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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 4 December 2007

Mardi 4 décembre 2007

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 4 December 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 4 décembre 2007

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Mr. Dave Levac: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This evening at 6 o'clock in room 228 there will be an event on behalf of the World Society for the Protection of Animals, and we're all invited to see an award that's being given out. I would seek unanimous consent of this House, for today only, to wear a ribbon to designate such an event that's happening this evening. It's in favour of protecting our animals on the planet. I seek unanimous consent that the ribbons be worn today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Brant seeks unanimous consent to wear a ribbon in commemoration of an event taking place here at the Legislature today. Is there agreement? Agreed.

Agreed to.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Whenever we do this—I have no objection—we should have a bit of a discussion among the whips ahead of time so that we know what's coming. I know the member would like to have done that but is no longer in that capacity.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the member from Timmins–James Bay on that point of order. I think he offers a very good suggestion to all members of the House. Sometimes we've seen opportunities where ribbons are on one side or another and the other members do not have possession of them. So I would encourage discussions either among the whips, or perhaps it's an item the House leaders can address as well. I thank the member for that.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MARIE NIELSEN

Mr. Frank Klees: Joining us in the members' gallery today is nine-year-old Marie Nielsen and her mother, Bente. We welcome them.

Like other young people, Marie loves pets, and especially Jack Russell terriers, which she began to train. Through her commitment and dedication to what she loves to do, Marie became the recipient of the prestigious

Canadian and American national Jack Russell trial child handler of the year award.

These awards represent a special public acknowledgment for her innovative hard work by leaders in her field of interest on both sides of the border. That Marie accomplished this at the age of nine is a further tribute to her willingness to work hard and her dedication to excellence, qualities that indeed deserve to be recognized by all of us at her age of nine. Congratulations to you, Marie.

On behalf of all members of the House, I join with Marie's family, her friends and her community in proudly congratulating her on her achievement. We wish her well as she pursues her passion. Marie is truly an example to other members of our community and especially young people. We welcome you here today.

AUGUSTINE TIMOTHY DEBASSIGE

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Mr. Speaker, the first thing I would like to do is to congratulate you on taking your post.

Augustine Timothy Debassige: Gus Debassige passed away in his 80th year at Sudbury Regional Hospital Memorial site on November 27. Gus was my friend and supporter. He was a well-known business person at M'Chigeeng First Nation. He was a determined hard worker in business, in the affairs of his community, in the affairs of the broader aboriginal community and in politics.

He had worked as a young man on hydro projects near Thessalon, in Sudbury and even in Pakistan. When he came back home to West Bay, as it was known then, he was determined to make a difference. He was the chief from 1959 until 1969 and then for many years thereafter he served on council. Gus wanted a progressive community.

He was a close friend and confidante of Lester B. "Mike" Pearson, who was the member for Algoma East and the Prime Minister of Canada. Gus had a direct line to Mr. Pearson, as he had to Maurice Foster, Brent St. Denis and myself. The erection of 8-by-4 plywood home-made red signs at M'Chigeeng signalled the start of every general election.

Gus was an ardent sports fan. He loved baseball, hockey and playing pool.

Gus will be missed. Our sympathies go out to his wife, Loretta, children Janette and Blair, the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren.

Gus, well done—a life well lived.

FIRE IN WASAGA BEACH

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise to extend my sincere appreciation to Fire Chief Mike McWilliam and the 94 firefighters from Wasaga Beach, Clearview, Essa, Springwater, Collingwood, Tiny and Oro-Medonte who courageously came to the rescue after last week's devastating fire in my home town of Wasaga Beach. I also want to thank Mayor Cal Patterson and his team for their very helpful response during and since the fire.

This is an overwhelming loss for Wasaga Beach. A piece of our heritage vanished last week but our memories will always remain. Thankfully nobody was hurt in the fire, which wiped out roughly 80% of the historic boardwalk and pedestrian mall, with many of the buildings dating back to the 1940s.

As Bill Jory wrote in the Toronto Sun, "Wasaga Beach, as symbolized by the boardwalk, has always been more than a beachside town; it's a state of mind evoking visions of endless summer and recurring youth."

But we must not forget that Wasaga Beach is more than just a strip of manmade developments. To quote Thelma Morrison, "Wasaga Beach is a very special place. Anyone who has ever walked its shoreline, admiring the endless sweep of its beach, the expanse of its bay, the misty backdrop of the distant Blue Mountains, knows the unique character of Wasaga Beach. We could wander the world without coming across a scene so compelling, so memorable in its appeal."

Today I am calling upon the government to provide all necessary assistance to Mayor Cal Patterson and his council and the business owners who have suffered an immeasurable loss.

1340

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It has now been some nine weeks where riders across northeastern Ontario who rely on the Ontario Northland bus services have been without services because of an ongoing labour dispute. Myself, my colleague the member for Nickel Belt, our critic M^{me} France G elinas, along with our leader, Howard Hampton, have been calling on this government to take some action to intervene so we can get the buses back on the road in order to put people back where they need to be when it comes to travelling for medical services or for pleasure or business.

I note, finally, that there's been some movement on the part of the ONTC. I have to hope that the government has intervened, through Minister Gravelle or the Premier, calling people back to the table to negotiations. By the grace of the weather yesterday in northern Ontario, negotiations were unable to start because of travel problems with storms and such; that made it difficult for people to get in.

I want to put this government on notice: If we're not able to resolve this particular strike at the bargaining table, I say to you now we need to send this off to binding arbitration. The union is onside. It's something that needs to be done. We cannot be put in a position of not having the buses on the road as we enter into this holiday season. For those who must travel for medical reasons, this is causing huge hardship across northeastern Ontario, and I put the government on notice now that if we're not able to resolve this at the bargaining table, we need to move this off to binding arbitration in order to resolve this issue.

ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: This month the Ontario Trillium Foundation announced Trillium grants in the riding of Huron-Bruce totalling over \$270,000 that will be invested through seven separate grants.

Just to explain about some of the projects receiving monies, they included the Huron County Child Abuse Prevention Committee that received a grant of \$67,800 over two years to develop, implement and evaluate the Rural Father Involvement pilot project, which is a community-based project to help uncover and prevent the causes of child abuse and neglect in Huron county. The Lions Club of Lucknow received \$50,000 towards making the front entrance of the Lucknow arena fully accessible and to improve the building's energy efficiency. The community of Lucknow has undertaken efforts to raise the remaining \$50,000 needed for the project and has already reached \$30,000 of that through one community fundraiser. Other grant recipients included the Lions Club in Formosa. They received \$32,200 in order to replace playground equipment at the Formosa Lions Park. The township of Huron-Kinloss received \$45,000 to renovate the Lucknow library. The Teeswater Lions Club received \$15,000 to put towards the publication of a history book on the townships. The Kincardine Legion branch received \$15,000 towards renovation costs to its facilities as well.

As a member of a rural riding, this money will be greatly appreciated by the communities to reinforce our strong rural communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Laurie Scott: This morning the Environmental Commissioner released his annual report and delivered yet another lump of coal to Dalton McGuinty and his "all talk and no action" environmental record. Unfortunately, what the Environmental Commissioner reported was not news to this side of the House. The Liberals have no real plan to manage growth in Ontario, nor do they take the challenge seriously.

The report indicates that the Liberal government needs to step back and rethink its strategy. So far, the Liberal strategy is twofold: "Don't worry, be happy," and "Don't worry, blame someone else." When faced with the

serious questions about the environmental impact that his poor plans have thrust upon the province, the Minister of Public Infrastructure makes an embarrassing attempt to blame the federal government once again.

The minister is quoted in the *Globe and Mail* saying, “The federal government are the ones who decide what the immigration levels are.” We aren’t sure if the minister is also trying to blame new Canadians for his failings, but we are aware of the strategy of saying, “This is everyone’s fault but mine.”

Today’s report showed we need real action to address challenges in urban growth in Ontario. That means getting on with more transit and more energy. It means funding our infrastructure properly so that we don’t have wooden pipes in Toronto, and firefighters in Kingston don’t have to colour-code their fire hydrants based on the deterioration of the pipes that lead to them. It means having the courage to respond to the aging water and waste water infrastructure in this province. It means taking responsibility for the challenges that come with being government.

It’s time to stop the blame game. Take the Environmental Commissioner’s recommendations seriously.

JOHNNY LOMBARDI

Mr. Mike Colle: The city of Toronto has proclaimed today as Johnny Lombardi Day. This evening, there will be the first screening of a biographical film entitled *Johnny Lombardi: The Great Communicator*.

Johnny Lombardi was a pioneer of multicultural broadcasting in Canada. As the founder of CHIN Radio, he broadcast in over 30 languages, ensuring all of our diverse communities were given an opportunity to celebrate and honour their cultural heritage and at the same time imploring them to be passionate about their adopted country, Canada.

Johnny Lombardi was truly a great Canadian who during World War II was an army sergeant who served in France, Germany and Holland, and was part of Canada’s D-Day invasion at Juno Beach. Johnny Lombardi dedicated his whole life to making Canada a welcoming home for all. On this day, December 4, his birthday, we salute his accomplishments and his legacy of respect and equal opportunity for all.

Having grown up in Little Italy myself, I had the privilege of knowing and learning from Johnny Lombardi—how deeply he loved people from all parts of the world and how he wanted to ensure they were fully participating citizens in this remarkable country called Canada.

Johnny Lombardi tonight will be the subject of an amazing new documentary film on his life, the life of a pioneer of multiculturalism and diversity, and a great broadcasting pioneer. “Fai na bonna jobba,” he would say: “Do a good job.”

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’d appreciate if we could finish the members’ statements, allow that to pass, and then I will come back to your point of order. Thanks.

RIDING OF ETOBICOKE–LAKESHORE

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: Mr. Speaker, let me start by congratulating you on your new role, as well as congratulating all of my colleagues on all sides of the House, new and re-elected, for being here to advocate on behalf of their communities.

I’m so pleased to be back in the Legislative Assembly representing the people of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Over the past four years, I am proud of the progress we have made across the province and in particular in my community in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Investments in health care, education and the economy have resulted in stronger communities across our province. Class sizes are smaller, test scores are up, more students are graduating, and schools are getting much-needed repairs. In Etobicoke–Lakeshore, schools are being built, renovated, expanded and repaired, and Humber College is restoring building space and creating more student spaces, all as a result of increased investments made by the province.

As a lakefront community, we are so proud of the revitalization taking place and the recognition of our small businesses through a community partnership undertaken by the joint BIAs, the Lakeshore Community Partnership and myself in a program recognizing our gems of the lakeshore, something we are so proud to have so many of. We look forward to expanding and building upon this recognition program in the years ahead.

We’ve come a long way, and now, in last week’s throne speech, we’ve laid out our plan to ensure that progress continues in Ontario and that we keep moving forward. It’s an ambitious plan. It is one that will be good for my community in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. I look forward to undertaking that work in the years ahead.

CHRIS GARRETT

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me congratulate you on your new role. We look forward to a great four years.

I stand before you today to share my plea to honour a hero from my riding, Northumberland–Quinte West. Constable Chris Garrett saved the lives of countless civilians and fellow officers on May 15, 2004, the same day he lost his life in the line of duty.

The Governor General and Prime Minister Harper have denied awarding this man the Cross of Valour due to a technicality. I’m here to tell you today, along with Premier McGuinty and over 28,000 Canadians who have signed an online petition, that an act of bravery has no expiry date. I will be presenting a resolution to this Legislature calling for Stephen Harper and Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean to accept the responsibility that this dead-

line is unreasonable. Prime Minister Harper has the ability to change this legislation, and today I'm calling on him to do just that. Award Constable Garrett the Cross of Valour that he deserves; recognize this fine man for his undeniable act of courage and heroism.

I signed the petition and I urge every member of this House to do so. They can go online to www.PetitionOnline.com/05142004/.

1350

VISITORS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—and congratulations again, by the way. I want to introduce to the House some amazing people from my riding. From the Parkdale Liberty Economic Development Corp., Bill Squires, Melody Brice and Jessica Hum are here. They are responsible for changing the face of Parkdale, one storefront at a time, with Operation Storefront. So welcome to the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): As the member knows, that isn't a point of order, but we would like to welcome you and thank you for the nice Christmas decorations that you are selling and that I purchased. It gracefully hangs on the Speaker's Christmas tree.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

Mr. Khalil Ramal: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wonder if you can join me with the rest of my colleagues in this House to congratulate my seatmate, Lou Rinaldi, on his 60th birthday.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I know all members of the House are very proud of the occasion you have reached, member from Northumberland—Quinte West. Happy birthday from all of us.

VISITORS

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I am pleased today to welcome into the House—do you remember Joshua? Joshua Rosenkrantz was one of our pages. His sister now has joined us as a page as well. So I'd like to say welcome to her mum, Pat, and to her dad, David, and to her friends Kelly and Vanessa as well, from Humber Valley Village school in the great riding of Etobicoke Centre.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: A historic occasion today—the member from Oxford celebrates a birthday. We have no idea which one it is because he refuses to tell us. Perhaps you can ask him to share that information with the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the member, and we too wish you a happy 29th birthday—that is that it, member from Oxford?—and many more.

VISITOR

Mr. Dave Levac: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Earlier we gave permission in this House to wear a ribbon. I would like to introduce in the gallery, on the west side, Melissa Tkachyk, the programs officer for the World Society for the Protection of Animals, here for this evening's festivities at 6 o'clock in room 228.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome to the parents of the pages who are here. It's a real pleasure to have you here. It's also a pleasure for me to ask all members of this Legislature to welcome this group of legislative pages for our 39th Parliament. I would ask each of the pages to please join us on the floor. This is a process that former Speaker Brown initiated and I think it's a wonderful tradition. The former Speaker planted a good seed and it's one that we're going to continue:

First, Nikita Arora from Brampton—Springdale; Mara Badali from St. Paul's; Christian Campbell, Ottawa—Orléans; Quinton Eaton—Almondm, Perth—Wellington; Simon Harmgardt, Oakville; Parker Hickey, Timmins—James Bay; Odessa Kelebay, Etobicoke—Lakeshore; David Lewis, Don Valley East; Marisa Musing, Beaches—East York; Shawn Okum, Guelph; Olivia Paty, Whitby—Oshawa; Jordan Freedman Pollock, Trinity—Spadina. Jordan, of course, is the son of our good friend at the table Lisa, and we're proud of that. Leah Rosenkrantz, Etobicoke Centre; Laura Rudback, Ajax—Pickering; Annie St. Marseille, Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry; Chris Stoner, Huron—Bruce; Émile Vercouteren, Chatham—Kent—Essex; Andrew Vettese, Eglinton—Lawrence; Diem Vu, Parkdale—High Park; and the daughter of a former member, Tiana Wildman, Algoma—Manitoulin.

On behalf of all the members and all the staff here at the Legislative Assembly, we thank you for participating in the page program and we trust that you will learn a lot over your two weeks here. Resume your posts, please.

ANNUAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today I have laid upon the table the 2006-07 Annual Report of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

ROYAL ASSENT
SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I also beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in his office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following is the title of the bill to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to provide reservist leave and the Health Insurance Act to eliminate the waiting period for military families / Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi afin de prévoir un congé pour réservistes et la Loi sur l'assurance-santé afin d'éliminer la période d'attente pour les familles des militaires.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Standing order 62(a) provides that “the standing committee on estimates shall present one report with respect to all the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 59 and 61 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year.”

The House not having received a report from the standing committee on estimates for certain ministries on Thursday, November 15, 2007, as required by the standing orders of this House, pursuant to standing order 62(b) the estimates before the committee of the Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ministry of the Attorney General, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Ministry of Culture, Democratic Renewal Secretariat, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Office of Francophone Affairs, Ministry of Government Services, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Health Promotion, Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, Office of the Premier, Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Ministry of Research and Innovation, Ministry of Revenue, Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Ministry of Transportation, Office of the Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, and Ombudsman of Ontario are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 60, the estimates, 2007-08, of these ministries and offices have not been selected for consideration and are deemed to be received and concurred in.

Report deemed adopted.

1400

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

KATELYN BEDARD BONE MARROW AWARENESS MONTH ACT, 2007 LOI KATELYN BEDARD DE 2007 SUR LE MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION AU DON DE MOELLE OSSEUSE

Mr. Crozier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to make the month of November Bone Marrow Awareness Month / Projet de loi 5, Loi visant à désigner le mois de novembre Mois de la sensibilisation au don de moelle osseuse.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: The short title of this bill will be the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Awareness Month Act. The creation of the bill was inspired by Katelyn Bedard and her parents, Joanne and Bryan, who are founders of the Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Association.

As we know, there are too many deaths in this country and in this province because of the lack of awareness about what bone marrow transplants can do to save lives. We hope that this bill, if passed, will help make people more aware.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT (WAGE SECURITY), 2007

LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (SÉCURITÉ SALARIALE)

Mr. Paul Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to provide for an Employee Wage Security Program / Projet de loi 6, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi afin d'établir un programme de sécurité salariale des employés.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to congratulate the Speaker on his appointment.

This bill protects the workers in our province. This bill is long overdue. When corporations close, pull out of our province and go back to their countries of origin, people are left with devastation in their communities. They lose their severance packages, there's a tax on their pension

plans and they lose their benefits. This is unacceptable, and it's time that our government address this issue immediately.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
AMENDMENT ACT
(RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE), 2007
LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI
(AUGMENTATION DU SALAIRE
MINIMUM)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 / Projet de loi 7, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: We in the New Democratic Party believe that \$10.25 an hour in three years is far too little, far too late. We believe that if this government is serious about addressing the problems of poverty in our midst, they will do what thousands of Ontarians have asked—labour unions, anti-poverty activists—and raise the minimum wage now, and also index it to the consumer price index as well. That is why I've introduced this bill. We need action, not another cabinet committee.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Government House leader.

Interjections.

Hon. Michael Bryant: House leader, he said.

Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent, and therefore I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Bryant seeks unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(g), notice for ballot items 1, 2, 3 and 4 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The government House leader moves that, notwithstanding standing order 96(g), notice for ballot items 1, 2, 3 and 4 be waived. Agreed? Agreed.

Agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WORLD AIDS DAY

JOURNÉE MONDIALE DU SIDA

Hon. George Smitherman: Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to add my voice to those who have offered congratulations on your selection.

I rise in my place today to talk briefly about World AIDS Day, which was marked this past Saturday. In some ways, it's entirely appropriate that I should have the opportunity to talk about AIDS not on the actual preordained day when everyone dutifully talks about it but on another day, because while we may care about December 1 and the fact that that is World AIDS Day, AIDS in itself doesn't care at all.

Stephen Lewis, who in many ways has become a Canadian symbol of the battle against AIDS, has spoken of the great rage that he feels when he thinks of the thousands and millions who have died. He has called it a failure of leadership, and so it is. Mr. Lewis's focus is Africa, where the face of AIDS is female and frequently terribly, terribly young.

But even here in our Ontario, the numbers still have the power to raise serious concern. Twenty-five thousand people in this province are living with HIV—between 1,500 and 2,000 new infections every year. Every one of us in this chamber knows someone: our friends, our lovers, our brothers, our sisters, our sons, our daughters—we all know them. And the scary thing is, not only do we know people who are aware that they are living with this disease, but chances are we know people who don't have a clue that they are. An estimated 30% of the people living with HIV are undiagnosed. The story of AIDS today is, I am grateful to say, one of leadership paying attention.

Je pense que nous sommes en train de faire des progrès dans nos efforts de traitement de ceux qui sont touchés par le SIDA et pour enrayer la propagation de la maladie.

In this province, I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished. We have built a strong community-based infrastructure of more than 90 HIV and AIDS projects and organizations. Recently, we introduced a new province-wide rapid-point-of-care HIV testing program that will offer Ontarians the opportunity to obtain an HIV test and a result on the spot. At the same time, we have expanded our anonymous testing program to include 50 sites across the province of Ontario, where Ontarians at highest risk for HIV can obtain an HIV test. These sites are tremendously important because the stigma of AIDS is still such that anonymous testing is frequently the only way to get people in so they can find out if they are or are not infected.

1410

As well, last year alone we spent more than \$71 million on HIV/AIDS drugs through the Ontario drug benefit program, which includes the Trillium drug program.

Today, I'm pleased to announce that our government has approved funding for Isentress, the first of a new class of anti-retroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS. Isentress meets a compelling medical need for new anti-retroviral treatments, given the increasing prevalence of drug-resistant HIV. Acknowledging this need, the ministry's expert committee reviewed Isentress through the new rapid review process. Within one week of Isentress receiving its notice of compliance from Health Canada, we're ready to provide funding through the Ontario public drug programs for Isentress on an exceptional access basis.

Notre province est de toute évidence un chef de file en matière de collaboration entre les secteurs et les disciplines afin de concentrer l'expertise nécessaire sur les problèmes que nous devons résoudre pour renforcer notre action face à cette épidémie.

L'Ontario réunit des chercheurs sur le SIDA, des responsables de l'élaboration des politiques, des responsables de la santé publique, des organismes communautaires de santé et des services sociaux ainsi que des personnes vivant avec le SIDA afin de collaborer à déterminer l'orientation stratégique de notre action.

The theme of this year's World AIDS Day was leadership—because leadership is what we must have if we are going to finally win this battle and wipe this disease from the face of the earth.

Now is not the time to shrink from this ambitious objective nor is it the time to pit one initiative against another. That is why I'm calling on the federal Minister of Health to immediately reverse his decision to cut funding of HIV/AIDS initiatives in Ontario by 30%. That decision is totally unacceptable and it is unfairly singling out the province of Ontario and its people. We all know that there is enough money for the federal government to maintain current funding levels and invest new money in vaccine development as they have promised.

This is one of the rare issues that we face in this Legislature about which I know we don't have to be partisan. We all believe the same thing; we just need to remind ourselves, and each other, once in a while.

That's what I'm doing here today: I'm asking my colleagues and all Ontarians to continue showing leadership to others and to continue to expect leadership from others. We do that, and we'll help change the world for the better.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RENDEMENT SCOLAIRE

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I rise in the House today to highlight our recent progress in helping more students achieve their full potential.

Je suis très fière des améliorations que nous avons apportées à l'éducation pour aider les élèves à réussir.

Since the start of the school year, we've funded more than 1,000 additional elementary teachers to further reduce class sizes. We've also expanded high school

programs that allow students to explore careers and customize their education. And we've created new teaching resources focused on environmental education, autism and English as a second language.

In addition, there are thousands of construction projects completed or under way to make our schools safer and healthier places to learn. And this summer, we announced an additional \$182 million for the current school year, in addition to the \$781-million funding increase announced last March.

Our government is committed to ensuring that our publicly funded schools have the resources they need to help our students succeed. These results, coupled with the hard work being done every day by Ontario's teachers, administrators and support staff, has resulted in higher student achievement. In fact, Ontario students are now performing among the best in the world in reading, math and science.

Just within the past week we've seen the scores from two international studies released. Ontario results of the 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study showed Ontario's nine- and 10-year-old students rank among the top students in the world in reading. Only the Russian Federation and Hong Kong were in a performance range higher than Ontario. And a second study—this one from the Programme for International Student Assessment—found that our province's 15-year-old students are achieving excellent results in science. In overall science, only Finland and Hong Kong/China were in a performance range higher than Canada. Within Canada, only Alberta was in a performance range higher than Ontario.

The top performance of Ontario's youth shows that we are equipping our students with the tools that they need to succeed in the competitive global economy of the 21st century. These high scores are because our students, parents, educators and government are working together.

I ask my colleagues and the good citizens of Ontario to join me in saluting our educators—not just today but throughout the year every day. They provide our students with the tools and knowledge they need to be successful in life. They encourage and inspire our children, provide strong leadership and support our school communities. I encourage everyone to nominate an extraordinary educator for a Premier's Award for Teaching Excellence. These awards are a great way to say thank you to those who keep our schools safe and healthy and who help our students reach their full potential. Nominations for the Premier's awards will be accepted until January 28, 2008.

Our government has made major strides in education. We know there's more work to be done. Each year, our government consults with its education partners across the province and asks for their input. We now have a foundation for success and we have to keep moving forward. That's why we have appointed a special adviser to recommend the best way to implement full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, and that's why we're working to reduce the barriers facing students in at-risk

communities by dramatically expanding the successful Pathways to Education initiative and by investing attention and resources in schools in marginalized neighbourhoods.

Nous continuerons de collaborer avec les parents et les éducatrices et éducateurs pour améliorer le rendement des élèves. Nous voulons faire en sorte qu'un nombre toujours croissant de jeunes obtiennent leur diplôme d'études secondaires et réussissent dans la vie.

Our government is committed to helping our students reach their full potential by making Ontario's publicly funded education system the very best it can be.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR SECTEUR MANUFACTURIER

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'd like to start by saying how delighted I am to be back in the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and I look forward to continuing to strengthen Ontario's economic advantage.

Since our government took office in 2003, it has been one of our top priorities to shape a globally competitive environment and innovative economy. Over four short years, we believe we have delivered on many of those fronts: Hundreds of thousands of new jobs have been created; we've invested an historic \$1.7 billion in our innovation and commercialization program to turn great ideas into great jobs, products and services; and I'm proud that every year more than 140,000 newcomers are choosing Ontario as the best place to open up a business and join the workforce.

Cela reflète une économie prospère et concurrentielle, une économie qui se situe à l'avant-plan de la liste des priorités pour de nouveaux investissements, une économie qui crée des produits et services à la fine pointe de la technologie recherchés et nécessaires partout dans le monde, et une économie qui incite des gens de partout sur la planète à venir s'installer en Ontario.

However, as much as we would like to, no government can deflect the challenges that market pressures create, and it's no secret that Ontario's manufacturing sector is facing tough times. The very foundation that created the prosperity we know today is struggling. That's why I'm here today to tell the people of Ontario that the McGuinty government is committed to continue building on Ontario's response and competitiveness strategy for manufacturers.

Manufacturing is extremely important to Ontario's economic prosperity. Our government knows that the sector faces challenges, and we know there are problems that have to be resolved. We have been active in helping keep this sector competitive, and we continue to act to ensure that manufacturers are able to grow and prosper.

The fundamentals are in place. We're making it easier for manufacturers to do business in Ontario by phasing out the capital tax by 2010. We are reducing business education taxes which, when fully implemented by 2014, will benefit more than 500,000 businesses. We're striking

a balance between competitive and sustainable tax regimes, and investments in education, health care and infrastructure, the fundamentals that keep our economy strong.

Manufacturers across the province told us that to stay competitive they needed more avenues to get their products to more consumers, and we acted: An historic \$30-billion ReNew Ontario infrastructure plan has helped Ontario manufacturers raise the flow of goods to key markets across Ontario and throughout North America, not to mention 10 new international marketing centres around the world.

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Our government is proactively engaging with the private sector, using the multiplier effect of strategic public investments to leverage industry expansion and job creation. We listened to the auto sector. They told us that we needed to increase investments to assembly plants, and we translated that into a half-billion-dollar fund that leveraged \$7 billion in investment.

I'm proud to say that our auto investments have boosted Ontario to the number one automotive producer in North America for three years running, and this at a time of major restructuring.

We looked at the whole of our manufacturing sector and introduced an advanced manufacturing investment strategy—again, a half-billion-dollar plan to increase competitiveness and productivity across the sector. Now we're positioning Ontario's economy for the next generation of jobs. Our government's \$1.15-billion next generation jobs fund will spur significant investment and create high-value jobs in high-potential areas of our economy, such as clean automotive, environmental technologies, biotech, ICT, digital media and more.

The Ontario government has more than a strategy for manufacturing in Ontario; we do have a vision. That's why I'm very pleased today to announce two gentlemen who have joined us in the galleries today: our co-chairs of the Ontario Manufacturing Council. Jayson Myers, president of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, is here with us today, and we welcome Jayson Myers. We have done a tremendous amount of work with Canadian manufacturers, not just our trade missions to Alberta, but continuous work in terms of strengthening our manufacturing sector. Jim Stanford, our other co-chair, and economist with the Canadian Auto Workers, is here in the House. We thank him for joining us today. We have developed a tremendous relationship with this particular union, the largest private union in the nation. Thank you for being here today, Jim.

Led by these two chairs, the council will identify strategic approaches and recommend to our government how we can best support this sector. I'm very pleased that they've joined us here today. Their strategic leadership is a vital addition to our council and a big win for Ontario's manufacturing sector. I look forward to working with them both, and the council, to help manufacturers continue to create wealth and prosperity across Ontario's economy.

MANUFACTURING

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I rise in the House to add my support for the Ontario Manufacturing Council, announced here today by my colleague. I welcome the council as another component in our government's strategy to help Ontario's manufacturers. As Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, this is important to me because small and medium-sized manufacturers comprise 99.5% of all manufacturing establishments in Ontario. I look forward to working with the council, my colleague Minister Papatello and my other colleague, David Ramsay, to ensure that our small and medium-sized manufacturers succeed.

Since our government took office, we have taken comprehensive action to support Ontario's manufacturing sector. We implemented the auto strategy. We implemented the advanced manufacturing investment strategy. We have worked aggressively to maximize opportunities flowing from Alberta's oil sands. We brought forward the next generation jobs fund. We also focused on helping our manufacturers compete globally and find new opportunities and new markets. We are reducing taxes—phasing out the capital tax in 2010 and reducing business education tax rates, which, when fully implemented by 2014, will benefit more than 500,000 businesses.

Our government recognizes that Ontario manufacturers face challenges. But the key point is that our government is at the table, partnering with the sector to boost innovation, attract investment and create and protect jobs. Our government looks forward to continuing this productive partnership in the years ahead, and I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the two chairs.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mr. Frank Klees: On behalf of our caucus, I want to congratulate Ontario students for their excellent achievement on international tests. It's a tribute to them, and it's a tribute to their teachers and to their parents and, indeed, to the education system in this province.

We take nothing away when there are positive results. But what I want to do as well is express the pride we have, as a PC caucus, in having introduced standardized testing in this province so that we could indeed measure the success of our students and ensure that the appropriate resources are placed in those areas where students need that support. The Liberal Party, on every occasion, voted against the opportunity to implement standardized testing. Today, the government stands with us in taking great pride in that foundation that was laid so that we could, in fact, congratulate the excellence of our students in this province.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Today is a day of great significance, as we acknowledge the importance of the

manufacturing sector and its workers. Historically, there has been no greater contributor to the prosperity of Ontario than the manufacturing sector. The manufacturing sector has long been the backbone of Ontario's economy. It is a sector that touches every corner of this great province. It provides meaningful employment to more than 940,000 Ontarians, putting food on the tables and roofs over the heads of themselves and their families.

Tragically, the manufacturing sector has fallen on difficult times in recent years. Since October 2003, Ontario has lost more than 175,000 manufacturing jobs—over 18% of this industry. These losses have been spread across subsectors of the manufacturing sector in communities across the province.

Last month alone, on November 1, Chrysler announced that it would be laying off 1,100 workers in Brampton; on November 21, the Lear plant in Windsor announced closure, leaving 160 workers unemployed; on November 16, Promens Canada in Lindsay laid off 80 workers; on November 15, Kraft Canada laid off 380 workers; and on and on it goes, with other plants that have announced closures in Brantford, Guelph, Cornwall and London. There are 2,419 manufacturing jobs gone out of Ontario in November alone, as this carnage continues.

This is part of a greater economic trend that is clouding Ontario's once-mighty economy. Where it was once the engine of Canada's economy, it has now been relegated to the unenviable position of the economic caboose. Just recently, reports show that Ontario ranks last in GDP growth, last in retail sales, seventh out of 10 in employment growth—jobs growth—and we're near the bottom in housing starts across Canada. This is the reality of Premier Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

This has been the reality for a couple of years, and yet what has been the reaction of the Premier? They announced just last week that they would appoint the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane and former Minister of Natural Resources to examine the problem. Apparently, it is no longer just a small contraction. Finally, it has grown into a real problem. It took four years for this government to recognize that they have a real problem in this area, and 175,000 families have paid the price for its not recognizing that problem earlier.

What have the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and the Minister of Small Business been doing for the past four years? Why haven't they been examining the problem and lobbying the Premier at the Cabinet table not to break his promise and eliminate the capital tax faster than 2014, and not to break his promise on raising electricity prices? Why have they not lobbied the Premier not to bait voters with a tempting holiday, which is akin to imposing a \$2-billion tax on Ontario's business sector in the form of a holiday in February? With the strength of Ontario's dollar, why haven't they reduced business taxes and reduced red tape so that manufacturers in Ontario can compete with other jurisdictions in the Great Lakes Basin?

We have seen no broad-based help for manufacturers in Ontario. When the member for Timiskaming—

Cochrane served as Minister of Natural Resources, we saw the forest industry shed 40,000 jobs under his tutelage, we saw 12 sawmills closed, we saw dozens of pulp mills closed. He has now been given the job of examining the manufacturing industry in general. Given the member's track record, I greatly fear for the future of the manufacturing sector here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to remind members on all sides of the House that certainly we encourage conversations, but we need to have respect for one another. If you have a serious conversation that you want to have, I'd ask that you take it outside the House and allow us to conduct House business here.

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STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mr. Rosario Marchese: New Democrats would like to recognize and give credit to the teachers of Ontario for the results achieved in the international reading literacy study, which are due in large part to their efforts.

New Democrats have some concerns. Test scores have become the driving force of this government, as indeed in the previous Conservative government, so that they can advertise a politically useful number. We do not believe that standardized test scores should ever be the prime indicator of the success of the system.

Many of the teachers share our concern that in Ontario higher standardized test scores are being achieved at the expense of other skills and areas that are equally valuable. No one teacher has ever said to me, "I am really happy about the time and energy that we are putting into standardized testing." No teacher has said that they think that higher test scores alone are an indication of higher learning. Most teachers say that they feel pressure to produce a higher number, and so that's what they do. Many teachers are concerned about the time being spent on testing and the lack of time spent in other areas such as art and music, and this includes their concerns about spending more time on special education. Many are concerned with the limited nature of the test preparation agenda and the fact that it limits the educator's ability to explore subjects in depth.

Today, we believe that we should give credit to our teachers for these results. But even those who deserve the credit are telling us that there's a lot more to a successful education system than standardized test results.

WORLD AIDS DAY

JOURNÉE MONDIALE DU SIDA

M^{me} France Gélinas: New Democrats also want to recognize World AIDS Day. Mr. Smitherman has already mentioned the leadership of Mr. Stephen Lewis—a great social democrat and previous leader of the NDP, I might add—in fighting AIDS in Africa.

We in Ontario have to acknowledge the grim reality that since 1985, Ontario continues to have the highest

number of positive HIV test reports in Canada. In 2005 there were 1,670 positive HIV tests reported, a 20% increase since 2000. Of those people, 14% were women. HIV infection amongst women has been steadily increasing over the years, and they now account for 25% of the positive test results.

There are two points I want to make about what the government can do to improve the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS. First, change the northern health travel grants so that people with HIV/AIDS will qualify for the grants when they travel to access the services they need.

Le programme doit être assoupli afin que les critères d'éligibilité du programme de subvention accordé aux résidents du nord de l'Ontario pour frais de transport à des fins médicales, afin que les gens du nord qui vivent avec le VIH / SIDA et qui doivent voyager pour avoir accès aux services dont ils ou elles ont besoin, soient remboursés pour leur déplacement.

Mon deuxième point parle de la pauvreté. Plusieurs des personnes atteintes du SIDA / VIH n'ont d'autres sources de revenu que le programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées. Le montant de la pension est tellement bas, que ces gens qui sont souvent très malades sont forcés de vivre dans la pauvreté. Ceci n'est pas acceptable.

My second point is that people who live with HIV depend on ODSP. ODSP has to be increased so that we can make a real difference in the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Mr. Paul Miller: Economic development: In the presentation by the minister, she said, "We have a vision." In Hamilton, your vision is clouded. We've seen little or no evidence of manufacturing or industrial jobs being created in our city. By the way, you might want to add a steel expert to your committee. He might have a lot of valuable input.

Low-paying service jobs do not fix the economic downturn in our communities. We have one of the highest residential and business taxes in Ontario. Until this government completely reverses social downloading, no business will be headed for Hamilton.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The Minister of Small Business said in his statement, "We implemented the auto strategy." But clearly, with over 170,000 manufacturing jobs disappearing, many of them in the auto sector, that's not working.

He said that he implemented the advanced manufacturing investment strategy. Again, that's not working.

He said that he's worked aggressively to maximize opportunities flowing from Alberta's oil sands. I guess that's where all the jobs are going.

He brought forward the next generation jobs fund. Again, that's not working.

Finally, he talked about reducing the business education tax. I certainly know from our friends in TABIA that that is not working. In fact, it's not even going to come into place for another seven years.

So has this government done much for small business? No.

LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just like to remind members on all sides that in my opinion one of the most important places in this building is our legislative library. We thank the staff there for the great work that they do for all of us. I would just remind everyone that it is their annual holiday open house. That's from 3 to 6 p.m. today on the third floor in the north wing, featuring hidden treasures of the library. So I would encourage you to help support our legislative library.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is to the Premier. There is an article in today's Globe and Mail indicating the government will experience a significant loss, possibly in excess of several hundred million dollars, as a result of investments that have gone into the dumpster. Will the Premier indicate if this is indeed the case and, if yes, what impact the loss will have on government finances?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: There are \$720 million in investments in the so-called commercial paper issue. At this point in time, we estimate that our losses will be under \$100 million and fully offset by net interest savings, and therefore will have no impact on the province's financial statement, no impact on cash flow.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: The minister can obfuscate as much as he wants and try to muddy the waters, but a loss is a loss. You don't scoff at a loss of over \$100 million. That's the Liberal attitude. We're talking taxpayers' dollars here—we see the approach of this government and its members—quite possibly, as the minister suggested, hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.'s motto is "Know your limit and play within it." You seem to have ignored your own agency's advice and gone to the casino with taxpayers' money. Why would you allow the financing authority to roll the dice with taxpayers' dollars?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Financial institutions around the world are experiencing this situation. In fact, this is a substantial sum of money; we recognize that. It is less than 10% of our cash holdings. The amounts purchased were done within reasonable limits of prudence. The hundred-million figure is there because we're awaiting

the results of the Montreal accord. That is our best estimate.

I should point out that our potential writeoff as a result of this is far lower than many other private institutions relative to their cash holdings. I should point out, it is not uncommon for public authorities to have investments like this. I should point out further that Ontario's bonds continue to sell very well throughout the world, again re-emphasizing the confidence credit granters have in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I'm told if they went to the secondary market today they'd be looking at a loss in excess of \$200 million. This government's attitude toward the loss of this many hard-earned tax dollars is eerily similar to their nonchalance regarding manufacturing job losses: "Don't worry, be happy." We could have in brackets here "you dumb taxpayers." Liberal arrogance personified.

Government—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just ask the member to reconsider his comment that he made in regard to taxpayers in the province and to try and at least keep a good tone within this Legislature.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Government is in the stewardship business when it comes to tax dollars, not the investment business. You've exposed taxpayers and apparently aren't doing anything to prevent something similar from occurring in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Answer.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Will you commit today to calling in the Auditor General, asking him to determine what happened, why it happened, who is responsible and how we ensure it doesn't happen again?

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Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would remind the member opposite that this has global consequences affecting many public borrowing authorities and others. I would also remind the member opposite that in 1995 we bought these investments, in 1996 we bought these investments, in 1997 we bought these investments, in 1998 we bought these investments, in 1999 we bought these investments, in 2000 we bought these investments, in 2001 we bought these investments, in 2002 we bought these investments and in 2003 we bought these investments.

This writedown is unfortunate. The amounts invested were less than 10% of our cash holdings. Ontario's performance and rate of return exceeds that of other jurisdictions. International credit-granting organizations and people who buy our bonds continue to do so at record pace because of the financial—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Minister of Finance. As you know, August 13 became a day of infamy in financial markets when these risky investments were effectively frozen after investors became suddenly spooked by

the US sub-prime mortgage losses. That was almost four months ago. Why did four months pass before this minister or his predecessor came forward with a public statement to Ontario taxpayers of exactly what their loss has been by the McGuinty government's risky investments?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to remind the members that you were very supportive of your member when he asked his question. It was very quiet. The moment your member sat down, the noise started. There is room for banter within this House, but we need to keep it at an acceptable level, and I would ask the members to take that into consideration. Thank you.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would remind the member opposite that all of these investments are fully disclosed through public accounts routinely debated by this Legislature. In this particular case, Ontario's exposure is lower than most other comparable jurisdictions, representing less than 10% of our cash reserves. Cash reserves are routinely invested in order to earn a rate of return to further help us provide better health care, better education and to make investments in the environment. This is all documented in the public accounts, all documented through the OEFC and all readily available to all members of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Tim Hudak: If we could interpret the Minister of Finance's comments, what he's telling us is that he's effectively buried this issue since August 13, 2007. I guess in the meantime we had an election campaign, and certainly the Minister of Finance and the Premier, Dalton McGuinty, did not want the substantial loss to Ontario taxpayers to become public until after the election campaign. Will the Minister of Finance stand in his place today and apologize to the taxpayers of Ontario for keeping this buried for four months and for the substantial losses of these investments?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: First of all, all these figures with respect to the amounts of investments are fully available to the member and to all members of the assembly. We routinely look at them—our members do. We're aware of what the OEFC is doing and what the government is doing. I'd urge him to look more carefully every year at these things.

Relative to other jurisdictions, we do not have as much exposure as others in terms of the percentage of our cash reserves. But those numbers are readily available. They are accessible to members and have been subject to tabling in the Legislature and subject to all the usual scrutiny that comes with this assembly. We'll know the final number once the terms of the Montreal accord are set. But I remind the member opposite, we anticipate no net impact on our financial statements resulting from this right now.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Minister of Finance asks us to look more carefully. Maybe the Minister of Finance and his predecessors should look more carefully before exposing Ontario taxpayers to risky mortgages in Austin, Texas or Atlanta, Georgia.

Minister, some \$200 million potentially lost to Ontario taxpayers—taxpayers, by the way, who are paying higher

taxes under the Dalton McGuinty government, taxpayers who are paying higher hydro rates under the Dalton McGuinty and have seen substantial sums invested in risky mortgage schemes in the United States.

Minister, I want to know, who made the judgment call to invest in these risky mortgages, what penalty is that individual going to pay, and will you finally call in the auditor to get the truth before the assembly today?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Ontario has been investing in these papers for 15 years. By my reckoning, governments led by Bob Rae, Mike Harris, Ernie Eves and Dalton McGuinty have made these investments. Of course, Floyd Laughren was the finance minister at the time some of those investments were made.

This is not to diminish the fact that there is a write-down. Ontario has been hit, as other jurisdictions have. It's my view that the investments relative to cash reserves were relatively low compared to other jurisdictions. The loss we estimate to be under \$100 million. No one wants that, obviously. I don't think your government would have wanted that when you invested in these types of instruments. Unfortunately, like most other jurisdictions, we have been caught up in the situation. Again, we estimate the loss will be under \$100 million, which is not to say that we don't want to do better in the future.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier: Yesterday, you waxed eloquent about meeting with the Premier of Quebec and talking about sustaining manufacturing jobs, so I want to ask about measures Quebec is taking. Does the Premier agree with Quebec's introduction of a \$120-million workforce investment tax credit that is winning kudos from labour leaders and manufacturing leaders in the province of Quebec, and if the Premier agrees, will he commit to introducing such a workforce investment tax credit here in Ontario in your economic statement next week?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I always appreciate the question. Quebec is bringing its own particular approach, and I can tell you that we've been bringing ours. I like to think that we have been leading here. We were the first jurisdiction in North America to come forward with a half-billion-dollar auto sector fund. We landed \$7 billion worth of new investment. We did that, and that was an Ontario approach. We also have in place an advanced manufacturing investment strategy—and by the way, these were in place long before Quebec announced its recent spate of initiatives. That half-billion-dollar fund has spawned, I think, some \$600 million worth of new investment and some 3,400 new or protected jobs. We've also brought a pretty aggressive approach to supporting agriculture and forestry.

I must say that in each and every instance, we have not had the support of the leader of the NDP or his party when it comes to working with labour and with the private sector to strengthen our manufacturing sector. I

would love to get that support as we work together on behalf of our manufacturing sector.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier boasts about an auto sector strategy when the analysts say Ontario, over the next five years, is going to be the biggest loser of auto sector jobs in all of North America.

But again, I want to ask the Premier about his conversations with the Premier of Quebec. Does the Premier agree with Quebec's approach of taking back wood allocation rights from forest companies that shut down mills and kill jobs, and if he does, will he commit to taking back wood allocation rights from forest sector companies that have shut down mills and killed jobs here in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, Quebec has its particular approach. I think it more appropriate to their circumstances than ours here in Ontario. We have in place over \$1 billion in programs available to assist the forest sector over the next five years. We've already flowed \$275 million in assistance to the forest industry. That has led to \$390 million worth of new projects that are under way because of our programs, and we expect to be able to announce many more in the coming months.

Beyond that, we know that energy costs remain a real and pressing issue for the forestry sector. That's why we have in place our pulp and paper electricity transition program. This is not something that they have in the province of Quebec, but we are proud to say that we have it here. It's a \$140-million program to reduce electricity costs by 15% over three years.

So again, I praise Premier Charest for the approach he's bringing in Quebec, but we're bringing our own approach here in the province of Ontario.

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Mr. Howard Hampton: Once again, Premier, you talk about \$1 billion. The fact is that industry has only taken up \$89 million because what you have advocated doesn't work for them. Since you announced a special rate for paper mills, paper mills have laid off in Kapuskasing, Thunder Bay and Dryden, and more layoffs are on the way.

Premier, you should know that mills and factories in Quebec have a hydro rate that is only one half the industrial rate here in Ontario. Since your conversation with Premier Charest last week, will you commit in your economic statement to introduce a reduced industrial hydro rate here in Ontario which matches the reduced industrial hydro rate in Quebec?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The leader of the NDP would have us believe that there are no economic challenges being faced by our cousins in Quebec, but I can tell you that there are some real and pressing challenges there.

We talked about some of our programs here in contrast to their programs. One of the things I would gladly exchange is their hydroelectric capacity in Quebec for ours, because they have been blessed by Mother Nature in a way that is simply stupendous. The leader of the NDP knows well that hydroelectricity is so much less

expensive than that produced by so many other means. We are working as hard as we can to expand our hydroelectric capacity. We are increasing the capacity at Niagara Falls, for example. We are looking to more run-of-the-mill opportunities that we have shunned in the past because we think it's really important to pursue those for environmental as well as economic reasons. But we look forward to continuing to work with all of our sectors to strengthen our economy.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Howard Hampton: Again to the Premier. The Environmental Commissioner released his report today. Does the Premier agree with the Environmental Commissioner that Ontario should crack down on urban sprawl by boosting transit and reducing highway expansion? If he agrees, will the Premier cancel the Highway 404 expansion through the greenbelt and use the money saved to build light rapid transit that would improve transit service, ease road congestion and fight climate change, which position is the Premier's position?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, I want to thank the Environmental Commissioner for his report. He always has something worthwhile to say, and we will consider his recommendations very closely.

We have, I like to think, laid down a pretty good foundation of progress when it comes to standing up for the environment, including our initiatives to put in place a growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe. Keep in mind that Ontario had no plan to deal with population growth in a sustainable way before this. We also have in place now our climate change plan. We have a 1.8-million-acre greenbelt. We have increased the use of ethanol; we mandated that it be found to the extent of 5% in our gasoline. We are pursuing an aggressive renewable energy plan; we've got the most aggressive plan in all of North America. We have an LCBO bottle return program now being made available at the Beer Store. We've got the toughest Clean Water Act and the toughest endangered species protection legislation in Canada. That's just a small listing of those initiatives that we've taken during our first four years, and there is much more to do.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Environmental Commissioner says that the urban densities that are happening in greenfield areas are such that they will not support rapid transit, which means more greenhouse gas, more highway congestion and more cars.

The Environmental Commissioner also has some grave concerns about the way in which the McGuinty government sponsors a \$40-billion nuclear mega scheme but then says that it doesn't have to undergo an environmental assessment. He urges that the government put your deeply flawed integrated power system plan through a full and thorough provincial environmental assessment so that the real environmental issues can be considered. Premier, will you follow the advice of the Environmental Commissioner on that front with respect to your \$40-billion nuclear mega scheme?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to take the leader of the NDP up on the issue raised regarding our support for public transit. I think it's important that Ontarians recognize that we have invested \$4.9 billion in public transit, including over \$1.8 billion in GO Transit. We now have on the table as an initiative to be delivered on by the Greater Toronto Transit Authority a \$17.5-billion massive investment in public transit—the biggest of its kind ever.

The leader of the NDP has suddenly become a champion of public transit, but when we put forward a proposal to extend the subway, he said he was against that. He said he was not in favour of our investment in public transit. It's difficult to tell from one day to the next whether he's for public transit or against public transit. On this side of the House, we are always in favour of public transit.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The question was about the McGuinty government's \$40-billion nuclear mega scheme. I take it the McGuinty government is not going to follow the Environmental Commissioner's advice on that one either.

The Environmental Commissioner also raised another serious issue. It's about your government's failure to fulfill your constitutional obligation to consult with First Nations when making decisions that affect First Nation rights; specifically, when you award mining permits and mining exploration permits without adequately consulting First Nations. Now, he urges that you reform the Mining Act. He urges that you begin a process of real consultation with First Nations. Are you prepared to follow that recommendation of the Environmental Commissioner or will we see more Platinex court cases?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I take that particular advice from the Environmental Commissioner to heart. I think he's right, and we need to do more work. I'm proud of the fact that we set up the first aboriginal affairs ministry. We have a minister dedicated to that. We know we have to put in place some reasonable protocols that ensure that effective consultation is in fact there. We know we have to take a look at the Mining Act as well to ensure that it is updated and reflects the aspirations of a progressive society here in Ontario. That is one of many recommendations we will be carefully considering in government.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Today the Environmental Commissioner released another tough report on your government's record on the environment. In response to the report, your cabinet colleague Minister Caplan suggested to the Globe and Mail newspaper this about the Environmental Commissioner, and I quote: "Clearly, he's wrong." My question to the Minister of the Environment is this: Do you agree with what Minister Caplan said when he stated that the Environmental Commissioner is clearly wrong?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'd like to thank the member opposite for her question. As the Premier has already stated, we accept the report that the Environmental Commissioner has brought forward. We always look forward to the reports of any independent officers of this Legislature. We like their advice. We will obviously study the report in great detail. But we're encouraged by some of the very positive statements he made in the report about what this government has actually done over the last four years, when you're well aware of the fact that in the eight years prior to that, absolutely nothing was done with respect to many of the projects that have already been mentioned. I will go into greater detail during the supplementary question.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Minister, the Environmental Commissioner has stated that your government needs to step back and rethink your strategy in terms of putting infrastructure over environment with respect to urban growth. To date, your strategy is to step back and blame anyone within reach.

But let me quote again from the Globe and Mail and again from Minister Caplan, that "The federal government are the ones who decide what the immigration levels are," and Ontario is simply dealing with it.

To the Minister of the Environment: Do you agree with Minister Caplan that the failure of your government's growth plan and the environmental consequences of that failure are the fault of new Ontarians and the federal government?

Hon. John Gerretsen: As the member well knows, the projections are that in the province of Ontario we expect to get about three and a half to four million more people in this province over the next 25 years. In order to accommodate that, we put in some very aggressive plans.

First of all, we put into effect the greenbelt plan that's going to protect the size of PEI: 1.8 million acres of land. Secondly, we put together a growth plan to make sure that those people who are coming to this area will be accommodated.

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We also put into effect a water protection plan to make sure that the sources of water are protected, which, by the way, you did absolutely nothing about.

I might just remind you what the commissioner said in 2002, when you were in government. He stated the following: "The water quality monitoring system has largely been abandoned by your government. I suspect that the problem may be worse than ever." As a matter of fact, you have done absolutely nothing about supporting public transit.

We are very proud of our record of accomplishment over the last four years. There's a lot of work that's been done, there's a lot more work to do, and we're—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The question is to the Premier, and it's a very easy one. Will the Premier immediately

move to pick up 50% of transit operating costs to alleviate the financial crisis affecting Ontario's cities?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I know that the member is—and she should be, as all members of the House are—concerned about consulting with municipalities, specifically the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, before embarking upon policies that would have significant ramifications for both the provincial government and those municipalities. You are aware at the present time that there are discussions going on and a full evaluation of the responsibilities that are held by the provincial government financially and those that are held by the municipal government. You are aware as well that the Ontario government has already uploaded some of the costs which municipalities have been forced to incur over the years to make room for municipalities to invest in areas which are clearly within their—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Mr. Minister, what I think everyone in this province is painfully aware of, including city councillors and treasurers, is that in fact your government refuses to pay its bills. So will you commit today to paying Toronto and in fact all municipalities the money you owe them for the administration of Ontario Works, for the per diems, for the rates for emergency hostel services and for child care before they have to set their municipal budgets?

Hon. James J. Bradley: My colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is dying to answer this question.

Hon. Jim Watson: I am very proud of the track record of the McGuinty government when it comes to dealing with municipalities across Ontario. I happened to be the mayor of the city of Ottawa during the Harris-Eves downloading, and I know full well from personal experience the damage that did to the municipal sector. That is why I'm proud that in the last four years we have uploaded land ambulance costs to a 50-50 arrangement, we've uploaded public health costs, and on January 1, we're going to start the phase-in of the Ontario drug benefit plan and ODSP, which over a four-year period will save municipal taxpayers almost \$1 billion.

MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Mr. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to congratulate you and all others who put forward their name for Speaker. It's noble work, and a special congratulations to you for being the chosen one.

My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Mississauga is a strong and vibrant fast-growing community, and, like most municipalities, it needs work from senior levels of government. The McGuinty government's Move Ontario 2020 plan is a big step forward for Mississauga, providing \$65 million for Mississauga Transit as part of that plan.

As a new MPP, I want to bring back to my constituents information about what their provincial government is doing for them. Would the minister be able to elaborate on some of the other initiatives the government has undertaken to support the people of Mississauga and municipalities across Ontario?

Hon. Jim Watson: Let me congratulate the honourable member from Mississauga South on his election—what a great addition to the Legislative Assembly—and for his first question.

The McGuinty government is very proud of the investments we have made in Mississauga: the Move Ontario 2020 plan that saw \$15.3 million in provincial gas tax go to that particular region, and \$11 million in 2005-06 helping to support public transit. This government is also back in the business of providing support to municipalities through affordable housing programs. The region of Peel is receiving \$39.6 million in support to help those people who need a break when it comes to affordable housing. In 2007, Mississauga received \$18 million in part of its land ambulance cost-sharing agreement. We're very proud of the investments of the McGuinty government in Peel region, in Mississauga. We look forward to working with Mayor Hazel McCallion in a respectful fashion.

Mr. Charles Sousa: Thank you, Minister, for that information. It is clear that the government has a strong working relationship with the city of Mississauga.

I know that previous governments have butted heads with municipalities. They've treated them as second-tier governments. I know that there are some politicians who have shown little respect to our municipalities and have downloaded services, telling them to stop whining.

Minister, I don't want to start throwing insults. I want to work closely with other levels of government and to help Ontario and our municipalities prosper. Can you tell me in what other ways this government can work with Mississauga, other municipalities and other levels of government so that our municipalities can become even stronger?

Hon. Jim Watson: One of the very first meetings I had an opportunity to go to as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing was by the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario, chaired by Hazel McCallion. I was able to give an update on the fiscal review process that is going to report to us with a consensus report in the spring, and the committee of mayors from all across the province of Ontario unanimously endorsed a report by Hazel McCallion, called Cities Now, demanding that the federal government help the municipal sector all throughout the province of Ontario. They need help. They need help in transit, in housing, in infrastructure, and they endorse Mayor McCallion's Cities Now program and the One Cent Now program put forward by Mayor Miller and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

In my own hometown of Ottawa, 150 business, labour and civic leaders marched on Parliament Hill, demanding that the federal government help the municipal sector throughout the province. Our mayor, Larry O'Brien, said,

“We’re calling on the federal government to take a leadership role and work with the province to ensure that the city is properly funded.” What was the response from the federal finance minister to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock for a moment, please. I would just remind all members that when the Speaker rises, there is an expectation that they will take their seats, please.

Start the clock.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services: Minister, over the past few months, confrontations in Caledonia have resulted in people being knocked unconscious and sent to the hospital. As a result of this violence and as a representative for Caledonia, I have received countless phone calls and e-mails. People are asking me one specific question. They are asking, “Who’s in charge? Who’s in charge of the OPP?”

Minister, can you assure the people in my riding that you are accountable, that you are the one who sets the policy and you are the one who sets the direction for our OPP?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Speaker, congratulations on your appointment.

Certainly the role of the OPP is to ensure that the community and its residents are safe, and I have to tell you and the people of Ontario that I am very, very pleased with the way the OPP has acted throughout this entire incident. I believe that we should be very proud of the very excellent and professional nature of engagement with the community that has taken place over the course of the last little while.

1510

Mr. Toby Barrett: Minister, I’ll go back to my question. Subsection 17[2] of the Ontario Police Services Act states that the OPP is subject to the Solicitor General’s direction. That’s you. Going back to my question, Minister, do you agree—perhaps you do not agree with the police act—that you have ministerial responsibility for setting direction for the OPP? Are you the one, or are you not the one? Are you the one my constituents can go to with respect to some of the concerns with the OPP with respect to democratic responsibility concerning OPP services in Caledonia? Are you the guy?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: If the member is suggesting that the solicitor general or any other minister or member should interfere with the operation of the OPP, he’s wrong. He’s dead wrong.

What I would suggest to this member, and to everyone in the province of Ontario, is that we understand, when tensions are high, that we do everything in our power to ensure that those tensions aren’t escalated, that we have confidence in the Ontario Provincial Police and the very professional way they carry out their mandate.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Over the last five years, Hamilton has lost thousands of good-paying jobs in the manufacturing and industrial sectors. What is the Minister of Economic Development going to do to address the economic crisis facing our city?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I’m happy to congratulate this member for joining us here in this House. Congratulations to you for being here.

I do want to say that we have a long record of support to Hamilton, and it’s very important that all of us understand how core the city of Hamilton and its success are to Ontario. It will remain a priority of this government, and I think that all the representatives who come from Hamilton will see the work we are doing today and that we have done.

For example, in our first term—I will be happy to follow up with an additional list on the next question, but let’s just start with Stelco. It was this government, in fact, that stepped forward to protect the pensions of the Stelco employees—a \$150-million loan guarantee. That was last term, but just the other day you’ll note that our Premier was in Hamilton at Dofasco with an AMIS project that actually allows Dofasco to innovate for the future and secure the jobs of Hamilton. We expect this member to support those kinds of initiatives.

Mr. Paul Miller: I’d like to address the comment about Stelco. That \$150 million was a loan to the company, and all it really did was make it more attractive to sell. What happened was that the company was devalued and sold in 18 months for \$1 billion. The CEO of that company walked back to Virginia with \$68 million in his pocket. Shame.

Major companies like Westinghouse, Consumers Glass, American Can, Firestone and Procter and Gamble, the big steel producers, and many small manufacturers like Otis Elevator, Frost Fence and International Harvester are all gone. Thousands of jobs have left the city—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Question?

Mr. Paul Miller: What is going to replace them when the government has done nothing to address the issues that forced them out in the first place?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’m not sure what the question is there, Minister.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: It’s important to note that we are working with the city of Hamilton. We were with the mayor the other day, and he spoke very heartily about this Premier and our commitment to the city of Hamilton, and that is going to continue.

Let me say this: The fundamental infrastructure that Hamilton needs to thrive is the role that we can play, and have played, with the city of Hamilton. The \$11 million in public transit—the same party you now represent voted against that initiative. The \$3 million to clean up the brownfield areas in Hamilton for redevelopment and economic development—you’re now part of the party that voted against that initiative. The list goes on, and it

will continue because our investments in Hamilton are important for the infrastructure that businesses need to thrive in Hamilton. Dofasco is but one recent example.

I appreciate your comments about Stelco, but the people in Hamilton want jobs, and that's what we help to deliver.

FAMILY DAY

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Firstly, I would like to congratulate you on your new role.

Our government has created a new public holiday, Family Day, to be held on the third Monday in February. My constituents, like all Ontarians, work very hard and they deserve more time to spend with their families. Yesterday in the Legislature, the official opposition had something interesting to say about our government's initiative to reward Ontarians for all their hard work. Could you please indicate why our government went forward with the creation of Family Day?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Speaker, congratulations on your election as Chair.

To the member from Mississauga–Brampton South, congratulations to you on your election to this place. We know you're going to make a fine contribution here. We know you're going to do a fine job in your riding and, judging by your first question, you're already off to a great start.

You're absolutely right. Our government has just created a new public holiday called Family Day because our government believes in a healthy and balanced work life, and a home life, for our workers across this province.

Yesterday something strange happened. Because if I recall, during the election I remember John Tory—

Interjections

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Just a moment, please. I just remind members that respect is a two-way street within this House. I reiterate that there is some room for some banter within the Legislature, but when it gets a little loud it's difficult to hear the response.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Yesterday in this House, the official opposition seemed to make it quite clear that they no longer support this new holiday, Family Day. This comes in stark contrast to the position they held in the last election. During the last election, John Tory said, "The gap between New Year's Day and Easter is a long gap and I'm all for a family having a day to be together." What happened between the election and today?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just ask the members of the opposition—I say the same to government—there is some room, but heckling your own member is not the appropriate thing to do. And it is her first day, first question in the House.

You have the floor, member.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It would indeed seem that the official opposition has changed their tune. Maybe the

new leader of the Opposition could explain to the hard-working families in his riding why Conservatives do not support giving hard-working Ontarians a holiday to spend together. I do remember John Tory's support for the creation of Family Day, and I think his party supported the same position at the time of the election. It would be pretty cynical for anyone to object to the creation of another day for families to spend time together.

Minister, I don't think John Tory was all alone in his support for our government's initiative. Could you tell me who else supports the creation of Family Day?

Hon. Brad Duguid: While this flip-flop yesterday may have been a surprise to some of us, frankly I don't think it should have come as too much of a surprise. I ask you, when have the Tories ever supported working families across this province? When have the Tories ever cared about families across this province? I think we're back to the same old story, the same old Tories.

But this party, this government, respects families and that's why we're looking forward to, on the third Monday of every February, giving families a chance to come together, giving family a chance to celebrate what's important in life in Ontario, giving families a chance to enjoy the health that comes with spending time together. The workers of this family deserve that day. This party's proud of the fact that we're going to give it to them.

1520

COURT SECURITY

Mr. Bill Murdoch: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. First, I'd like to congratulate him on his job, and next I should ask him who's in charge, but I won't.

My question concerns court security costs. As you know, we have a new courthouse in Owen Sound, and right now the city of Owen Sound is bearing the total cost of court security at the facility, which is about \$554,000, even though only one third of the cases are heard. Your predecessor had a tough time addressing this contentious issue, but Owen Sound Mayor Ruth Lovell and myself have and will keep pushing for a fair solution on who pays for court security. Minister, can you please bring me up to date on how your government plans to address this inequity?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I want to congratulate the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for being re-elected and thank him for the question, because it is an important question.

Clearly, there are municipalities across Ontario that are struggling with court security costs and policing costs, and you know, they're optimistic, because finally we have a Premier in place who understands the importance of shared responsibility and, as a result, put together the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Service and Delivery Review that's going to report back. I look forward to the findings of that review panel.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: As you know, you're a new minister in that portfolio, and that's why I wanted and

hoped that you got brought up to date. As you mentioned, you had the same Premier for four years, and he couldn't get brought up to date, so I'm a little concerned at that answer, because he mentioned that he had a lot of faith in the Premier and it's tough to have faith in the Premier when he hasn't done anything for four years.

You're putting it all on this review that's going on, Minister, and I have concern that they may not address this issue. What I would like you to do today is give us your promise that if this is not addressed, you will meet with the consortium that has been looking at that, along with a lot of the other mayors, and sit down with them and come up with an adequate solution.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Let me explain that in the previous four years our Premier was busy uploading the costs your government downloaded on municipalities.

I don't know what report is going to come back, but I do know that the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review team will come back with a consensus report between the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Toronto and the province. I think that is very, very important. I believe that shows the goodwill that is a part of this government. Whenever it comes to issues affecting municipalities, we have talked with our municipalities.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Finance Minister. Yesterday, we learned that you have no concrete plan to fix the problems at the OSC; you simply lamented that we don't have a national regulator. Today, we hear that you have no real plan or reason to write down \$100 million and you simply lament that other people are losing money as well. My question is, what concrete plans does the Finance Minister have to make sure that taxpayers won't be whacked by similar bad provincial investments in the future?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I want to thank the member for his question. Since he raised the issue of the legislative committee's recommendations—I appreciate him raising that—I went back and had a look at all 14 major recommendations, and they are all implemented or partially implemented—every one of them.

I want to thank the members of the Legislature for their outstanding input with respect to that, because it is important that investors have confidence in their capital markets. It is important that we, as a government, with our oversight and regulatory responsibility, listen to the views of the members of this Legislative Assembly. Those recommendations were far-reaching, and I am pleased that most of them have been fully implemented as of yesterday.

Mr. Michael Prue: Yesterday the minister couldn't come up with anything your government could do to protect Ontario investors, and today, with respect, the minister can't come up with anything he can do to make sure the taxpayers won't be hit yet again by financial mismanagement. Ontario deserves better from its finance

minister. My question: How can Ontario taxpayers trust the finance minister to manage the province's finances when he can't even answer these basic questions?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: This coming from a member of a government that ran a \$10-billion deficit; this coming from a party that saw a downgrading of Ontario's credit rating three times, a record; this coming from a member of a party that saw 1,300 jobs a month lost in Ontario; this coming from a party that saw a record increase in our debt.

We've eliminated the deficit. Ontario's debt-to-GDP ratio is down under this government. Confidence is restored in our public health care system, our public education system and in the government's ability to enforce its environmental laws. That's a record I'll put up against his every day of the week.

PATIENT SAFETY

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your election.

My question is for the Minister of Health. On November 29, the Canadian Institute for Health Information released the results of a three-year-long look at hospital mortality rates across the country. The report compared a hospital's mortality rate to the average Canadian experience. It will provide hospitals with an important tool to improve patient safety.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information allows hospitals to opt out of the study, and Humber River Regional Hospital, which has a site in my riding of York South–Weston, is among those that have decided not to publicize their numbers.

Considering the government's approach to increased transparency in the public health care system, I would like to know how the minister intends to reassure my constituents that Humber River Regional Hospital is meeting the standard.

Hon. George Smitherman: Congratulations to the new member on her successful election in the riding where, I'm privileged to say, I was born.

Transparency is the new government, and patients are going to come to expect and to learn much more about the performance of their health care system. On the study that the honourable member mentions, CIHI, which collects the data, allows the hospitals the option of whether they will participate in its public release. My office has been in touch with Humber River Regional Hospital. In the interests of transparency, I'm pleased to tell the House that they'll be releasing their data within a week.

Members should know that by next year, our government will have passed a regulation that would require all hospitals to report this data, without exemption, to ensure this information continues to drive much-needed improvements in patient safety.

I thank the honourable member for her interest in this issue.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I want to thank the minister for being so forthcoming with that answer. It is important for patients to have access to this information so they can be informed about what their hospital is doing to ensure that they get the best care possible. The patients who use Humber River Regional Hospital will be pleased to know that they can expect further moves toward transparency from their hospital and their government.

As a supplementary question, I am sure that my constituents would like to know from the minister what other initiatives our government have undertaken to strengthen patient safety in the province's hospitals. Would the minister be able to tell us how our government is making sure that the health care system is more transparent and accountable to patients?

Hon. George Smitherman: As I mentioned, we see transparency as something that is particularly powerful and beneficial to our patients, so here are some initiatives that we'll follow along the same line.

By March 31, as a result of the wait times strategy, we'll be requiring all participating hospitals to begin reporting infection rates in three areas: surgical site infections, central line infections and ventilator-associated pneumonia.

By the end of July 2008, we'll implement a regulation that will require hospitals to inform patients about errors that have occurred regarding their care—very transformational. We intend to extend those requirements to all hospitals, whether they're part of the wait times strategy or not, as long as they have a sufficient number of procedures that would make this practical. These are all initiatives that will enhance the patient's understanding of circumstance. Added transparency is added pressure on hospitals to perform, and this is in keeping with our values.

1530

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. In my riding of Dufferin—Caledon, the Orangeville Fire Department has seen the resignation of seven firefighters in one week. The firefighters resigned because they received letters indicating that they were violating the union's constitution by being employed full-time in one department and acting as a volunteer with another. As you are no doubt aware, this is not a new issue. The Honourable George Adams issued a report and recommendations on how to balance the use of double-hatter firefighters. Given that this issue impacts many smaller communities across Ontario that rely on volunteers, is your government prepared to implement the Adams report recommendations to ensure that smaller fire departments that rely on volunteers will be able to use and continue to use double-hatters?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: First of all, I want to congratulate the member on her election and I want to say that she represents a view in her constituency. I want to

also inform her that our government has not changed its position and we do not believe that legislation or interference in the collective bargaining process is the solution to this issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: To the same minister: For the last five years, I've been raising this issue in the Legislature to express support for two-hatter firefighters. The minister now has two choices to protect the public interest: He must either make the fire service grant a permanent, ongoing program to support small and rural communities with their firefighter training needs or he must support legislation to protect two-hatter firefighters from these union threats. Which option will the minister choose?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Being sort of a master of introducing private members' bills, I would suggest that the member is simply doing his job in advocacy for his constituents and I encourage him to continue to do that. We're not deviating from our position with regard to this. We understand and we believe that firefighters, fire chiefs and municipalities must work together to resolve this issue. We are confident that co-operative dialogue amongst all of the partners will lead to a very, very positive solution.

PROTECTION FROM HARASSMENT

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: This past summer saw a tax on Asian-Canadian anglers here in Ontario. Last week, the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association called for enforcement of anti-harassment laws under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. What are your plans, Premier, to ensure that this summer, all legal anglers, including Asian-Canadian anglers, are free from harassment?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Thank you for the question. Harassment or activity based on anybody's heritage or cultural heritage is just not accepted in our society. We have the Human Rights Commission to investigate such instances. Where they receive complaints, they are very proactive in asserting the sanctity of people's heritage and in protecting that. I'm pleased to say that in the instances where complaints have been forwarded to the Human Rights Commission concerning incidents or allegations involving the fishers in question they have taken action and they are proceeding with the appropriate level of investigation. They have also instituted a public education campaign in the appropriate jurisdictions to make sure that the public is aware and supports the fact that this should not occur.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Premier, your minister didn't answer that question. What are your plans to ensure that in the coming year, all anglers—Asian-Canadian anglers included—can go fishing legally without fear of harassment? Can you please answer that question? What are your plans?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'll pass the supplementary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and again, congratulations on your election as the Speaker.

The question is a good one in terms of what we're doing to move forward, and I thank the member for the question, because under no circumstances should there be any assault or alleged assault without it being followed through. So one of the most important things that we can do and are going to do is education, ensuring that the fishing regulations that come out are available to all, and we're looking at whether they should be in multiple languages. We're also going to encourage the conservation officers to continue with their enforcement and to follow through.

The Attorney General was correct that if in fact there is any violence, it goes through to the OPP. Of course, it can come through our tips line as well.

PETITIONS

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett: This petition is titled "We Request Land Dispute Hearings" and is addressed to the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas land dispute deliberations to date have operated under a veil of secrecy, without transparency, and have created a atmosphere of privacy and scepticism, shutting out people from information and decisions that impact them directly; and

"Whereas Ontario's aboriginal affairs minister has indicated, in both the media and during his visit to Caledonia, his intention to garner local public input; and

"Whereas our Ontario Legislative Assembly provides a mechanism for open, accountable, transparent recorded discussion through all-party committee hearings that are open to the media;

"We, the undersigned, petition our provincially elected legislators, representing all political parties, to commence public hearings through a select or standing committee, as soon as possible."

These petitions are signed by people from Canfield, Dunnville, Hagersville and, of course, Caledonia.

PSYCHIATRIC PATIENT RIGHTS

Mr. Michael Prue: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas the officer in charge of the maximum secure psychiatric facility at the Oak Ridge division of the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre, in Penetanguishene, Ontario (Oak Ridge), requires that virtually all staff members handle mail and refuses to create a job position for a mail person so as to resolve decades of ongoing and continuous problems with the pickup and delivery of mail; and

"Whereas the chief executive officer for Oak Ridge, Dr. Brian Jones, was investigated by the RCMP in March

1996 and found to have unlawfully opened and damaged patient mail while employed as a director at the Kingston Psychiatric Hospital; and

"Whereas the chief executive officer for Oak Ridge also refuses to create a job position for a mail person so as to resolve the decades of ongoing and continuous problems with the pickup and delivery of mail; and

"Whereas the psychiatric patient advocate office for the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre has been investigating the ongoing and continuous problems with the pickup and delivery of mail for more than 20 years but has never effected a resolve of any kind, thereby acting to condone, circumvent or undermine patient rights; and

"Whereas the ongoing and continual problems with the pickup and delivery of mail constitute the opening, examining, withholding, obstructing or delaying of communications, including communications with barristers and solicitors and members of Parliament, in violation of section 26 in the Mental Health Act, RSO 1990...;

"We, the undersigned, patients at Oak Ridge, hereby petition members of the Legislative Assembly to resolve this ongoing and continued problem with violations of section 26 in the Mental Health Act, RSO 1990, c. M.7, by enacting an amendment that would require the officer in charge of a psychiatric facility to appoint a person responsible for ensuring that communications by way of mail are not being opened, examined, or withheld, and that their delivery will not in any way be obstructed or delayed."

It is signed by about 100 people of that facility.

1540

STEVENSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital needs \$1.4 million in new funding over the next three years to get its birthing unit reopened and to ensure that they can recruit enough obstetricians and health care providers to supply a stable and ongoing service for expectant mothers in our area; and

"Whereas forcing expectant mothers to drive to Newmarket, Barrie or Orangeville to give birth is not only unacceptable, it is a potential safety hazard; and

"Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital cannot reopen the unit under its current budget and the McGuinty government has been unresponsive to repeated requests for new funding;

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

"That the McGuinty Liberal government immediately provide the required \$1.4 million in new funding to Stevenson Memorial Hospital so that the local birthing unit can reopen and so that mothers can give birth in Alliston."

I agree with that petition and I've signed it.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
LABOUR DISPUTE

M^{me} France Gélinas: From Ontario Northland service supporters:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, the residents of northern Ontario communities, have had no ONTC bus service since the strike began September 29; and

“We lack adequate medical services here and must travel for specialized medical care;

“Our family members attend schools or have jobs in other areas; and

“Train service only covers a few communities; and

“Winter will be upon us soon”—is upon us right now—“and our highways will be travelled by many of us who prefer the security of bus travel; and

“The people of the north must have public transportation; and

“The mandate of the ONTC is to provide this service;

“We, the undersigned”—and there are 1,961 signatures to this—“petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to settle this dispute with the striking drivers. We need our bus service returned.”

I fully support this petition and I affix my signature to it.

HEALTH CARD RENEWAL CLINIC

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to present yet another petition about “Bringing Health Card Renewal Services Closer to Glanbrook Residents.” It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas seniors, the disabled, families with young children and other Mount Hope and Binbrook residents are forced to drive to downtown Hamilton to renew their Ontario health cards; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario mandates that health cards be renewed on a regular basis and that an Ontario health card must be presented to receive OHIP health services; and

“Whereas the Dalton McGuinty government has increased taxes and fees on local residents but has not improved services;

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

“To work with the Ontario Ministry of Health to bring a mobile health card renewal clinic to the Mount Hope and Binbrook area so that residents can more readily renew their Ontario health cards without the drive to downtown Hamilton.”

Beneath the signatures of Audrey and Trev Ormandy, I affix my signature in support.

PSYCHIATRIC PATIENT RIGHTS

Mr. Michael Prue: I have another petition from the same group of individuals on a slightly different topic. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the officer in charge of the maximum secure psychiatric facility at the Oak Ridge division of the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre in Penetanguishene, Ontario (‘Oak Ridge’), has restricted patient access to telephone communications by:

“(a) removing Bell Canada pay telephones from each ward unnecessarily, which prevents privacy of telephone calls with solicitors, financial institutions and others by reason that the calls must now be made through an Oak Ridge telephone with a switchboard operator and computerized system capable of monitoring and recording conversations, gathering personal access codes and credit card numbers, and recording data on the telephone numbers called and the times, dates and durations of the calls; and

“(b) by eliminating separate telephones on each ward that were used for conference calls to solicitors, the courts, disciplinary bodies, the Human Rights Commission and other parties; and

“(c) forcing a physically handicapped patient to share a telephone that was previously designated for his particular disability with 19 other patients on a ward; and

“(d) limiting each ward to just one telephone for all 20 patients to share, despite that (1) provincial jails provide one telephone for every 10 inmates; (2) there are up to eight additional telephones available for the four to 12 staff on each ward; (3) the majority of patients at Oak Ridge are from Toronto or other regions and generally require long-distance communications; and (4) virtually all of the 160 patients at Oak Ridge require contact with solicitors by reason of the legal proceedings relating to their detentions; and

“Whereas the chief executive officer for Oak Ridge, Dr. Brian Jones, refuses to reinstate access to telephone communications and further refuses to allow access to by way of fax, e-mail and the Internet (i.e., other than limited Internet access to a handful of select patient enrolled in schooling), which are normally modes of communications that solicitors, financial institutions and others are commonly using more often than telephones and mail; and

“Whereas the psychiatric patient advocate office for the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre has investigated complaints about restricted communication for years but has never attained a resolve of any kind, thereby acting to condone the restrictions and circumvent or undermine patient rights; and

“Whereas the patients at Oak Ridge are not convicted of criminal offences or detained there for punitive purposes and subsequently maintain their civil, legal and democratic rights; and

“Whereas the restricted access to communications by way of telephone, fax, e-mail and the Internet would effectively constitute the withholding, obstructing or delaying of communications in violation of section 26 in the Mental Health Act, RSO 1990, c. M.7;

“We, the undersigned patients at Oak Ridge, hereby petition members of the Legislative Assembly to resolve these effective violations of section 26 of the Mental

Health Act by enacting an amendment hereto that would define the reference to 'communication' therein as contact by mail, telephone, fax, e-mail and the Internet, similar to the definitions used in the Unclaimed Intangible Property Act, RSO 1990, c. U.1, s.1 and the Criminal Code, RSC 1985, c. C-46, s. 319-7. Alternatively, we petition members to enact any other amendment that would preserve such modern-day communications as a matter of right."

I would submit this.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the parents of St. Paul's elementary school in Alliston have raised many issues regarding the security, cleanliness and state of repair of their school; and

"Whereas a 2003 condition assessment completed by the Ontario government identified the need for \$1.8 million in repairs to St. Paul's elementary school; and

"Whereas the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board has approached the Ministry of Education with the intention of having the school deemed prohibitive to repair as they believe the school requires \$2.28 million in repairs, or 84% of the school replacement cost; and

"Whereas there are ongoing concerns with air quality, heating and ventilation, electrical, plumbing, lack of air conditioning and the overall structure of the building, including cracks from floor to ceiling, to name a few;

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

"That the Minister of Education immediately deem St. Paul's elementary school prohibitive to repair, secure immediate funding and begin construction of a new facility so that the children of St. Paul's can be educated in a facility that is secure and offers them the respect and dignity that they deserve."

As I've said before, my mother taught at this school for about 34 years, and I went to this school from kindergarten to grade 8. It badly needs repairs, and I call upon the government to do so.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's from a group from my riding called Seniors Deserve Dignity.

"Whereas in Ontario there is no minimum standard of daily nursing and personal care for seniors living in long-term-care homes;

"Whereas Ontario seniors in long-term care are given only \$5.57 per day for meals;

"Whereas our personal support workers, the front-line staff in long-term-care homes, are stretched to the limit trying to meet residents' basic needs;

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have broken their promise to increase overall per-resident funding by \$6,000, to bring in a minimum of care for seniors, to hire an ombudsman to make long-term care fairer and more transparent, and to hire 2,000 new long-term-care workers, including 600 nurses; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty rewarded himself with a \$40,000 pay raise;"

We, Seniors Deserve Dignity, "petition the Ontario government to immediately fulfill the McGuinty Liberal promise for seniors."

I fully support this petition and I affix my signature to it.

STRANDHERD-ARMSTRONG BRIDGE

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker; you look great in the chair.

This is a very important issue in the riding of Nepean-Carleton. It's with respect to the proposed Strandherd-Armstrong bridge.

"Whereas the close-knit communities of Barrhaven, Riverside South and Manotick combined have a total population of well over 50,000 people; and

"Whereas the only link between Barrhaven and Riverside South across the Rideau River is a lengthy commute either across the congested Hunt Club bridge or through the village of Manotick, which cannot sustain the traffic; and

"Whereas the city of Ottawa has identified the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge as a viable alternative to the traffic congestion created at the Hunt Club bridge and on Bridge Street in Manotick; and

"Whereas the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge is a much more environmentally sustainable option for south Ottawa commuters across the Rideau River than either the commute through Manotick or via the Hunt Club bridge; and

"Whereas the city of Ottawa has identified the cost of the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge, including all ramps, road widening and bridge work, at \$105 million; and

"Whereas the city of Ottawa has requested that a third of that funding, approximately \$35 million, be provided by the Ontario Liberal government, and further, that one-third from the federal government has already been committed; and

"Whereas the previous Liberal MPP for the community of Riverside South did not act on the need for this bridge and the current Liberal Premier of Ontario has refused to enter into negotiations with the city of Ottawa over sharing the cost of the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge;

"The residents of Barrhaven, Riverside South and Manotick call on Dalton McGuinty to build the bridge now."

I couldn't agree with this petition any more than I do, and I affix my signature and present it to page Jordan.

1550

HEALTH CARD RENEWAL CLINIC

Mr. Tim Hudak: Yet another petition to bring a health card renewal clinic closer to Glanbrook residents. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas seniors, the disabled, families with young children and other Mount Hope and Binbrook residents are forced to drive to downtown Hamilton to renew their Ontario health cards; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario mandates that health cards be renewed on a regular basis and that an Ontario health card must be presented to receive OHIP health services; and

“Whereas the Dalton McGuinty government has increased taxes and fees on local residents but has not improved services;

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

“To work with the Ontario Ministry of Health to bring a mobile health card renewal clinic to the Mount Hope and Binbrook area so that residents can more readily renew their Ontario health cards without the drive to downtown Hamilton.”

Beneath the signature of Josephine Streker, I affix my signature in support.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 3, 2007, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I'm honoured to stand in the House today on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus and our party leader, John Tory, to respond to last week's speech from the throne.

At the outset, I think it's safe to say that responses to the speech from non-partisans indicate widespread disappointment. I'm going to put a handful of quotes on the record to emphasize the general reaction: a “tepid affair”; “syrupy platitudes”; “over-hyped.” But perhaps the most consistent message of disappointment was the speech's failure to provide any specifics on how the government will cope with what is undoubtedly the most serious challenge facing our province: the hollowing out of the manufacturing sector.

Webster's dictionary defines “crisis” as a “situation that has reached a critical phase, with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome.” I would

suggest that the situation in this province's manufacturing sector meets that definition.

In a press conference following the speech from the throne, CBC Radio's John McGrath asked Mr. McGuinty about the speech's failure to adequately address job losses in the manufacturing sector. The Premier fumbled, mumbled and stumbled through a non-answer, an approach that typifies a seeming nonchalance about the loss of over 154,000 jobs since 2005 and the impact those job losses have on communities, families and the future well-being of this province. It's a “don't worry, be happy” approach that is unnerving at best and should give all Ontarians pause. There appears to be a real lack of understanding or a failure to listen or both when it comes to the challenges in our manufacturing sector; the most recent example of that is the government's introduction of a new statutory holiday coming to a business near you, if there are any left, this February.

They call it, in their usual Orwellian fashion, Family Day. One of our members, Lisa MacLeod, is attempting to introduce a resolution to change the name of the holiday to Unnecessary Fiscal Burden Day to more accurately reflect what this day will mean to our economy.

No doubt this announcement has some appeal with hard-working Ontarians, but what about businesses already struggling with the higher dollar and tougher competition from developing countries? Were they consulted about the impact on their operations? No. Regrettably, this was a broadside to an already troubled business sector at a cost of \$2 billion, according to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Auto parts giant Linamar Corp. described the holiday as “the last thing we need in an already tough environment.” With 7,500 employees in the province, the day off means that Linamar must make up 60,000 hours of productivity.

Just think about the judgment here, the lack of consultation. We are witnessing a hollowing out of our manufacturing sector, plant closure announcements or layoffs almost every week, and the Liberal government's first initiative following re-election is to blindside business, saddling them with another cost, another reason to leave this province or close their doors. And their first throne speech following re-election virtually ignores the challenge and the advice of the people who drive our economy—the job creators—and is silent on tax reduction, cutting red tape, fixing our energy supply and other measures to address the situation.

I don't want to get personal here, and I won't. Some people ascribe all kinds of negative motives to the Premier with respect to our economy lagging behind the rest of the country; I disagree. I think he had and has the best intentions. I also think Bob Rae had the best intentions for Ontario when he was Premier. Of course, he's now a Liberal, so I guess things come full circle over there. To pursue his best intentions, Mr. Rae raised taxes, raised welfare rates, created a slew of new social programs and turned Ontario, once the economic engine of Canada, into a province that nearly went bankrupt—

until Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservatives stepped in and turned Ontario around.

Today, we once again have a Premier whose best intentions for Ontario mean dramatically increased spending, raising taxes and increased regulation in lock-step with Big Brotherism. In the process, he's turning Ontario, once the economic engine of Canada, into the poverty capital of Canada—as the Winnipeg Free Press describes us, “an aging economic athlete,” an economy that lags behind the rest of the country. Four years from now, the Progressive Conservatives will do what we do best: step in and fix the mess left by the best-laid plans of well-intentioned tax-and-spenders.

The Progressive Conservative Party and our leader, John Tory, believe that without question the state of the province's economy, especially its manufacturing sector, is far and away the number one priority facing the government and this Legislature, and I can assure you it will be the official opposition's primary focus in the days and weeks ahead.

Speaker, as I'm sure you noted, the throne speech either ignored or gave short shrift to a significant number of provincial responsibilities—responsibilities that matter to Ontarians—like our justice system, agriculture, rural affairs, the inability of our conservation officers to protect natural resources and on and on. What the speech didn't spare ink on was a slavish devotion to the blame game. Mr. McGuinty has a propensity to blame others for his own government's failings and the speech fit nicely into the mould. Whining and blaming others was the centerpiece of the throne speech. If Liberal members don't believe it, I would ask them to read it again. Ten separate times it focused on the federal government.

1600

The McGuinty government has the blame game down to a science. When they can't or won't keep promises, they blame the ghosts of governments past. When that doesn't work, they blame the federal government—anyone but themselves. As our party leader, John Tory, suggested, Sir John A. Macdonald may be next on the Liberal's political hit list. Ontarians expect their government and its leader to take responsibility for their actions, to buckle down, work harder, get the job done and start keeping promises for a change.

I'm going to take some time to discuss just a few of the areas overlooked or ignored in the throne speech, matters that will continue to be priorities for the Progressive Conservative Party, the official opposition. One of these is integrity in government. I think it's eminently fair to say that the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, when elected, governs with personal integrity.

I stepped aside as Solicitor General when a young offender's identity was potentially revealed in the delivery of a throne speech. My colleague, Jim Wilson, stepped aside from cabinet while a matter was investigated in the Ministry of Health. We didn't wait until we were browbeaten into submission in question period, we just did the right thing. That's a proud trademark of the

Progressive Conservative Party when in office, along with keeping promises.

When you govern the province on the back of a paper napkin, or go where the wind blows to make policy, you are a government that lacks political integrity. But this government also lacks personal integrity because it rewards bad behaviour. The member for Mississauga centre, Mr. Takhar, is perhaps the best—or worst—example: the first MPP in Ontario's history to be reprimanded by the province's Integrity Commissioner for breaching the Members' Integrity Act. The last we saw him, he was drowning in scandal and running away from reporters into a waiting limousine. Today, where is he? Right back in cabinet courtesy of the Premier.

Another example is slushgate: money to the Premier's friends, no questions asked. And what happened to the man who operated the Liberal slush machine? Rewarded by the Premier with another leadership role, this time in the Legislature as chief government whip. These are just two examples that reflect the integrity vacuum with this government, reflect on the lack of leadership at the top, and it taints all of us as elected officials.

Another historic priority for the Progressive Conservative Party—justice, law and order—will continue to rank high on our list. Unfortunately, there is no shortage of concerns on the crime and justice front. Toronto is close to recording a record number of murders this year. Last year, seven out of 10 arrested on murder charges in Toronto were either on bail, on probation or under court-ordered prohibitions at the time of the crime.

Our judges continue to give two-, three- and even four-for-one credits to convicted felons for time served in a remand facility awaiting trial. Courts are clogged, with some judges allotting up to 13 remands—believe it or not, we heard this from the chiefs of police last week—before hearing a case, impacting court costs and policing costs and delaying justice to victims. Crime victims still have inadequate victim services and compensation. The shocking revelations last year from the Ombudsman are largely unresolved.

The illegal occupation of land in Caledonia, now approaching the second anniversary—

Mr. Tim Hudak: Wow. Two years.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Two years. The McGuinty Liberals have ignored the rule of law in Caledonia, leaving residents feeling abandoned and trapped.

I could spend the better part of an hour enumerating the problems in our justice system and the McGuinty government's continuing failure to come to grips with them, but instead I'm just going to briefly highlight a couple of the measures we will be continuing to press for to address those challenges.

The first will be the reintroduction of the private member's bill brought forward in the last session by our party leader, John Tory. It's designed to increase accountability in the justice system, requiring annual public reports on the activities of our courts. When this bill was voted on in the last session, Liberal members, including their

justice ministers, silently gave victims and other Ontarians the middle finger by voting against the bill. They also sent the clear message that the status quo in justice is acceptable to them and their party, and that we can keep the operations in our court system—our justice system—behind the curtains, away from Ontarians.

That's not good enough for the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, and we will be consistently and frequently driving that message home. As well, the Progressive Conservative Party will continue to fight for the rule of law. All Ontarians are equally subject to our laws, without exception; no one is above the law or beneath its protection.

In wrapping up, Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to spend a few more minutes on our number one issue: the economy. As you know, talk of a US recession is in the air, fuelled most recently by a tightening in their bond market, and that should be ringing a few alarm bells within the McGuinty government. But if the throne speech and the Premier's words are any indication, it's not penetrating the cranium.

Last week, I met with the president of a Canadian subsidiary of a major multinational corporation. They operate a number of plants in various parts of Ontario. He told me that if they were building a plant today—making a plant location decision—they would never choose Ontario. This same company, whose president I sat down with, advised me that just a few weeks ago, prior to the federal government's economic statement, they were preparing to announce the closure of one of their Ontario plants. The federal tax cuts announced in that statement encouraged them to pull back and, at the very least, stay the execution. Their decision simply reaffirms the old adage: Tax cuts create jobs. Tax cuts also keep jobs. It has worked every time it's tried.

This Liberal government, regrettably, is taxing, spending and regulating this province into the ground. For the first time in 30 years, Ontario's unemployment rate exceeds the national average. Just think about that. Our economic growth has fallen behind all other provinces and is now predicted to rank dead last this year by both RBC and CIBC. For 2008, Scotiabank predicts another 10th-place finish for Ontario. We now have the least competitive business tax structure in all of Canada, according to the C.D. Howe Institute. We're in danger of losing our status as a "have" province, according to Dale Orr of Global Insight Canada, who says Ontario's economy is "only a fraction of its former self."

This is not an accident. A moment ago, I reminded folks that tax cuts create jobs, that it works every time it's tried. Now let me remind you of the flip side: Tax hikes kill jobs, drive investment away and hurt Ontario families. It's called cause and effect. And it's not just tax hikes in the Premier's arsenal; he's blasting a hole in our prosperity with three barrels. The second barrel is regulation, and the third barrel is spending. Taxing, regulating and spending—it works, every time it's tried, at damaging our economy and hurting Ontario families.

A perfect example is diamonds. Ontario could have been a world centre for diamond mines. More importantly, it could have transformed northern Ontario into a jewel of the north.

1610

But here's where the Liberals' failure to understand even the basics of economics has damaged Ontario's future. It turns out that Ontario is literally sitting on top of a diamond mine—many diamond mines, to be exact. Now, to get those diamonds we need investors who will come here, risk their capital, build the infrastructure, do the work, create the high-paying jobs that will bring those diamonds up and, in the process, make Ontario a world centre for diamonds.

So if you want investors to come to Ontario, what do you do? The same thing you do with any guest you'd have to your home. You put out the welcome mat; you bring them inside and treat them well.

What did this Liberal government do? Well, they did put out the welcome mat, and when the first investor, De Beers, stepped onto it, the Liberals yanked it out from under them. They more than doubled the tax on the diamond industry. A De Beers executive said in this building that this is the kind of treatment they would expect in a Third World country. Now executives in the mining industry suggest that Ontario's first diamond mine may very well be its last. That's what Liberals do when they're sitting on top of a diamond mine: They find some way to screw it up.

To the husbands and wives of Ontario, I want you to look at your wedding rings. That could have been an Ontario diamond—a source of pride, a source of jobs, a source of revenue to pay for everything from education to health care to safe streets. Gone, thanks to Liberal taxes and Liberal, some would suggest, dishonesty.

Of course, Liberal tax hikes are fuelled by Liberal spending. In the past four years, total program spending—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I will withdraw that at your request, Mr. Speaker.

In the past four years, total program spending by the McGuinty government has skyrocketed by an average of 7.9% each year, and that's before all their new spending commitments: 7.9% each year. We have fixed election dates now so we know how long they'll be in office. So if you look at that spending, 7.9% per year times eight, that's a 63.2% increase in spending projected. It took 136 years, from Confederation until 2003, for the Ontario government expenditures to reach \$68 billion, but Dalton McGuinty single-handedly managed to increase spending to \$91 billion in 2007-08.

So what does this mean to Ontario families, the ones who are paying for all of this? Forty-five hundred dollars each year for each family. To some people, that's a car or an education or a honeymoon or an operation across the border, because Liberals have failed to shorten wait

times. Forty-five hundred dollars each year for each Ontario family: That's how much more this government is spending. Tax, regulation and spending works every time it's tried at damaging our economy, driving away jobs and investment and hurting Ontario families.

We in Ontario need a strategy, not just for next year but for the next decade. We need to plan how to ensure that we reach our goal of making Ontario the best place to live, work and raise a family. That's why the government should convene a conference of leaders from business, labour, agriculture and our universities to help develop such a strategy. Then it will be up to our government to implement.

We've done it before when Confederation was in crisis. Progressive Conservative Premier John Robarts convened the Confederation of Tomorrow conference. We can do it again, but only if the government of Ontario rises to the challenge of defining Ontario's place in a changing world.

In closing, I want to assure the people watching, the people listening, the people who care about parliamentary democracy and the future of our wonderful province that they have an official opposition in this Legislature ready, willing and able to do an outstanding job on their behalf. We have an enthusiastic and energetic crew with a solid mix of members experienced in both government and opposition. We're also bolstered with the addition of four new, very talented MPPs. I'm going to mention their names: Peter Shurman, Thornhill; Randy Hillier, Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington; Sylvia Jones, Dufferin-Caledon; and Bob Bailey, Sarnia-Lambton. They're raring to go and they'll keep this Liberal government on its toes.

As much as we'd like to be overly generous as we approach the Christmas and holiday season, we have a responsibility to convey our concerns about the state of the province, its communities and its people. What that means, in case anyone is uncertain, is that we will not support this throne speech.

The official opposition will be voting against it, and at this point I would like to move an amendment to the throne speech.

I move that the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by adding after "We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session" the following:

"However, the current speech from the throne fails to adequately address the state of our economy which is the single most important issue facing Ontario today; and

"Whereas since the beginning of 2005, Ontario has lost more than 153,000 manufacturing jobs; and

"Whereas the throne speech fails to recognize that economic growth predictions for the province have shrunk by a full percentage point from predictions used by the government less than a year ago; and

"Whereas the throne speech fails to indicate any sense of urgency for dealing with the economic challenges facing Ontario; and

"Whereas the throne speech fails to provide a plan for dealing with this new economic reality by maintaining a program of unreasonable taxation and undisciplined spending; and

"Whereas the throne speech fails to set out a plan to reduce taxes and reduce regulations that are killing business in Ontario and placing such hardships on Ontario's families;

"We therefore regret to inform His Honour that the current Liberal government is ignoring the very real economic problems facing Ontario and has failed to ensure our economic fundamentals are sound and, in so failing, is failing to live up to the responsibilities placed on it by the people of Ontario."

I would so move, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Runciman has moved that the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by adding after "We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session" the following:

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"Whereas the throne speech fails to provide a plan for dealing with this new economic reality by maintaining a program of unreasonable taxation and undisciplined spending; and

"Whereas the throne speech fails to set out a plan to reduce taxes and reduce regulations that are killing business in Ontario and placing such hardships on Ontario's families;

"We therefore regret to inform His Honour that the current Liberal government is ignoring the very real economic problems facing Ontario and has failed to ensure our economic fundamentals are sound and, in so failing, is failing to live up to the responsibilities placed on it by the people of Ontario."

Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): 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 ayes have it.

Debate adjourned.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 1620.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Albanese, Laura (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Culture
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	
Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (L)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Health) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Santé)
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / procureur general
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (L)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Health) / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Santé)
Brown, Michael A. (L)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (L)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	St. Paul's	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires autochtones, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (L)	Barrie	Minister of Culture, minister responsible for seniors / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craiton, Kim (L)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	
Delaney, Bob (L)	Mississauga–Streetsville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Research and Innovation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Dhillon, Vic (L)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Dickson, Joe (L)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Environnement
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (L)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme
Gélinas, France (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (L)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health Promotion / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton–Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Welland	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée)
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires autochtones
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (L)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for seniors / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Richesses naturelles
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (L)	Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa–Orléans	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Renouveau de l'infrastructure publique
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (ND)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron–Bruce	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Municipal Affairs) / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Affaires municipales)
Moridi, Reza (L)	Richmond Hill	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services (Community Safety) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels (Sécurité communautaire)
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (L)	Kitchener–Conestoga	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for women's issues / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Hon. / L'hon. Peters, Steve (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland–Quinte West	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (Rural Affairs) / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales (Affaires rurales)
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de l'Éducation
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Housing) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Logement)
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice- premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (ND)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général

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