green ribbon.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Ms. MacLeod has asked for unanimous consent to wear the green ribbon signifying Children's Mental Health Week. Agreed? Agreed.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House

Leader): I just happen to have one right here and it says the following:

I move that, notwithstanding any other order of the House, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 8, 2007, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 345. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1349 to 1354.

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

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Cansfield, Donna H.	Marsales, Judy	Smitherman, George
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chan, Michael	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Patten, Richard	Wilkinson, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Phillips, Gerry	Zimmer, David
Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq	
Gravelle, Michael	Racco, Mario G.	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	MacLeod, Lisa	Runciman, Robert W.
DiNovo, Cheri	Martel, Shelley	Savoline, Joyce
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Scott, Laurie
Ferreira, Paul	Murdoch, Bill	Tabuns, Peter
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Tascona, Joseph N.
Klees, Frank	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 40; the nays are 20.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services): I am pleased to rise in the House today, during Children's Mental Health Week, to speak about our government's commitment to improv-

ing supports for children and youth with mental health challenges.

For too long, mental health has been a taboo subject. As a result, many people have suffered in silence and without the supports required to enable them to reach their true potential.

Studies suggest that approximately half a million young Ontarians have a mental health-related challenge which can affect their ability to function adequately on a day-to-day basis.

We know that, left untreated, children and youth with mental health challenges will face even greater challenges as adults.

Sadly, many young people and their families hesitate to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental illness. A recent study released by Kinark Child and Family Services found that 38% of Canadian adults would be embarrassed to admit their child or teen is struggling with a mental health issue. Results of another study released last month by the Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre found that about 50% of Canadian adolescents who are depressed or suicidal are not accessing mental health services because they and, in many cases, their families are embarrassed.

But it doesn't need to be this way. Children and youth with mental health challenges can live happy and productive lives if they are provided with the treatment and support that they need. This week is an opportunity for all of us to become more aware of the importance of removing this painful and damaging stigma so that more young people can get the support and services they need.

We need to help children and youth, their families and the general public to understand that mental health is just as important as physical health.

Our government believes it is essential that we help provide these children and youth with the support they need to ensure that their abilities can indeed overshadow the challenges they experience in life.

As Minister of Children and Youth Services, I've had the opportunity to hear from children and youth about the challenges they face and the supports they need. I have also listened to the agencies that serve them, their parents and grandparents, their caregivers, their teachers and others, all of whom have taught me a great deal. Our government shares their vision for child and youth mental health.

We envision an Ontario where mental health services are delivered in an integrated way within a system that places children, youth and their families at its very core, and where the system fits the needs of the child and family, as opposed to the child and family being expected to somehow fit into the system.

1400

I have visited several centres that provide services and supports to children and youth with mental health challenges, including the Thunder Bay Children's Centre and Madame Vanier Children's Services in London, the York Centre in Richmond Hill, Kinark Child and Family Services in Markham, New Path Youth and Family

Counselling Services in Barrie, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa, East Metro Youth Services and Youthlink in Scarborough, the George Hull Centre for Children and Families in Etobicoke, Lutherwood in Waterloo and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Clinic in Guelph.

These organizations, as well as hundreds of others across the province, play an essential role in supporting children and youth with social and behavioural problems and mental health disorders, some of whom may also have other challenges such as autism spectrum disorders. The dedicated staff, generous volunteers and valuable programs in these centres are important to children and youth in helping them to believe in themselves and to learn how to achieve their best performance.

In March of this year I announced that our government is making further investments to strengthen mental health services for children and youth. Mr. Speaker, \$24.5 million in new funding includes a 5% increase, totalling \$18 million in base annual funding for child and youth mental health agencies across the province, to reduce wait times and to help address cost pressures.

This is a second increase in base funding for the child and youth mental health sector that has been provided by our government since 2004. Prior to the 2004 budget, this sector had not received a base increase for 12 consecutive years. We are also investing \$4.5 million province-wide in annual regional allocations to address community priorities, based on the new policy framework for child and youth mental health developed by my ministry and the children's mental health sector. Local funding allocations will be determined through collaborative community-based processes so that the money goes where it is most needed to help provide the supports that our kids need in the most effective ways.

As part of the most recent announcement, a new fund of \$2 million will be allocated annually to enable agencies to provide immediate child and youth mental health support when a local community is faced with an extraordinary crisis or circumstance. Through these new measures, our government is building on its previous investments in more than 260 child and youth mental health agencies and 17 hospital-based out-patient programs. As of this year, the government will have increased funding for the sector by nearly \$80 million since 2003-04.

Young people with mental health issues have the ability to reach their full potential like other children and youth. By strengthening the community programs that support these young people, we're helping more children and youth succeed in school and become healthy, productive adults. We're also working to build a system where families can readily find the services they need, when and where they need them, without having to knock on multiple doors—a system that is inclusive, collaborative and free of the stigma, shame and blame that so often characterize mental health conditions.

The policy framework for child and youth mental health that was launched last fall will help us realize that

vision and achieve these goals. The framework is an important tool in building the integrated system we all want. It is the product of cross-sectoral collaboration with over 300 participants from a very wide range of government and community partners. The best possible child and youth mental health outcomes occur where there is collaboration and integration, not only within the formal child and youth mental health sector but also across other sectors supporting the well-being of children and youth, including schools and school boards and primary care providers.

As we look at ways to improve the current system of services, it is absolutely essential that we start with, and remain firmly focused on, the needs of the child. We are determined to achieve the best possible results for our children and youth.

A few months ago I announced the expansion of telepsychiatry, a creative solution for increasing access to mental health services for children and youth in underserved remote and rural areas and for getting them the help that they need, when they need it. As a result of this expansion, the program is providing approximately 1,400 consultations annually, province-wide.

Our government also recognizes the unique needs and challenges of aboriginal children and youth, particularly those in rural, remote and northern communities, and are working with aboriginal communities to meet those needs.

Last July I was pleased to be able to attend the ribbon-cutting for the Youth Substance Abuse Treatment Centre in the northern community of Cat Lake, serving the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation. Our government provides more than \$700,000 for Tikinagan Child and Family Services to administer this eight-week treatment program for youth ages 12 to 18.

I also had the opportunity to visit the community of Big Trout Lake and saw there was a need for services there. As a result, we provided \$800,000 to support the development of a residential treatment centre for children and youth.

Our aboriginal children and youth are also benefiting from increased supports through such programs as Akwego, a community-based program delivered by the Federation of Indian Friendship Centres in 27 Ontario communities which provides support, tools and activities to help young people make healthy choices.

Through these initiatives and our investments in our partnerships with organizations in child and youth mental health, we are working to build a more connected and more responsive service system in communities and regions across the province. We will continue to do more to ensure that our province's most vulnerable young people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our government's appreciation for the work done by the staff and volunteers of the hundreds of organizations, some of whom are represented here in the gallery today, that help children and youth with mental health conditions to achieve their very best performance.

CLIMATE CHANGE
CHANGEMENT DE CLIMAT

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): I'm pleased to tell the members of the House the progress we are making in achieving our government's ambitious environmental agenda. Climate change is the most critical environmental challenge. It's a very real threat, but I am confident that we can meet this challenge and build a stronger, cleaner, sustainable world. It comes down to everyone doing their part, a mix of willpower and innovation.

Today is a case in point. This morning I had the privilege of joining my cabinet colleagues Minister Caplan and Minister Duncan as we threw the switch to bring deep water cooling online for Queen's Park, including this historic Legislature building. This innovative technology uses water from Lake Ontario to provide a reliable, efficient and sustainable source of cooling for offices.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I need to be able to hear the minister. The member for Niagara Centre will be helpful, I'm sure.

Minister.

Hon. Ms. Broten: Deep water cooling is cleaner, greener and more efficient. Not only is this a great renewable energy source that will reduce our fossil fuel consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions; it makes good economic sense. It is estimated that using deep water cooling will save Ontario taxpayers around \$4.5 million over the next 30 years. Our government is committed to doing what needs to be done to improve the air we breathe and to fight climate change. As a green government, we're working on many fronts to make our province more sustainable, but we can't do it alone.

Nous sommes un gouvernement vert, et nous avons plusieurs projets pour rendre notre province plus viable. Mais seuls, nous ne pouvons pas accomplir tout ce qui doit être fait.

We're asking every Ontarian to make conservation a part of their lives and to reduce their environmental footprint. We're encouraging people to lower their energy consumption and switch to clean, renewable sources of power. But we're not just saying it; we're doing our part too. We are a government that leads by example. We're delivering our commitment to reduce our energy consumption by 10% this year, and we are already well on our way to making that target.

But that's not all. At our downtown office at the Ministry of the Environment building at 135 St. Clair Avenue West, we're using 100% green renewable energy. Beginning on April 1, our building switched to Bullfrog Power. Bullfrog Power is an electricity retailer which gets its power from wind and low-impact hydro generation. It's clean, renewable and it's a positive step that we can take to fight climate change and make our province greener and healthier. Last year, I made the switch to renewable energy in my own home. It's one small step but it's an important one.

Cette énergie est propre et renouvelable et nous permet de faire un pas dans la bonne direction pour lutter contre le changement climatique et rendre notre province plus verte et plus en santé.

The fact is that if each of us takes these small but important steps to reduce our environmental footprint, it's going to add up. It's going to make a big difference for our planet and for our children.

1410

Another way our government is taking the lead is cutting emissions of ozone-depleting substances by phasing out the CFCs used in older, more inefficient chillers—the large cooling systems used in office buildings and factories.

Today, I'm proud to report we've made regulatory improvements to phase out the use of CFCs. In 2012, these surplus chemicals will be designated as hazardous waste. That's a positive step forward in reducing our province's greenhouse gas emissions and it's going to promote increased energy conservation. As industry replaces old, inefficient chillers with new technology, it could mean more than 50 megawatts in energy savings across the province.

Investing in new technology and clean, renewable energy helps improve the air we breathe and helps us combat climate change. And by investing in Ontario's green industry, we support our province's future prosperity and grow tomorrow's jobs.

As more government buildings begin using greener, cleaner, renewable energy sources, I challenge other organizations and businesses to get on board and find ways to reduce their environmental footprint and be part of the culture of conservation in Ontario. It's good for our environment and it's good for the bottom line.

Toutes ces mesures comptent. Elles nous amènent dans la bonne direction. Elles nous font tous avancer dans notre lutte contre le changement climatique.

All of these steps count. They propel us forward in a positive direction. All of these steps are moving us forward in our fight against climate change. By showing real leadership, by doing what needs to be done to reduce our carbon footprint, we're helping create a healthy and sustainable environment, not just for ourselves and our communities here in Ontario but for the world our children will inherit.

GLOBAL EDGE PROGRAM

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship): I rise in the House today to inform members about an important new program that supports enterprising students across Ontario.

This morning, I was pleased to launch Global Edge, an exciting pilot program that gives post-secondary students international work experience, preparing them to enter an increasingly competitive and globalized economy.

Ontario youth are tomorrow's great leaders and innovators. This program gives students with an interest in business and entrepreneurship an early advantage. We

have partnered with some of the world's most successful and innovative companies to provide tremendous opportunities for 11 Ontario students.

I would like to inform the Legislature how this program came into existence. When my ministry was established, this was an idea that I wanted to explore, and I'm pleased to say that we have brought this to reality.

It is important that our future business leaders, Ontario's enterprising youth, experience what it takes to succeed in the global economy. Since I became minister, it has been my goal to provide Ontario's youth with this opportunity, to show them early on, at a critical point in their lives, what the global economy is all about so that they can get hands-on experience, both professional and business experience, from their peers right here in Ontario. I am very pleased that Global Edge provides this opportunity.

The program also showcases one of our major assets—our hard-working, skilled young workforce—to the rest of the world. Some of the most innovative and successful corporations now have the opportunity to see just how talented our young workers really are.

I would like to recognize the students who were chosen to participate in the first year of the Global Edge program, and I would like the other members of the House to join me in extending to them our welcome to this House: Sandra Cobena from Aurora, who will be working with Aecon in Ecuador; Cory Newman of Sparta, who will be working with Bombardier and travelling across America; Adrian Barber of Dundas, who will also be working with Bombardier; Kyle Fiore of Orléans, who will also be working with Bombardier in Mexico; Whitney Ersman from London, who will be working for Bank of Montreal and Harris Bank in Chicago, Illinois; Andrew Sutton of Oshawa, who will work for Cisco Systems in Ireland; Cathy Janeka of London, who will be travelling to the UK to work for ICICI Bank; Keirin Lee of Toronto, who will be working in India for Infosys; Aarti Ruparell of Mississauga, who will be working for RBC in Miami, Florida; Victoria Avila from Ottawa, who will be working for Scotiabank in Mexico; and Lucas Jewitt of Thunder Bay, who will travel to Mumbai, India, to work for State Bank of India. They will work for some of the most successful companies in the world, companies selected for their economic performance and scale of operations in the global economy.

I want to thank our partners Aecon, Bombardier, Bank of Montreal/Harris Bank, CISCO, ICICI, Infosys, RBC, State Bank of India and Scotiabank. These are the companies that are providing these youth with great opportunity to gain global experience.

Global Edge helps enterprising students develop essential business skills, which are key to their personal and career growth, and to the future of this province. Challenging placements give students first-hand experience of business on the world stage and the knowledge of what it takes to be successful in a global marketplace. We all recognize that the global economy is knowledge-based and extremely competitive. That is why this program will be invaluable to all participants.

This is just one of many initiatives taken by the McGuinty government to encourage and support our province's best and brightest minds. Our government continues its commitment to support young entrepreneurs through programs such as future entrepreneurs, Summer Company and the Ontario secondary school business plan competition.

Today's announcement shows how innovation thrives when governments, organizations and businesses work together, how we can deliver the results when we move forward together.

I am sure this will be an experience student participants will never forget. Global Edge will provide these students with the experience of their lifetime.

I want to thank the students again and also the firms that are participating in this program for coming here this afternoon and joining us in the Legislature.

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

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): Yesterday marked the beginning of Children's Mental Health Week, and on behalf of John Tory and the Progressive Conservative caucus, I want not only to acknowledge Children's Mental Health Week but also to thank the thousands of parents and professionals who work in the children's mental health sector and who are working hard to protect these vulnerable children. I'd like to draw particular attention to those in the gallery today who are service providers and who have joined us for a lobby day at Queen's Park. So thank you very much.

Presently, one in five children are living with mental illnesses in this province, and that is 20% of our children and youth population. But while the dedicated employees in the children's mental health sector are continuing to pour their hearts into their work in order to ensure these children are getting the treatment they need and the care they deserve, there is more that can be done for this sector. Throughout Ontario, children's mental health networks are suffering from fragmented funding and wage disparity, causing high turnover and stigma. They need more than one-off funding announcements—they need far more.

To fully address the gap in services and treatment for 20% of our children and youth population, the McGuinty Liberals should be taking a holistic approach to in some places enhance and in other places fix children's mental health services. This means that the McGuinty government should not only be looking at funding announcements but also at developing, adopting and implementing an overall children's mental health strategy by giving clear authority to the minister and by breaking down the ministerial silos of this government.

One in five children in this province suffer from mental illness. We need to start thinking outside the box so these kids don't feel like they're stuck in one.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I'm pleased to respond to the statement by the Minister of the Environment, but what this announcement really is just another Liberal re-announcement. Another day, another photo opportunity.

We're pleased that after four years of inaction, the McGuinty Liberals have finally decided to adopt the policy ideas set forth by our leader, John Tory, who has clearly said that government needs to lead by example. Well, what do you know, this morning the Minister of the Environment told the people of Ontario that the government should be leading by example to clean up Ontario's air. As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

But let's be clear. We all remember in 2003 when Dalton McGuinty stood on stage, waved that big, red book of broken promises and told the people of Ontario that he would lead by example by closing the coal plants in 2007. It was Dalton McGuinty himself who stated that he would clean up the dirty air that contributes to 1,800 premature deaths and \$1 billion in health care costs. So far, the McGuinty government's idea of leading by example is to break this ill-advised coal-closing promise not once, but over and over again.

1420

The coal plants Dalton McGuinty promised to close are still spewing the same dirty air that he promised to clean up. The new technologies that could help us make a real difference in the quality of the air we breathe remain a prisoner of Dalton McGuinty's coal fiction. John Tory and the PC caucus fully support the goal of reducing energy consumption and the government's taking the lead to fight for climate change in Ontario. We presented a comprehensive plan with real action and real targets, but in four years, Dalton McGuinty has not presented a climate change plan—no targets, no vision. What Dalton McGuinty does have is scandals of Gomery proportions and a refusal to be straight with Ontarians.

GLOBAL EDGE PROGRAM

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): I'm responding to the statement by the Minister for Small Business. I'm reluctant to respond to anything this minister says, because we on the this side of the House don't believe he should be sitting on the executive council. He's the first member of this Legislature to be officially reprimanded by the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario for breaching the Members' Integrity Act. The Integrity Commissioner said that this minister was "egregiously reckless," and to make it even worse, he did this in his capacity as a minister.

The Integrity Commissioner left it up to the Premier to mete out discipline, and we've seen how the Premier of the day metes out discipline in terms of allegations and substantiated allegations against ministers in his government. We saw it with Minister Caplan and the OLG scan-

dal. We're seeing it on a day-to-day basis with Minister Colle and the slush fund scandal, where the Premier refuses to act—even to call in the Auditor General. He allows this minister, who was the first member of this Legislature to be officially reprimanded for breaching the Members' Integrity Act, to continue to sit on the executive council. Shameful.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. Order.

Responses?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): I'm responding to a statement by the Minister for Small Business. First of all, congratulations to the successful applicants. But clearly, just as in the case with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, there was no transparent accessibility to this fund. There are thousands of young people eminently qualified for this program, and yet no members on this side of the House were even alerted of its existence. Could the minister immediately submit the criteria, the process for selection, any political connections and when the notifications for this program went out, or do we need to call in the Auditor General on another ministry just so that all young people are made eligible for this program? On the heels of the slush fund, this is shocking and completely unfair to all those young people who had no chance to even apply.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): I always find it extraordinary to hear this government talk about action on climate change. The minister declares that the government is reducing its energy use by 10%. It's interesting that this is a government that has very little understanding of energy or the issues before it, but certainly this is not a government that has a commitment to the reduction of energy use by 10%. If the minister talked about electricity, then one might look at their record. But in fact, this government recently replied to a question that I posed during estimates—

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): What about your record, Peter? You're in favour of higher electricity prices for consumers.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The Minister of Health will come to order.

Mr. Tabuns: I think he just feels bad about his bad press recently. In any event, on April 19, I received a letter from the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal—I had asked in estimates what the targets were for public infrastructure renewal—the non-electrical energy targets, the reduction targets for Ontario operations. He wrote back that there are no non-electrical energy reduction targets assigned to public infrastructure renewal or the Ontario Realty Corp.—none, zero, rien.

This is an area where government doesn't set targets, doesn't act, speaks as virtuously as it possibly can, and

then on a day when the Globe and Mail reports that eight new nuclear reactor proposals are on the table, that same day we get the sugar-coating. We get the announcement of tremendous virtue on the part of the government because it has to cover over the fact that this is the most pro-nuclear government Ontario has ever seen.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): On behalf of New Democrats, I want to welcome the representatives from Children's Mental Health Ontario to Queen's Park today. I had the opportunity of popping into the open house earlier today and I appreciated what you had to say.

I want to thank volunteers on the agency boards, because many of you are busier now than you were when you worked full-time for paid work in the workforce. I also want to thank the many professionals and staff who go far beyond the call of duty, and certainly beyond the pay they are provided, to work with adolescents and youth who suffer from anxiety, depression, who have behavioural disorders or who contemplate or have tried suicide. We owe all of you a great debt of gratitude for the work you do to give every child and every adolescent the chance to be as safe, happy and healthy as he or she can be.

But the crux of the matter is this: In Ontario, one in five children suffer from mental illness, suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth, and in Ontario only one in six kids who need help actually gets it. At the moment you only get access to care if you have extreme needs. That's why Children's Mental Health Ontario asked for \$40 million of new funding in its pre-budget submission, and they didn't get anywhere near \$40 million, did they? They got an increase to base funding that amounts to about 5%. What does that mean? Well, it kept the wolves from the doors of those agencies where people were literally getting layoff notices. It will allow some agencies to flow a very modest pay increase to staff who deserve so much more. It did not and it will not make any significant dent at all in the huge waiting lists for mental health services, for diagnosis and treatment for children and adolescents and the families and friends who support them. And it certainly will not allow for the creation of new programs to deal with mounting service needs, and that is a disaster for children who suffer from mental health illness in this province.

We need government to get serious about making investments in children's mental health here in Ontario. Maybe when government gets serious about making those investments, the stigma and shame that are attached to children's mental health will be eliminated or reduced.

It is also going to be a pleasure for my colleague Ms. Horwath to introduce a private member's bill next week to designate the first full week in May every year as Children's Mental Health Week to keep this issue—

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

VISITORS

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm sure all the members of the House would want to welcome the members of OUSA, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, who are here in the Legislature today to watch the proceedings.

BERTHA WILSON

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes to recognize the passing of former Justice Bertha Wilson.

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

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General): It's with great sadness that I rise today in the House to mark the passing of one of our greatest Canadians, one of the most distinguished judges of Ontario and Canada and indeed the world, the Honourable Madam Justice Bertha Wilson.

En raison de ses multiples accomplissements, il s'est avéré difficile de résumer ses exceptionnelles contributions à notre pays dans le temps qui nous est alloué aujourd'hui.

Before Bertha Wilson, and for much of our history, having nine male judges on the nine-member Supreme Court of Canada was a given. Now it is quite possible to imagine the heretofore unimaginable: a Supreme Court of Canada whose nine members are all the best judges in the land, and all happen to be women. An all-female Supreme Court of Canada? Why not? Why not, indeed? Ask Bertha Wilson.

1430

She was born in Kirkcaldy, Scotland, on September 18, 1923, received her master of arts degree from the University of Aberdeen in 1944 and then came in Canada to study law at Dalhousie University. At the time, the dean of Dalhousie's law school encouraged her to "go home and take up crocheting." To "go home and take up crocheting," that's what he said. "No thanks," she said. She went on to receive her bachelor of law degree, and in the 1957, she was called to the Nova Scotia bar.

As evidenced by the dean's comment, the legal profession of that era was dominated largely by men, a fact not lost on Bertha Wilson. Despite this state of affairs, she began a very prosperous career at the Toronto law firm of Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt. She was the first female lawyer to be hired by that firm, and she became the first female partner at that firm.

Sixteen years later, she blazed yet another new trail by becoming the first woman to be appointed to the Ontario Court of Appeal. It was a very proud day for her province and for her country. Justice Wilson flourished in her new role. She made a number of groundbreaking rulings during her seven years on the court.

Twenty-five years ago from this year, as the charter was born in 1982, she continued her pioneering ways by becoming the first woman appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada—the same year the Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into force. Her appointment by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau literally and figuratively shook up the Supreme Court.

She was the first woman in the 107-year history of the court to serve as a judge and a colleague. This had profound as well as mundane effects. On the mundane side, they had to build a women's washroom on the judge's floor because there was none before Justice Wilson. More importantly, she brought a sense of humanity to the court as an institution.

With the charter, the court was suddenly thrust into the nation's spotlight. The charter promised equality to all Canadians, male and female. Her appointment was an important part of the fulfillment of that promise. But please don't imagine that it was a symbolic moment only. Professor Jamie Cameron of Osgoode Hall Law School remarked that Justice Wilson was "a vital part of that early burst of judicial energy and creativity that really characterized those early years of charter interpretation."

These early years are sometimes referred to as the Dickson-Wilson court. It marked the most activist and progressive era of Canada's jurisprudence, and it was very much thanks to her.

Like the charter itself, she ushered in a new era of public law. She presided over landmark cases like *Singh*, which held that refugee claimants must have an oral hearing, revolutionizing the way a refugee claim is determined; *Andrews v. the Law Society of British Columbia*, the first Supreme Court case dealing with equality rights under the charter; *Lavalée*, which considered self-defence from a battered women's perspective; and *Morgentaler*, which struck down Canada's ban on abortion. These landmark cases were not only unique because of their subject matter but also because they were some of the first cases to interpret the charter.

She retired from the court in 1991, was made a Companion of the Order of Canada and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Not one to rest on her laurels, in 1993, she continued her advocacy on behalf of women by penning the landmark report *Touchstones for Change* as chair of the Canadian Bar Association's task force on gender equality in the legal profession.

So where are we now? Where once Bertha Wilson was the sole female judge on the Court of Appeal for Ontario, today women account for one out of four members of that bench. Where once she was the only female member of the Supreme Court, women now make up four of its nine judges. Here in Ontario, women account for 53% of those called to bar last year. Just last week, the first female Chief Justice on the Ontario Court of Justice, Annemarie Bonkalo, took her post.

It all started with a brave woman who said "no thanks" to an insult from a law dean and "yes" to a heroic career in law and justice. We have a long way to go, and I'm sure she would not want any self-congratulations by

anyone, but we can give thanks. She was a hero to men and women, to the disenfranchised, to the discriminated, to the unsung and to the vulnerable.

On behalf of the Premier and the government of Ontario, I offer my most sincere condolences to friends and family of the Honourable Bertha Wilson and the thanks of a grateful province.

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax): I'm very honoured to rise today on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus and join with my colleagues from all sides of this House to honour a woman to whom we all owe a significant debt of gratitude for having the courage to forge a path for women's equality in the legal profession and in the administration of justice in our country.

Justice Wilson began her formal education in her native Scotland, earning a master's degree from the University of Aberdeen in 1944. Years later, she found herself at the gates of the law school at Dalhousie University seeking admission to the bachelor of laws program. After many attempts to dissuade her, including advice to "go home and take up crocheting," as they had "no room for dilettantes," she ultimately prevailed and thus began what would become an exemplary legal career.

In addition to completing her LLB at Dalhousie in 1957, throughout her life she was also awarded honorary degrees from scores of institutions spanning the country, as well as several international institutions.

Justice Wilson was called to the Nova Scotia bar in 1957. After two years, she moved to Ontario and joined the firm of Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt. By 1968, she made partner, becoming the first woman appointed a partner in a major Canadian law firm. It was not long after that she continued to make history, this time as the first woman appointed to the Ontario Court of Appeal—in fact, the first woman to be appointed to any appellate court in Canada—in 1975. She built upon this historic achievement in 1982, the same year that saw the enactment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as she was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada by then-Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, becoming the first woman to become a Supreme Court justice.

Widely characterized as controversial though fair, I wondered how she saw, if any, her role in history. Perhaps her reputation and drive to speak out often on behalf of minorities was shaped by a responsibility she felt as a woman, or perhaps the reverse: that she was ascribed the title of "activist and feminist" simply because she was female. I therefore read with interest, in Ellen Anderson's biography of Bertha Wilson, a speech delivered by the justice in 1990 at Osgoode Hall Law School entitled, "Will women judges really make a difference?" Anderson writes that Justice Wilson's speech was met with significant controversy amid charges that the sheer insinuation that it might not be possible to achieve judicial neutrality represented an abdication of the oath of her office and painted her as a feminist, though, as I learned, she never considered herself to be one.

In this speech, she reflects, "When I was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada in the spring of 1982, a

great many women from all across the country telephoned, cabled or wrote to me rejoicing in my appointment.... So why was I not rejoicing? Why did I not share the tremendous confidence of these women? First came the realization that no one could live up to the expectations of my well-wishers. I had the sense of being doomed to failure, not because of any excess of humility on my part or any desire to shirk the responsibility of the office, but because I knew from hard experience that the law does not work that way. Change in the law comes slowly and incrementally; that is its nature."

But change things she would. Though symbolic of her humility, it is almost ironic that these comments came amidst a time of significant legal developments in Canadian history. Justice Wilson was, of course, one of the pioneers shaping the effect the charter would have on individual and collective rights and freedoms in Canada and, therefore, has left an indelible mark on our society. Her drive to apply the charter rigorously and broadly made her famous for her thoughtful rulings. As she described the charter, "it had put law into the kind of perspective in which I have always seen it—as large as life itself—not a narrow legalistic discipline in which inflexible rules are applied regardless of the justice of the result, but a set of values that we, as a civilized and cultured people, endorse as the right of all our citizens."

Today, as we recognize her outstanding contributions to society here in this House, the family, friends and colleagues of Justice Bertha Wilson are gathered in our nation's capital to pay tribute to her remarkable life. Justice Wilson is survived by her husband of 61 years, John Wilson, as well as by a brother, James. I would ask all members of this House to join me in offering our sympathies and condolences for her loved ones, as well as to reflect on the integral role she has played in the evolution of our justice system in Canada.

1440

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): On behalf of New Democrats, it's a privilege for me to make these comments to mark the passing of Justice Bertha Wilson.

According to her biography, when Justice Bertha Wilson applied to study law at Dalhousie University in 1955, she actually wasn't interested in practising law; rather, she viewed law as an area for intellectual development. She thought that knowledge of the law could not but be useful to her, and she wanted very much to be able to help her Presbyterian minister husband's parishioners with their legal problems. In light of this, it's with a certain amount of humour, but still with the greatest respect, that we are here today to acknowledge a woman who became the first female Supreme Court justice in Canada and who blazed a trail for women's involvement in the legal profession in this country.

I think that if any one term were to describe Justice Wilson's contribution to the legal profession, to the role of women and to our Canadian political and legal legacy, it would have to be "trailblazer." At a time when women were supposed to support their husbands' careers, at a time when a law school dean could tell her that she

wasn't suited for the law and should "go home and take up crocheting," Bertha Wilson took one of the toughest careers and made it her own as a woman in what was then a man's world, and she didn't let those very early challenges deter her or put her off in any way.

When we talk about Justice Wilson, we talk about firsts. She was the first female lawyer hired by the Toronto firm of Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt. She turned a temporary position as a junior lawyer with the firm into a successful career, culminating when she was named the firm's first female partner. When she was appointed to the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1975, she was, of course, the first woman appointed to that court. And we all know that she was the first woman appointed as a Supreme Court justice in 1982.

It's not just for these firsts, however, that she is known. Justice Bertha Wilson made a name for herself in the legal profession for the many important judgements she was involved in and for her constant desire and support for the evolution of legal and social norms in our country. When she was first appointed to the Supreme Court, she was heavily involved in the legal questions around patriation of the Canadian constitution. Over the next decade, she continued to be involved in landmark judgements that have come to characterize Canadian society, continuing her previous important work on the Ontario Court of Appeal.

Justice Wilson wrote important decisions on any number of cases, many of which impacted the role and position of women in Canadian society. As a Court of Appeal justice, she wrote a historic decision guaranteeing the rights of women in common law relationships. As a Supreme Court justice, she wrote the majority decision striking down the section of the Criminal Code that dealt with abortion in the landmark *R. v. Morgentaler* in 1988.

Ironically, it was for her work after her retirement from the Supreme Court in 1991 that Justice Wilson most wanted to be remembered. It was her post-appointment work as the commissioner for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which called for a complete revolution in the relationship between First Nations and the federal government, that she felt had the greatest impact on Canadian society.

Today it is with sadness that we mark her passing, but it is also with extreme gratitude that we remember her life and her accomplishments.

VISITORS

Mr. Paul Ferreira (York South–Weston): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to welcome to the House this afternoon a group of young people from my riding. They are students at Weston Collegiate Institute. I'd ask all members to welcome them.

Failure of sound system.

The House recessed from 1445 to 1502.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I beg leave of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 30(b), we complete the allotted time for question period and

petitions such that the time not go beyond 5 p.m. Agreed? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I got a note: They found the government House leader's nail scissors up there. If he wants to pick them up later, he can. Just kidding.

My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and it concerns the political slush fund. The stench of this scandal continues to grow. On Saturday we learned about a senior staffer in the minister's own office with ties to one of the groups that received a quarter of a million dollars out of this fund. Today we learned about a former policy adviser to the Minister of Health who sits on the board of the Iranian-Canadian Community Centre, the Liberal-dominated group that received \$200,000 after being registered as an animal welfare charity only three weeks earlier. The web is catching more and more people with direct ties to the McGuinty government.

Early this afternoon a letter was delivered to the Auditor General signed by each and every member of the Progressive Conservative and NDP caucuses, asking him to use his authority to investigate the slush fund. Will the minister support that call and ask the Auditor General to investigate this slush fund?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): First of all, I want to correct the record. The Leader of the Opposition keeps referring to the young intern in my office as a senior staffer. He was an intern who came into my office, a foreign-trained professional. That's what he was: an intern who had no say in funding decisions.

The Provincial Auditor has the authority to look at all ministries—he can do that. We've given him the extended power to look at all ministries. He can do that, based on the extended powers that we've given him.

Mr. Tory: The gentleman in question, by the way, is a policy adviser in the minister's office. But having said that, the minister could stand up in his place right now and cut a lot of this very short by saying that he would agree, because he wants to clear his own name, clear the government's name, clear the names of some of these groups that have gotten tied up in this, by having the auditor investigate. You could get up right now and make it happen in two seconds. I don't know why you don't do that.

It's not just us who are calling for this information; it's more than a dozen newspapers across the province that are seeing the ties to the Liberal Party, including at least two ties to two ministers' office. The Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen, Guelph Mercury, Globe and Mail, Barrie Examiner, North Bay Nugget, Dunnville Chronicle,

Peterborough Examiner, Kingston Whig-Standard, National Post, Chatham Daily News, Kitchener-Waterloo Record, Hamilton Spectator and the Brantford Expositor have all run columns or editorials saying that this is an Adscam-type slush fund and it needs to be investigated. The time to call in the Auditor General is now. I ask the minister: Will you call him in? Can you stand in your place right now and get him in here to report before September 10?

Hon. Mr. Colle: We are very proud of the investments we have made with our community partners, whether it be the Afghan women's counselling and integration services, the Ireland Park Foundation or the Korean Canadian Women's Association. These are the partners we have made investments with because they were much needed, based on providing more services for newcomers and supporting volunteerism. Those are the principles we made those investments on. We are proud of those groups and we stand with those groups and those investments.

Mr. Tory: The minister just doesn't understand that only if someone independent takes a look at all of these things will we be able to determine—if the minister believes so strongly that what he's saying is correct, then why wouldn't the minister refer this to the Auditor General for investigation?

India Abroad, last Friday in a story headlined "Grants put Immigration Minister in a Bind," says that the minister gave a quarter of a million dollars to the Bengali Cultural Society after a meeting arranged by former Liberal cabinet minister Maria Minna. The minister's defence was that they were partnered with COSTI, but India Abroad says that the minister "gave a lengthy explanation about how money was given to the Bengali organization, but was unwilling to disclose whether the cheque was issued in the name of COSTI or to the Bengali Cultural Society."

It's the failure to answer these simple questions that begs for a review by the Auditor General. Why, before there's another revelation, will the minister not refer this matter to the Auditor General? Do you have something to hide? Why don't you refer it?

Hon. Mr. Colle: Many of these organizations, like the one he mentioned, COSTI, have been around for over 50 years, doing exceptional work all across the GTA, serving immigrants, teaching English as a second language, job-training workshops. These are the organizations that we partnered with to provide services in areas where there haven't been enough services to ensure that newcomers get a job, feel integrated and feel welcome in this province, unlike the previous government. The first thing they did was to close down all of Ontario's Welcome Houses.

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

Mr. Tory: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. On Saturday we heard about the Chinese Professionals Association of Canada, a reputable organization, which received \$250,000 from

the minister's slush fund. But we also heard how the minister had on staff in his office a member of the board of directors of this organization. The minister claims he was an intern and therefore everything is okay, that this is just a simple coincidence. This issue is all about the appearance of a possible conflict of interest. That's what it's about.

Here is what the National Post wrote this morning: "With memories of Adscam still fresh, this all sounds too familiar for voters' liking. If Mr. McGuinty wants to maintain his reputation as an honest Premier, he must call in the auditor now and clear up the allegations against his government before October's election. Otherwise, voters may simply assume the worst."

Why won't the minister do the right thing: Call the auditor in, allow him to investigate this, clear the air, clear your name? Why are you not doing that?

Hon. Mr. Colle: As I said, this ministry is proud to partner with organizations like the Chinese Professionals Association of Canada. They, since 1993, have helped over 12,000 newcomers get jobs, learn English; they have been mentoring with business. They are an outstanding organization that's got an incredible track record.

The intern in my office was a volunteer member of that great organization. He came into my office as an intern. He then resigned from that board. He is a great asset to my office because he's a newcomer who had the trials and tribulations, with high qualifications, of trying to get a job. He worked as a volunteer with many organizations, along with CPAC.

Mr. Tory: You see, if there's no problem at all with that grant, then I don't know why the minister wouldn't want the auditor to have a look at it and tell us all that there's no problem with it. We'd all be very happy to hear that.

1510

Yesterday, we heard about the United Senior Citizens of Ontario, which is concerned about the process by which this slush fund money was paid out. I have here today a letter from the Chinese Community Centre of Ontario. They've been trying for years to get funding for some of their programs and they've been denied through all the traditional sources, like the Trillium fund.

Here is another of the key points: Some groups knew about the slush fund and others didn't. The minister kept a list, the Liberal caucus was informed, and people could make an application or tell people about this. You had a list—the minister did—of winners and losers, without any kind of formal criteria or application process whatsoever, just you making your picks. That is why we need the auditor to review this, and every single member of the PC Party and the NDP agree. My question is this: Why won't the minister do the honourable thing and call the auditor in now to get to the bottom of this? Why won't you do it?

Hon. Mr. Colle: Again, the member knows full well that the Office of the Auditor General can look at any ministry and has the right to look at all of our books; he can do that.

I just want to say to the member opposite that the investments we've made in all newcomer agencies, especially in the Chinese community, where there's a growing number of newcomers coming into Ontario—we have made excellent investments in the TCCSA, Chinese information and community services, CPAC. These are organizations that are overwhelmed with the great number of newcomers looking for help. They are doing a great job.

Most newcomers who come here are doing wonderful things, but there's a number who are falling through the cracks. It is not right that 60% of the persons going to the Daily Bread Food Bank here in Toronto are immigrants. They're crying out for help—

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Tory: All we're asking the minister to do is to provide an accounting for that money and every other penny of taxpayers' money for which you have responsibility. That's all.

Here's what the Toronto Star said on April 26: "This ad hoc distribution of tax dollars is inexcusable. Taxpayers deserve a complete and immediate accounting of how their money has been used."

Here's what the Ottawa Citizen said on the April 27: "As any federal bureaucrat who has even a remote acquaintance with scandal during the Chrétien-Martin years can testify, a program that hands out public money at the end of a fiscal year, absent a proper application process and routine oversight, is ripe for abuse. The Ontario Liberals appear not to have learned this lesson."

And the Globe and Mail, on May 3: "It does not take a bloodhound to detect the whiff of a slush fund, and to wonder whether the Liberals are making such free use of public money to suit their own electoral ambitions..."

Why won't the minister heed the call of all of the opposition members of this House and call the auditor in to clear the air and show taxpayers that their money has been properly handled? If that's what you did—

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Colle: Many organizations, big and small—
Laughter.

Hon. Mr. Colle: I know the members opposite laugh—have been asking for help from government. They have been asking for help. Many of them with language barriers haven't been able to articulate that sometimes. These organizations that we have partnered with have given them a voice. They had not been listened to for many years. So what's happened is that as a result of our struggle to try and get federal funding, which we got—as a result of those new investments that the federal government is finally making in Ontario, they're being served better.

We also find that some of these organizations have never had any resources to build new centres or renovate. We've helped to—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question?

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. My question is this: In connection with the

McGuinty government slush fund, has the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration at any time offered his resignation to the Premier?

Hon. Mr. Colle: I've said it repeatedly that there is a great deal of work to be done, and I have been doing that work.

Laughter.

Hon. Mr. Colle: I know the members opposite are still laughing at that. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it has been my complete focus since I have been minister, before I was minister, even before I was elected, to try and help people in Ontario who need help.

Mr. Hampton: Gee, I thought it was a very straightforward, specific and simple question. I'll ask it again: In connection with the McGuinty government's slush fund, has the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration at any time offered his resignation to the Premier? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Colle: Again, as I reiterated, I am committed to continue and totally focused on doing a job that has to be done. I have been determined and continue to be determined to do that all the time. The leader of the third party is the one who still has not apologized for calling long-standing organizations, for the most part run by hard-working community groups—outstanding organizations across this province, whether it be CultureLink or AWIC or the United Jewish Appeal—he has called them all fly-by-nights. I challenge him to withdraw that “fly-by-night”—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: Minister, not once have you provided a direct answer to the questions that have been put to you regarding the McGuinty government slush fund, and this question, it would appear I think to most reasonable people, is the most specific, the most clear question: Have you, in connection with the McGuinty government slush fund, at any time offered your resignation, as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, to the Premier? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Colle: Again, that member has been asked to apologize about calling these great organizations fly-by-nights. He still refuses to do that. I've said very clearly, and I'll say it again, I have been committed to doing everything I can to help newcomers and I will continue to do that. I have always said I will, and I always will, continue to make that commitment, whether it was yesterday, a year or two years ago. I have always said I'm going to continue to work, as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, to do the much-needed work that was ignored for too long.

The Speaker: New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: To the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, let me ask the minister this: You've been around this Legislature for a while. As Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, does the minister think it's appropriate for a government to send \$30 million of

public money out the door with no announcement that there's even a program that groups can apply to, with no formal application process, with no criteria to assess what groups or organizations should get money, with no follow-up rules or regulations to determine whether or not the money has been spent appropriately and no evaluation or audit? Does the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration consider it proper, transparent and accountable for the government to put money out the door that way?

1520

Hon. Mr. Colle: As I've said before, my ministry's principles of investment are based on ensuring that integration and diversity are enhanced, that volunteerism and participation opportunities are increased, and that we support community building, whether it be in social services or settlement services. Those are the principles our investments have been based on, and they are sound principles. We are honoured, as the ministry, to partner with organizations that we've had long-standing relationships with that are doing great things and continue to do great things, whether they be small ones like AWIC in Don Mills or whether they be large ones or emerging ones like the Somali Midaynta Community Services who need more capacity. That's what we're—

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr. Hampton: Suddenly the minister has started to refer to principles. Could the minister table any documents that state these principles in connection with the \$30 million that went out the door? Can the minister table any documents that show that these principles were stated or pertain to \$30 million that went out the door?

Hon. Mr. Colle: The investments we've made, again, went to very deserving organizations, big and small: the Catholic Immigration Centre in Ottawa, Catholic Community Services of York Region, the Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines, which has been doing great work.

The investments we made are on our website, with the name of the organization and the amount. Also, there's now an improved process, a registry so we can track all the demands out there, because for too many years there was no investment in capacity building, no investments in renovations or in establishing new centres. We now have an improved process that is a better one. There's much more work to do.

Mr. Hampton: Minister, I think every member of this Legislature can probably cite from their own constituencies 20 or 30 organizations that do good work in the community and probably need funding, but in virtually every case, most of these organizations were never told by the McGuinty government that there was any program, that there was any money available. Some of them, when they did put in proposals, were told, like the Hindu temple in Hamilton was told, “Oh, there's no money.” Four times they were told.

Minister, that is why members of the opposition believe that the Auditor General needs to examine what happened here: no rules, no application process, no announcement, no follow-up evaluation or auditing, and yet \$30 million went out door.

The Speaker: Question.

Mr. Hampton: My question to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is: Will the minister call in the Auditor General to do an immediate investigation and report on the \$30 million that went out the door—

The Speaker: Thank you. The question has been asked.

Hon. Mr. Colle: As I've told the member, if you look at the organizations across the board, they are organizations that are helping newcomers—settlement, language training, job training—some are involved with food banks, some are involved with the cultural and heritage aspects of our great province. Those are organizations that have great track records. There are also organizations that are emerging, where we wanted to build more capacity based on enhancing diversity, expanding volunteerism, ensuring our heritage is respected and building better communities, socially and physically. Those are the investments we made, and that is the return the people of Ontario will get for years to come because these organizations are trying to contribute to Ontario.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): A question to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration regarding his Liberal slush fund: Yesterday the minister again dodged questions related to a senior staffer in his office who was a prominent and long-time member of a board of directors that received a whopping \$250,000 out of the slush fund.

Today we hear about another wild coincidence, about a senior staffer in the office of the Minister of Health who sits on another board that received another whopping \$200,000 slush fund grant under very suspicious circumstances. Aren't these rather happy coincidences for the Ontario Liberal Party and for Liberal cabinet ministers and their staff? Isn't this an extraordinary run of serendipity for the friends of Dalton? Minister, do you truly believe that taxpayers and members of the assembly are that gullible?

Hon. Mr. Colle: If you look at these organizations all across Ontario, we fund over 80 settlement services, and they're made up of members, volunteers, of all three parties.

The member opposite continues to not correct himself in that Michael Huang came into my office as an intern. He was a foreign-trained professional who was under-employed, who was doing great community work, who had walked in the shoes of the unemployed newcomer, who has master's degrees from the University of Beijing, who has post-master's degrees here in Ontario. He's out of work, yet he was volunteering. I was proud to have him come into my office and get his direct expertise on what we should do in helping newcomers because he has been there and he was willing to co-operate in sharing these experiences.

Mr. Hudak: If an intern can accomplish a whopping \$250,000 grant from the Liberal Party slush fund, imagine what your senior policy advisers are accomplishing for Liberal Party-connected groups. Legitimate

groups, Minister, working hard in Niagara, like Casa El Norte, the Fort Erie Multicultural Centre and Bled Hall in Beamsville, Ontario, didn't receive dime one from this fund. They didn't even know it existed. But you see that the Liberal Party candidate attached to a group goes to the front of the line. You see a group that has a Liberal Party staffer in the minister's office—they go to the front of the line. Or a board of directors that has seven out of seven who are senior donors to the Ontario Liberal Party. Ted Williams couldn't hit that kind of average on his best day—seven out of seven. Minister, it's clear that it's not what you do, it's who you knew in the Ontario Liberal Party. Isn't it time that this minister tendered his resignation immediately?

Hon. Mr. Colle: All across Ontario, there's an incredible number of groups that we have partnered with through various programs. In the Niagara region itself, we've developed a partnership with many of the service providers that created an immigrant gateway in the Niagara region. They come from all walks of life—the chamber of commerce—coming from the region of Niagara. In fact, that's what led that initiative in Niagara region, the members of the Niagara regional council who said, "We need to have more settlement services in Niagara." We've done that because the need was there.

The member opposite can cherry-pick his partisan—can go all over the place. The main thing is, we know that all of these organizations have representations from all different walks of life.

We have more work to do, but the good news is, there are more resources, especially since we also got federal investment now going to groups and to programs across Ontario that never existed before.

The Speaker: New question. The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Today, every single member on this side of the House came together to ask the Auditor General to immediately undertake an audit of all the slush funds handed out over the last two years. We had to take this extraordinary step because the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration would not do what he is required to do by his oath of office.

The Minister of Citizenship has made a mockery of this Legislature with his inability to explain the process for handing out millions of public—very public—dollars. My question to minister is as follows: We want to know if the minister has offered his resignation, and if he has not, why not?

1530

Hon. Mr. Colle: Again, to the member opposite, there are incredible demands and needs that we all know exist in Ontario. They may also exist on the infrastructure side and on the health care side, but there have been an incredible number of needs integrating newcomers across this province, investing in our volunteers and investing in communities. We've tried to do that because, as I said,

for a number of years there was no availability. We've tried to do that.

It's a big first step we've taken. We're going to make the process even better, because we know there are even more needs to be met. That's what we've tried to do, and as I said, we are committed to continuing to do that because there are many, many worthy organizations that still need our partnership.

Mr. Prue: In the past four weeks I think the Minister of Citizenship has done himself and his party a disservice in this House. Allow me to quote what Oliver Cromwell said in the House at Westminster in 1653, which I think is just as applicable to this minister today: "You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing.... Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God—go!"

Will the minister heed these words and before this assembly tender his—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Beaches—East York.

Mr. Prue: I don't know whether you heard the question, Mr. Speaker. Again I will ask the question, through you, to the minister: Will the minister heed these words and before this assembly, if not to the Premier himself, tender his resignation?

Hon. Mr. Colle: I have been most moved by the incredible courage of newcomers and the organizations that help newcomers across this province. I've been in the community halls, I've been in the mosques, I've been in the gurdwaras in the Sikh communities. I've seen the incredible courage, dedication and generosity of these newcomers.

I've also seen the desperation, where you've got people with PhDs who for 10 years haven't been able to work at anything over \$15,000 a year. That's why we've moved aggressively on Bill 124. That's why we've given them more language training. That's what we've done and that's why we've made these investments, so that these organizations can help not only the ones who are in desperate need but the ones who are almost succeeding.

Interjection.

The Speaker: I really don't need any more assistance from the government House leader.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. I know that your ministry is committed to protecting and managing our province's endangered species. My question is specifically focused on the endangered species legislation that the minister recently introduced. I believe that this legislation will make Ontario the North American leader in species-at-risk protection and recovery, compared to the Tory legacy, which, according to the 2002 auditor's report, "left threatened animals and plants at risk of extinction due to the lack of an overall strategy for protecting endangered species."

I've read the legislation, and I particularly noticed the stewardship and flexible tools proposed in it. I believe this will go a long way to ensuring the social and economic well-being of the province.

Minister, can you please tell this House why Bill 184 is so important to protect species at risk and the implications for our endangered species of some individuals clear-cutting trees?

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I very much appreciate the question from the member for Peterborough, who I know has great regard for the environment and is a strong supporter of this particular act.

I must say, as a former farmer and rural landowner myself, that I was quite shocked by the wanton destruction that happened yesterday in eastern Ontario by the landowners' organization that Randy Hillier was the founder of. I have to wonder why the leader of the opposition doesn't disavow himself from that sort of action. I'm sure he wouldn't want to be associated with that. What's interesting is that the farmers of Ontario and rural landowners are the original stewards of our land in this province. They take great pride in their land and their ownership and want to do the right thing and protect the environment. In fact, a proof of that is the oversubscription of all of our stewardship programs that we have, and that's why the McGuinty government has committed an extra \$18 million for our rural stewardship programs.

Mr. Leal: Thank you, Minister, for enlightening this House and, more importantly, providing us with up-to-date legislation. I've paid close attention to this legislation. I've noticed that renowned groups such as the David Suzuki Foundation, the Environmental Defence, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the World Wildlife Federation of Canada have all shown great support for this legislation.

The minister's response to my question has brought up the concept of consultation. I believe this is an important component when introducing such innovative legislation. Many groups have raised concerns about the consultation process. I know that the people of Ontario support this legislation. I know that farmers and rural Ontarians are great stewards of the land. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, I think it's important that the minister sets the record straight. Will he please share with all members of this House how the consultation process unfolded? And could he also tell us what extensive consultation process took place before bringing this legislation forward to this House?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: Since May 2006, members of our staff throughout the Ministry of Natural Resources have met with stakeholder organizations throughout the province, and all the main industrial and commercial groups have been consulted. We've had a series of aboriginal consultations throughout northern Ontario. I have been out and had meetings in Bruce county, in Dryden and in Thunder Bay. My officials continue to do that. As of noon today, all the amendments were brought forward. I believe the opposition brought forward 10. We brought

forward about 45. We look forward to coming back to committee tomorrow and having clause-by-clause debate on those amendments.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration regarding his political slush fund. In addition to Michael Huang, the policy adviser in the minister's office whose group received \$250,000 out of this slush fund, today we read in the Toronto Star that yet another Liberal connection has been made between the Iranian-Canadian Community Centre and this government. Sadly, a former staffer in the Minister of Health's own office sits on the board of that organization. Meanwhile, the Ottawa Chabad centre and the South Nepean Muslim Community Centre have been left out. They've received nothing.

So the minister has overseen and administered a political scandal which is now getting closer and closer to this Liberal government. My question, Mr. Speaker, through you: Did the minister do the honourable thing and offer his resignation to the Premier?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): As I said, there's an interesting amount of selective cherry-picking on who belongs to which party or which office. There are people all across Ontario working in these community groups or organizations from all parties. But I do want to say that the investment we made with the Chinese Professionals Association of Canada is an investment we're proud of because they are volunteers. Over 20,000 members have been working since 1993 on a volunteer basis, getting newcomers jobs, literally holding the hands of newcomers who are desperate because they can't pay the rent or put food on the table. Many of them, because of that assistance from these organizations, have gotten jobs and hope. The government is trying to increase the capacity to offer more opportunity because every year 140,000 newcomers come to Ontario. That's the investment we're making.

Ms. MacLeod: Mr. Speaker, he missed the point. Quite honestly, if he wants to start talking about Chinese Canadian communities, he forgot to mention the one in my riding that had no knowledge of the process whatsoever, the Agape Chinese Alliance.

He can also stay away from his speaking points and start answering questions in this place. I asked him a very simple question. It required a Yes or No answer. I'll ask him again, Mr. Speaker, through you—

Interjections.

1540

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. I need to be able to hear the member.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. This is not helpful. The member for Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. MacLeod: I guess they were over there reading their copy of the Gomery report to see how they can do

this again. But, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the question one more time, through you. I know you can't hear me right now, but has the minister offered his resignation to the Premier? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Colle: I really appreciate this opportunity to talk about the investments that we've made in Ottawa. We have invested in the Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre. We're proud of the investment we made in the Catholic Immigration Centre in Ottawa of about \$100,000. We're proud of the fact that we've made Ottawa an immigrant gateway. We've given the city of Ottawa over \$250,000 to establish a gateway for immigrants. We've got two programs at Algonquin College to help newcomers. We also have a very specific program out of Ottawa for 500 foreign-trained physicians to get work in Ontario. So there have been millions of dollars invested in Ottawa, because Ottawa is one of the designated immigrant gateways. We've made substantial investments there that were never made under the previous government before.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Paul Ferreira (York South–Weston): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. So many questions about the Liberal election slush fund have been left unanswered by this minister and his cabinet colleagues, questions that Ontarians have a right to have answered honestly. It seems that the Liberal government is incapable of answering questions, let alone providing honest answers. But we're going to give it another try. When will this minister do the right thing and resign for his mishandling of this scandal?

Hon. Mr. Colle: As I said, as minister, we have made investments with partners that needed to be made and had to be made; partners like the Jamaican Canadian Association which does incredible work and has a long track record; partners like the Greek community of Toronto, which has been in existence for decades and decades—they're building a new centre; partners like the Centre for Information and Community Services, which services York region and northern Scarborough. We're proud to partner with CultureLink; with the Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines, which is in a building that was built in 1860. That's who we've invested in. We're giving them the resources to provide better services.

Mr. Ferreira: It's Groundhog Day here at the Legislature. I'm afraid if the minister sees his shadow, we won't get any answers for another six weeks. But we're going to try again. I'm going to read from a couple of the daily newspapers. Here's what they say about the minister's evasive answering techniques.

The Toronto Star: "The government responded by either changing the subject or impugning the motives of the questioners."

The Globe and Mail: "Yet rather than respond to this brewing scandal, Mr. McGuinty trotted out the transparent political trick of deflection."

Mr. Speaker, through you and on behalf of the people of Ontario, when will this minister take his chance to do it right, to answer this simple direct question: Did he do the honourable thing? Did he offer to resign?

Hon. Mr. Colle: As I said, I have from day one been totally focused on helping make Ontario a better place, especially for many of our incredibly courageous immigrants and many of our volunteer organizations that have been working without help for years. I tried to do what I could; hopefully we're making it a better system.

But I would say the critical thing is that we must not forget those that we made the investments for, such as Thorncliffe neighbourhood services. I visited Thorncliffe neighbourhood services numerous times. The incredible volunteerism, the incredible dedication of everyone at Thorncliffe neighbourhood services, and every single member of the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre that now has a new centre—those are the organizations that have been driving my ministry, that make me do what I do, because they are very deserving. They need help and I'm proud to—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question?

NURSES

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, nurses are the heart of the health care system. They work long, hard hours in oftentimes stressful situations to provide Ontarians with the care they need. While we have made good progress on increasing the number of nurses in the system, nursing associations caution us about a projected nursing shortage in the future.

Minister, there is unbelievable growth happening in my riding of Thornhill and in the 905 area. With many young families moving into the area, they will need a strong health care system to meet their needs. But we cannot afford to allow young nurses to be swayed by the US or other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What are you doing to make this profession an attractive choice for young nursing students and keep them in Ontario?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): There's way too much help going on here at the moment.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. We're wasting time.
Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'm pleased, during Nursing Week, to have a question about nurses in the province of Ontario. I'm pleased to say to the honourable member—through you, Mr. Speaker, of course—who represents the great riding of Thornhill, that we recognize the growth that's occurring in his region. That's why there's a construction crane at York Central Hospital, that's why we're building a new regional cancer centre at South Lake, that's why we're dramatically expanding Markham Stouffville, and that is why we are going to build a new hospital in Vaughan. We are going to make sure that these new hospitals have good, new nursing grads. Through our new nursing graduate initiative, we're investing \$89 million to bridge nurses—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Member for Niagara Centre. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: Mr. Speaker, the disdain for the people of York region and nurses goes on in the form of the New Democratic Party, which refers to York region as underpopulated. But we know that nurses out there need bridging programs that support them in the transition from education to employment. At York Central Hospital, 42 new nursing grads already connected through our program to offer a guaranteed—

Interjections.

1550

The Speaker: Order. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Mario, here's your chance to soar with the eagles.

The Speaker: I'm not going to warn the member for Niagara Centre again.

Member for Thornhill?

Mr. Racco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents in Thornhill are not impressed with the opposition.

Minister, this week is Nursing Week, and it is a good time to reflect on how far the profession has come in the last few years. The previous government might have a short—

Interjection.

The Speaker: I'm not going to warn the member for Renfrew again.

Member for Thornhill?

Mr. Racco: The previous government might have a short memory, but I remember all too well the thousands of nurses who were laid off during the 1990s. New nurses are an important component in strengthening the nursing profession, but our hospitals, long-term care homes and community providers are full of experienced nurses who want to work longer but require less physically demanding roles. We cannot forget the thousands of nurses who are the backbone of our health care system. To the minister: How have you addressed their needs to keep them on the job longer?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: We're making tremendous progress in the province of Ontario to extend the careers of our nurses by giving them exciting opportunities, including helping to train those incoming new nursing grads that I just had the privilege of speaking about.

At York Central Hospital, 15 late-career nurses are benefiting from the flexibility of spending some of their time off the front line, helping to train the next generations of nurses, and we think that this has been important in helping to expand the life of those late-career nurses.

We've invested \$100 million of the people's money in 19,000 ceiling-mounted bed lifts to literally take the strain off the backs of nurses. Nursing, according to Doris Grinspun, "is on the road to recovery" after the seismic shift in the workplace caused by layoffs during the provincial funding cutbacks of the 1990s—actions perpetuated on health care by the two opposition parties in the province of Ontario.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship as well and has to do with the McGuinty Liberal slush fund. I think we have to attach the Premier's name to this because this wouldn't be happening without the concurrence and endorsement of the Premier of the province, which is shameful when you look at the positions that the now Premier took when he was Leader of the Opposition with respect to almost weekly demands for the resignations of ministers of past governments.

Minister, I have to ask you, through the Speaker: Given the standards that you had when you were sitting on this side of the House, the fact that we now know that over \$30 million of monies went to groups and organizations within this province without any application, without any follow-up in terms of approvals or audits, how do you justify positions you took when sitting on this side of the bench with your failure to resign today?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): As I said, the investments we've made with so many organizations that are doing incredible work—and I've named them over and over again—based on the principles of something I'd like the member to appreciate is that there are many needs in our diverse communities, incredible needs in our newcomer communities, in our volunteer communities, many needs in our poor neighbourhoods where the majority of the people living there, sad to say, are immigrants—no fault of their own, because they are trying desperately to work two or three jobs. In some cases, they're extremely frustrated because they say, "I have a degree, I have experience, and I'm still making minimum wage." Those are the investments we've made to try and give them the opportunity to learn English, get job training and make progress—

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

Mr. Runciman: I've known the minister for many years and I consider him to be an honourable member. It's difficult to sit here day after day and listen to him fail to respond to, I think, very legitimate questions. He's obviously having his strings pulled by the people in the corner office, by the Premier's people. This is not the Mike Colle all of us have known.

When we're looking at a scandal in terms of the significance of this, we know that Mr. McGuinty has no standards. We saw it with the Minister for Small Business and Entrepreneurship, the first individual found in breach of the Members' Integrity Act. He's still in office; he's still in cabinet. We saw it with Minister Caplan with the OLG scandal. He's still sitting there, smiling in his chair. Now we have a very honourable member—I know he's a very honourable member—who wants to do the right thing, and I ask him to stand up today and do the right thing. Either call in the Auditor General or defy that corner office and step down.

Hon. Mr. Colle: I do appreciate the great contribution that the member from Leeds-Grenville has made to this House, and I've always had great respect for him. I'd like him to appreciate the fact that I deeply believe in and have deep convictions about these investments and the organizations that desperately asked, sought and made their cases known for help from all governments—not just our government. They've asked the city. They've asked the federal government. That's who we tried to respond to with these investments. It was a cry that's been heard loud and clear across the province that I'm trying to address and have tried to address with these investments.

That's what I tell the honourable member. As I said, I have deep respect for his record, and I hope he has respect for what my conviction was in making these decisions.

The Speaker: New question.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Over the past couple of weeks, the Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario, the Somali Women's Association, the Vietnamese Women's Association, the Polish foundation of Canada and others from my riding have demanded to know why they were not advised of, or even considered for, the government's year-end slush fund, yet the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration refuses to answer any of their questions or, of course, our questions. We're all frustrated. We just ask a simple one, finally, one that maybe, just maybe, he might be able to answer, and that is whether or not this minister has submitted his resignation.

Hon. Mr. Colle: To again reaffirm that I have been totally committed and focused to do my job every day I've been here as minister—I will continue to make that commitment and focus, and I will not stop

I've said to the member opposite, there are an incredible number of organizations doing great work in a variety of fields: the volunteer sector, seniors sector, newcomer sector. We appreciate that they all need some help. My ministry tries to help as many as possible. There are many more to help. That's why we've put up the registry now, so for the first time, we have a direct application online for—

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Ms. DiNovo: It was the McGuinty Liberals that smeared me in the by-election of Parkdale–High Park and, through me, my family and my congregation, and then there was the OLG scandal and now there's the year-end slush fund.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Member for Perth–Middlesex. Minister of Health.

Member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. DiNovo: As I was saying, the smear campaign against me, my family, my congregation, the OLG scandal—

Interjections.

The Speaker: This is not helpful.

Ms. DiNovo: Shouting down women, Mr. Speaker.
Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Government House leader.
We'll wait. Order.

The Speaker: Member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. DiNovo: As I was saying, a smear campaign, slush funds, OLGC scandals—this is clearly a government that is completely ethically bankrupt. The minister did not advise all multicultural organizations of this year-end slush fund, and so I ask a very simple question again: When will this minister resign? Because he's clearly not fulfilling his mandate.

Hon. Mr. Colle: Our government and my ministry are very, very proud of the fact that after 20 years, where for a newcomer who came to Ontario we used to get \$800 and where a newcomer went to Quebec and they got up to \$3,800—we rectified that. We're proud of that record. We have a \$5,000 loan program for newcomers—we're proud of that. We have internship programs in the Ontario public service for newcomers—we're proud of that. We're proud of the investments we made in newcomer groups that were neglected for years and did not have any support. These are the organizations, big and small, that are getting help for the first time and getting attention. We think that's long overdue.

Is there much more work to do? Yes. That's why we now have a registry online so that we can help even more groups, hopefully into the future, because there is much need out there that still remains.

1600

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, supply management is critical for the riding of Huron–Bruce and for all consumers in Ontario who have access to guaranteed supplies of high-quality products at fair and stable prices. The agricultural community is concerned that supply management is at risk, based on the actions by the federal Conservative government, on the wheat board decision and the recent nomination of a candidate who will provide input into the provincial Conservative Party policy and who is against supply management.

Minister, what is the McGuinty government doing to ensure that supply management remains a vital part of Ontario's agricultural sector for years to come?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs): I very much appreciate the honourable member. She's very, very committed to her constituents and certainly to advocating for supply management. As part of her good work, she has moved this government to a motion that did come forward, I'm very happy to say, in December 2005, where the entire Legislature supported supply management. Subsequent to that, I also travelled to Hong Kong to represent this government at the world trade talks and to reaffirm our government's support. I just would like to read into the

record a letter that I received from the Chicken Farmers of Ontario where they indicate: "Please know, Minister, that the Chicken Farmers of Ontario deeply appreciate your ongoing support and your government's ongoing support for supply management. Your support for supply management played a pivotal role in ensuring that the sensitive products category remained a viable option for Canada's supply-managed industries." That is our commitment to supply management.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Supplementary. I'm sure the member will phrase this through the Speaker.

Mrs. Mitchell: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Supply management is a vital component, and I can tell you that it drives the economy in Huron–Bruce. In order to understand the economic impact of supply management on just one riding, consider the following statistics for the riding of Huron–Bruce: 200 million litres of milk; 65 million kilograms of poultry; eggs, 2.1 million birds; turkeys, 6.85 million kilograms.

Supply management is absolutely vital to the economic livelihood of farmers in my riding. Under a Tory regime featuring their newest team member, who advocates for optional access to supply management sectors, the agricultural sector would be severely impacted. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What do you feel would be the economic impact to Ontario under such a system as proposed by the newest member from across the way?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: What I can say is that we know that this sector generates \$2.4 billion for the province of Ontario, which is close to 28% of all farm cash receipts. Roughly 50,000 jobs are connected to supply management in the province of Ontario. I share the honourable member's concern with respect to the colleague of the members opposite, Mr. Hillier, who has indicated that he believes marketing boards—he calls them welfare farmers, those who participate in marketing boards or supply management. He says that the supply-managed sector provides false security and safety for the industry, and that farmers are foolish to believe that the supply management sector will provide them with prosperity. I disagree with Mr. Hillier; our government disagrees. We remain committed to supply management in the province of Ontario, unlike Randy Hillier and John Tory.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

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

"Whereas Ontario will not meet the needs of its aging population and ensure access to hospital services unless long-term-care homes can provide the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas staff are now run off their feet trying to keep up and homes are unable to provide the full range of care and programs that residents need or the menu choices that meet their expectations; and

“Whereas dietary, housekeeping and other services that residents and their families value are being put at risk by increasing operating costs; and

“Whereas some 35,000 residents still live in older homes, many with three- and four-bed ward rooms and wheelchair-inaccessible washrooms; and

“Whereas, on November 23, 2006, this Legislature unanimously passed a private member’s motion asking the government to introduce a capital renewal program for B and C homes; and

“Whereas such a program is required to support the limited-term licensing provisions in the proposed new Long-Term Care Homes Act;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$390 million in 2007 and \$214 million in 2008 to provide an additional 30 minutes of resident care, enhance programs and meal menus and address other operating cost pressures, and introduce a capital renewal and retrofit program for all B and C homes, beginning with committing to provide \$9.5 million this year to renew the first 2,500 beds.”

I’ve also signed this.

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan ignored stories of millions in rip-offs within Ontario’s lottery system for months, if not years;

“Whereas they acted only after they were caught and their first attempt was to ‘spin the scandal’ rather than fix the problems;

“Whereas Ontarians have every right to expect leadership from their government; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan have failed to”—

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The member for Erie–Lincoln rose on the issue of the content of petitions and attacking individuals in the House personally within these petitions. I think there was a ruling at that time that we were going to have a situation where this no longer existed. Clearly, this is in the category that was complained about by the member for Erie–Lincoln and I ask you to rule on that.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I haven’t heard the whole petition but it seems to me—it may be. I don’t know.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

We’ll move on. I will review the petition. It has been filed. I’ll have a look at it later and rule tomorrow.

ENERGY CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN LOGO

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

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s new energy conservation campaign logo, Flick Off, is offensive to public standards of decency by its suggestive nature;

“Whereas this logo is vulgar, is an insult to all Ontarians and sends the wrong message about community standards to the children and youth of our province who are targets of this ad campaign;

“Whereas this logo and campaign only serve to make light of and ridicule the important issue of energy conservation in Ontario today;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty and his environment minister to immediately withdraw this offensive ad campaign from the public domain and issue a formal apology to all Ontarians for wasting \$500,000 of Ontario taxpayers’ dollars on this ill-conceived and offensive decision of the McGuinty government.”

I support this petition, affix my name to it and send it to the table with Zachary.

1610

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario will not meet the needs of its aging population and ensure access to hospital services unless long-term-care homes can provide the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas staff are now run off their feet trying to keep up and homes are unable to provide the full range of care and programs that residents need or the menu choices that meet their expectations; and

“Whereas dietary, housekeeping and other services that residents and their families value are being put at risk by increasing operating costs; and

“Whereas some 35,000 residents still live in older homes, many with three- and four-bed ward rooms and wheelchair-inaccessible washrooms; and

“Whereas, on November 23, 2006, this Legislature unanimously passed a private member’s motion asking the government to introduce a capital renewal program for B and C homes; and

“Whereas such a program is required to support the limited-term licensing provisions in the proposed new Long-Term Care Homes Act;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$390 million in 2007 and \$214 million in 2008 to provide an additional 30 minutes of resident

care, enhance programs and meal menus and address other operating cost pressures, and introduce a capital renewal and retrofit program for all B and C homes, beginning with committing to provide \$9.5 million this year to renew the first 2,500 beds.”

I’ll send this petition with page Zane.

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Further to the House leader’s comments, I’d like to ask one review to be done. I believe I brought a point of order about petitions in the past about the stamp that the table offers as a clearance to the petitions that have been ruled on. I think what has happened is that maybe this petition has been read once before and not ruled on, and if it doesn’t have the stamp it implies that it’s an approved petition.

I would suggest respectfully that I believe the process has been traditionally that all petitions are stamped and therefore would be then seen as approved by the table, which would then represent the Speaker’s ruling, if a different Speaker were in the chair, about the petition.

So I offer that as, hopefully, a helpful comment on the petitions and the way they’re passed in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I take the chief government whip’s point. I would, though, advise that the petitions need to be stamped before they are presented here, but we are becoming more rigorous out of necessity with the language that is used in those petitions. So I would just caution members to ensure that the petitions don’t offend any of the traditions of this House.

I would point out that this particular petition that the member for Oxford had placed had been ruled yesterday by the Deputy Speaker as something that should not be presented here again.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): I have another petition:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I have affixed my signature.

REGULATION OF ZOOS

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): I have a petition here to the Ontario Legislative Assembly that reads:

“Whereas Ontario has the weakest zoo laws in the country; and

“Whereas existing zoo regulations are vague, unenforceable and only apply to native wildlife; and

“Whereas there are no mandatory standards to ensure adequate care and housing for zoo animals or the health and safety of animals, zoo staff, the visiting public or neighbouring communities; and

“Whereas several people have been injured by captive wildlife, and zoo escapes are frequent in Ontario; and

“Whereas these same regulatory gaps were affirmed recently by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his annual report;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP David Zimmer’s bill, the Regulation of Zoos Act.”

I’ll sign the petition as well.

LABORATORY SERVICES

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition regarding lab services at Muskoka Algonquin hospital.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare (MAHC) has indicated its support for moving significant parts of its laboratory operations to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie; and

“Whereas MAHC has indicated that it intends to cease doing community-based lab work if it does not receive \$150,000 more in funding from the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the impact of such decisions would negatively affect timely health care delivery to residents of Muskoka, while increasing the overall cost to taxpayers;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to work with Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to maintain hospital and community-based lab services at the existing facilities in Bracebridge and Huntsville, including restoration of lab services that have recently been contracted out to hospitals in Sudbury and Barrie.”

I support this petition.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I do have petitions here. I’ve never had a petition stamped in this House yet, and I wonder what section it is that says we have to have our petitions stamped. If you could help me out with that, because I feel it is a member’s right to put in petitions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): To the member: I’m advised that under the standing orders, MPPs are required to have their—take your seat.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Take your seat, please. It is in the standing orders that members are expected and required to have their petitions stamped before presentation.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have another petition, this one to do with Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare funding. It reads:

“Whereas demand for health services is expected to continue to rise with a growing retirement population in Muskoka-East Parry Sound; and

“Whereas studies indicate that overcrowded emergency rooms result in higher mortality rates; and

“Whereas growing demand and lack of availability of long-term-care beds place increased pressure on acute care beds; and

“Whereas the operating budget for MAHC must reflect the growing demand for service in the communities of Muskoka-East Parry Sound;

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

“That the McGuinty government and the Minister of Health provide adequate increases in the operating budget of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to maintain current health services for the people of Muskoka-East Parry Sound and allocate more long-term-care beds for Muskoka-East Parry Sound.”

I support this petition.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I see the minister here, so I know she'll be happy to know about these. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government enacted regulation 505/06 under the Day Nurseries Act; and

“Whereas regulation 505/06 came into force on January 1, 2007, changing the cost-sharing formula between the district of Parry Sound social services and administration board, the government of Ontario, and child care service users; and

“Whereas regulation 505/06 has resulted in disqualification of child care subsidies for working and single-parent families; and

“Whereas the regulation has resulted in fee increases of up to 96.5%; and

“Whereas adequate time should be provided to allow families time to make alternative arrangements and for non-profit daycare spaces to be developed in the communities served by the DSSAB;

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

“That the McGuinty government repeal regulation 505/06 in the district of Parry Sound until such time as adequate non-profit child care spaces can be created to provide an alternative for working families.”

1620

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to draw your attention to standing order 97(d). It states, “The minister shall answer such written questions within 24 sitting days...” I understand that on March 19, 2007, the member for Whitby–Ajax placed on the order paper a written question asking the Attorney General to “provide the amount of funding that will be available to the Human Rights Legal Support Centre, now that Bill 107 has received royal assent, and the number of staff that will be employed at the centre.”

By my count, this is 29 days now since the question was placed on the order paper, and no answer been given, to my understanding, neither interim nor otherwise. The minister has had more than enough time to answer the question and I ask you to direct the minister to table the answer today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm advised that the question that the member makes reference to, an order paper question asked by the member for Whitby–Ajax, has been answered today.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I have a similar point of order and I have not been informed that that's been answered, so I will proceed.

I draw your attention to standing order 97(d), which states, “The minister shall answer such written questions within 24 sitting days...” On March 19, 2007, the member for Halton placed on the order paper a written question asking the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship to provide an itemized total of the costs of creating the new Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, including but not limited to specifics like printing costs for new letterhead and signage.

By my count, this is the 29th sitting day since this question was placed on the order paper and no answer has been given, neither interim nor otherwise. The minister has had more than enough time to answer this question, and I ask that you direct the minister to stop and table the answer today.

The Acting Speaker: To the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke: I'm advised that the member for Halton has received his interim response today to his order paper question.

Mr. Murdoch: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I draw your attention to standing order 97(d). It states that, “The minister shall answer such written questions within 24 sitting days...” On March 19, 2007, the member from Halton placed on the order paper a written question asking the Minister of Economic Development and Trade to please provide the number of full-time, part-time and contract employees employed by the ministry, broken down for the years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. By my count, it's 29 sitting days since this question was placed on the order paper, and no answer has been given, to my

understanding. I would like you to inform the House and inform the minister that I would like an answer today.

The Acting Speaker: It is my understanding that the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has a valid point of order, and I would remind the minister that the minister is required, under standing order 97(d), to file an answer to a written question within 24 sitting days, as the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has pointed out. The minister’s response is now overdue, and I would ask that the minister give the House some indication as to when the response will be forthcoming.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I’m informed that all questions have already been tabled or will be tabled by the end of the sessional day today.

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: Sorry. May I correct that? The answers to all of the questions have either been tabled or will be tabled by 6 p.m. today.

Mr. Murdoch: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I don’t know how I go about this maybe you can help me. I would like to know how the House leader of the governing party would know the questions I’m going to ask and that they’re already going to be done by the end of the day. Maybe somebody can help me with this. It seems to me that he knows this already, and maybe he does. Then he could help me with my question about petitions, why we have to have them stamped by the Clerk’s office, if he knows so much. I feel that that is taking away from my ability here to operate.

The Acting Speaker: The government House leader has undertaken to commit to the House that all of the outstanding questions will be answered today by 6 p.m.

That deals with the point of order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRENGTHENING BUSINESS THROUGH A SIMPLER TAX SYSTEM ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 VISANT À RENFORCER LES ENTREPRISES GRÂCE À UN RÉGIME FISCAL PLUS SIMPLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 7, 2007, on the motion for second reading of Bill 174, An Act to enact the Taxation Act, 2007 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 174, Loi édictant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts et apportant des modifications complémentaires et autres à diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I understand that when we last dealt with this matter the member for York South–Weston had the floor. I am pleased to recognize the member for York South–Weston.

Applause.

Mr. Paul Ferreira (York South–Weston): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And colleagues, for that ovation. When I started yesterday debating Bill 174, I referenced my weekend back in the riding of York South–Weston and I mentioned my visit on Saturday morning to the opening day festivities of the York Baseball Association, where the topic that the folks there were concerned about wasn’t Bill 174. It was, in fact, the election slush fund of this government.

From the opening day festivities I proceeded to the 80th anniversary celebrations of Squibb’s Stationers, a fine business that has been continuously operated now for 80 years. In fact, it is the longest such business in the village of Weston. You would think that there perhaps Bill 174 would have been top of mind to those proprietors and those customers celebrating the 80th anniversary with the owner, Suri Weinberg-Linsky, but alas, it was not. What I was being asked about was the slush fund, and what we witnessed here today was again non-answers to our questions. So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move adjournment of the debate on Bill 174 this afternoon.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1627 to 1657.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Ferreira has moved the adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while you’re counted by the table staff.

You may take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing while the table staff counts you.

You may take your seats.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 13; the nays are 33.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The member for York South–Weston has the floor.

Mr. Ferreira: I am pleased to rise again to continue my comments on Bill 174. As I was mentioning earlier, while at Squibb’s Stationers on Saturday, I did have the opportunity to speak to the proprietors about tax reform that would have a real impact on their business, and that’s around the issue of property taxes. We know that there is a serious need for reform of the property tax system in this province, and what we have gotten instead from this government is delay. They’ve said that they want us to wait another couple of years before they implement any type of much-needed reform.

I’m hoping, quite optimistically, that the results on October 10 will in fact lead to property tax reform in a more immediate time frame. I suspect that given what is happening here in this House in terms of the non-answers that we are getting to the questions posed by members of

the opposition on the slush fund, this is a government that is gasping for air and is quickly going to run out of it.

Mr. Speaker, as much as I would like to continue on Bill 174, given the lack of answers, I would like to move adjournment of this House this afternoon.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1700 to 1730.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while being counted by the table staff.

Thank you. You may take your seats.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing while being counted.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 10; the nays are 32.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The member for York South–Weston still has the floor.

Mr. Ferreira: I see that I have 12 minutes remaining. I would like to share that with my colleague from Toronto–Danforth, if that is permissible, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: At any point during your remarks, if you wish to indicate a willingness to share your time, you may do so.

Mr. Ferreira: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like at this point to share the remainder of my time with my colleague from Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): Speaker, as you and people in this House are well aware, we have gone through some very tumultuous times in the last few weeks revolving around practices on the part of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration that are not acceptable. The practices have been pointed out as improper by members of this House. The minister refuses to answer our questions. The minister refuses to answer questions of the Queen’s Park press gallery when pressed and, frankly, it’s no surprise that the bells have been ringing in this House for an extended period of time.

We are supposed to be discussing Bill 174, the corporate tax harmonization bill. As you may well be aware, Bill 174 builds on a memorandum of agreement signed in October 2006 with the federal government in order to have the federal government administer corporate taxes, including provincial corporate taxes, in this province beginning in 2009.

This bill has been criticized by a number of people. One of the concerns with this bill is that this harmonization will lead to the potential for substantial reduction in revenue on the part of those of us here in Ontario, and that potential for loss of revenue, to my knowledge, has not been addressed by the minister and has not been addressed by the government. The Ontario Public Service

Employees Union suggests that the loss of revenue could be as great as \$1 billion. I don’t know if it will be \$1 billion, if it will be more than \$1 billion or perhaps a little less. I do know that to make a change that puts at risk a flow of funds of that scope is an extraordinary step. Frankly, if the government is serious about the financial well-being of this province, if the government is serious about the environmental and economic well-being of this province, it should be bringing forward the data to show that in fact there is no risk to the income of the province of Ontario.

We went through all of the angst of the broken promise right at the beginning of the term of this government when Dalton McGuinty, who had signed a pledge on television not to raise taxes, raised them by, what, 2.6 billion? And yet now we’re going through a corporate tax harmonization process that could lose a billion dollars in revenues. That’s an extraordinary step for government to take. Think about what a billion dollars brings. A billion dollars used by the province would have a substantial impact on the download. I’m talking about a billion dollars a year. That would have a very substantial impact on the burden that’s been dumped on the cities, towns and municipalities of this province who are struggling.

I know over a number of years, since 1997-98, that there’s been obvious decay in the stock of public housing in this province. It’s totally apparent. There are hundreds of millions of dollars worth of capital repairs that have to be done. If this money was kept in the budget, if this money was kept as revenue flowing into Ontario’s coffers, those issues could be addressed. But if this province doesn’t care about losing a billion dollars a year, let them speak out. They went through all the agony of breaking a promise and cranking up taxes in this province, and now they seem to have no difficulty, to be completely at ease taking steps that could lead to significant revenue loss.

When we see this kind of action on the part of the government, when we look at what’s gone on in the past while, where a ministry, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, dispenses tens of millions of dollars, supposedly at year-end, with no application forms, no criteria and no evaluation, when we see a situation where a ministry whose annual budget is in the \$90-million range has \$10 million or \$15 million per year left unspent at the end of the year to rush out the door, you have to ask what sort of management is going on and, setting aside the question of management, what kind of political decision-making is going on to shift these funds into this particular ministry for them to be dispensed in the way that they’ve been dispensed.

I have to say that this whole activity on the part of the government has caused tremendous anger on the part of those of us in the opposition and on the part of many in the public as a whole. On that basis alone, Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate as a way of protesting the ongoing stonewalling on the part of the government.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1738 to 1808.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Tabuns has moved the adjournment of the debate. All those in favour of the

motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing while you're being counted.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 6; the nays are 34.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost. However, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 p.m. this evening.

The House adjourned at 1809.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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 / Greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerk-at-the-Table / Greffier parlementaire: Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma–Manitoulin	Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L) Speaker / Président	Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Bramalea–Gore–Malton– Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Boutrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest–Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron–Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham–Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement	Lanark–Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Leeds–Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin–Peel– Wellington–Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglinton–Lawrence	Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L) Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration	London–Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin–Middlesex–London	Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu
Erie–Lincoln Essex	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L) Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (Ind.)
Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nepean–Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Guelph–Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
		Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)

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

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

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

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Garfield Dunlop, Andrea Horwath,
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