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Thursday 5 March 2009

Jeudi 5 mars 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 5 March 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 5 mars 2009

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

POVERTY REDUCTION ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA RÉDUCTION
DE LA PAUVRETÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 4, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 152, An Act respecting a long-term strategy to reduce poverty in Ontario / Projet de loi 152, Loi concernant une stratégie à long terme de réduction de la pauvreté en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate.

Mr. Michael Prue: I welcome the opportunity today to discuss this important bill, the Poverty Reduction Act. I would like to state at the outset and preface my remarks with a solid and sincere statement that I welcome any opportunity to alleviate poverty to any individual or group of individuals in this province. The question in Bill 152, to my mind, is whether or not it goes far enough and encompasses enough people.

We all know that poverty plagues far too many Ontarians, and this number is increasing as more and more Ontarians lose their jobs. Every morning when I wake up and read the newspaper, every morning when I turn on the news, I see the sad reality of what is happening in Ontario: people losing their jobs. Yesterday, it was Hamilton. This morning's news was shutting down another shift in Windsor. Hundreds upon hundreds, thousands upon thousands of people are losing their job, and the spectre of poverty hangs over all of them.

We know that more and more Ontarians are being forced to rely on social assistance payments and that those payments have declined about 25% since 1994. So even in this time, even after all of this time of affluence, even after all of these years have gone by since 1994, people who are living in poverty and people who are on social assistance are seeing less and less money. We know from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives that the gap between the rich and the poor in Ontario has reached an all-time high, with the richest 10% earning 75 times more than the poorest 10%. I'll put this into

perspective of what is happening in Ontario. Those who are well off earn 75 times as much income as those who are our poorest. Our richest are 75 times richer than our poorest individuals.

We know from the Ontario Association of Food Banks that food bank use has been rising among working Ontarians and in fact most of the food banks report that the majority of people who come in to use their facilities and their services and who take food out actually have a job, sometimes two or three, but they cannot make ends meet. We know from Campaign 2000 that one third of a million Ontario children live in poverty and that Ontario has been called the child poverty capital of Canada. We know from the co-op housing federation that more and more Ontarians are at risk of eviction and homelessness, with 20% of Ontarians paying half their income in rent.

Last night, when I was here in the Legislature, there was a small get-together by the fair rental housing providers, and although we often do not see eye to eye, they told me anecdotally of the number of people who are coming in and simply giving up and telling the rental providers in Ontario that they will be moving out; they can no longer meet the rent.

Beyond these numbers, though, are the stories of individuals who live every day in a situation of poverty. I have lived in poverty; I lived amidst poverty all of my young life. I grew up in Regent Park. I have told this tale many times in this Legislature. It was a life of growing up and seeing people whose hopes were dashed, who never had a chance from the outset; people who had good minds and were skilled and talented, who were forced to leave school at an early age, who never really had a chance. Some of them succumbed to alcohol and drugs. Some of them went to jail. Some of them had disastrous early lives.

I remember those days, growing up there. I remember things that would be very strange and very foreign to people in this Legislature, and perhaps to those watching on television today. I remember growing up where you would see cockroaches and mice on a daily basis. I remember growing up where there would be urine soaked in the halls and you could smell it when you entered the apartment building. I remember the locked basements—they came every day around six o'clock at night and locked the basement so that people couldn't go down into the apartments, because they were afraid of what would take place down there. I remember the scruffiness, and I remember most especially, in the neighbourhoods around Regent Park, that if they knew you were from Regent Park, you were often shunned.

I know how difficult it was for me, as a 14-year-old going to high school, leaving the security of the area at Lord Dufferin school and walking the couple of kilometres to Jarvis Collegiate, where the children and the young people were of a different class. They had money; they had social prestige. I know how insecure that made me feel in those days. If it made me feel insecure, I want to tell you it made my colleagues with whom I grew up in Regent Park feel even more insecure, because I was not a shrinking violet or a wallflower. I was willing to go out there and do what was necessary to get an education. But I know it was a difficult time, and I know that what happened to me is happening thousands upon thousands of times across this province each and every day.

I had an opportunity to take up an invitation by the social housing providers in Toronto a couple of years ago. They invited all the members of this Legislature to spend a week in one of the Ontario Housing projects in or around the Toronto area. I took them up on it. I remember going to live at Jane and Finch. I went with my colleague Marilyn Churley. Together, we braved going every day to Jane and Finch, and back to this Legislature. We lived there. We lived in a place that, I know from media reports, people often consider violent, tough and anti-social. But I want to tell you that what I saw there did not shock me. I saw all the same things of my youth. I saw cockroaches and mice. I saw leaking windows and leaking roofs. I saw buildings in states of extreme disrepair. I saw a place that nobody in this chamber would want to live in.

But I also saw people who held out hope, people who lived there who had hope, if not for themselves then at least for their children, and what they were trying so desperately to do in Jane and Finch. We went into a small, little room with dilapidated couches and things where young people in their teens would come—somewhere to go, somewhere to hang out. There was a wonderful woman, whose name I cannot now remember, who was there. She was considered the mother of Jane and Finch. She counselled the young people and helped them. She helped them to cook some of the meals. For some of them, it was the only meal they got every day. An opportunity to learn and to listen—she counselled them to go back to school when they wanted to drop out.

0910

I also saw some hope there, because I think that the city of Toronto was quite brilliant in what they did. They knew that the houses had to be repaired—the hallways, the walkways and everything else—and when they hired contractors they insisted that the contractors hire some of the local youth, so that those local youth, who had dropped out of school, who had no future, got a job. They got a job and they started to learn a trade. I watched a couple of young men sanding the walls and painting them. Probably, if they didn't do it themselves, they certainly knew who painted the graffiti on there in the first place. But, you know, what happened after that was that they became protectors of the work that they had done and they dissuaded others from coming along and doing

that kind of violence to the halls, to the walls and to the buildings. I saw a couple of young men who were being trained as stonemasons or to lay bricks, because there was some proper bricklaying in the courtyards, where people had taken the bricks out, and they were there to replace them. I'm confident that those bricks would remain in place today.

But I want to say that the despair there was enormous; the despair was enormous and it is continuing. In spite of some of the good things I saw, I know that most of the people who live in Jane-Finch, most of the people who live in Regent Park or Lawrence Heights or any of the dozens and dozens of places of poverty across this province, live daily in despair. I know that in my own riding one of the 13 areas that has been recognized by the United Way of Toronto is Crescent Town. I go there quite often. I have represented Crescent Town continuously in various guises—as councillor, as mayor, as MPP—for the past 21 years. When I go there, I also see people hoping against hope that things will get better; again, if not for themselves, then at least for their children.

They know—but many of us don't—what it means to suffer the ongoing physical pain of hunger and sickness. They know about what it means to be ignored, judged and dismissed for what they don't have and for what they might never have. They know the shame of not being able to provide one's children with what other kids take for granted. The kids know how difficult it is on pizza day when you can't take in the quarter or whatever is required to participate. That is a life that few of us can really understand unless we have to live it or unless we've ever lived it at all.

But we must all understand that poverty not only deeply harms those affected by it, but it also harms and affects the society as a whole. It costs us financially in this province, and it has been estimated as up to \$13 billion a year in lost government revenues and lost economic activity according to the Ontario Association of Food Banks. It also costs us at a much deeper level. Poverty and desperation lead to crime in our communities. Stark inequalities and injustice lead to anger and violence and undermine the trust of our communities. If you want to look at the lowest rates of participation in the political process, I would suggest you go to the poorest communities, and that's exactly what you find. They are disenfranchised, they are disenchanting and they do not participate on a political level or indeed on many other levels. Economic insecurity breeds a preoccupation with oneself and one's family and undermines community solidarity.

We need to do a lot about poverty. The first thing that people want is government action. They ask me all the time, "When is the government going to do something about this?" Just as I was leaving here today I got a phone call in my office from a woman in Ottawa who is demanding action on ODSP. She is on ODSP, and she despairs that this bill is not going to help her. Almost 90% of Ontarians agree that the McGuinty government should reduce poverty by 25% over five years. I'm sur-

prised it's only 90%; I would have hoped it was 100%. But everybody agrees that we need to reduce poverty. Recent polls by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives indicate that over 80% of Ontarians believe that a recession makes it more important than ever to reduce poverty, and it would seem to me that that is precisely what this government should be saying and what they should be doing.

But I despaired a little. A couple of days ago in this very Legislature I had an opportunity to ask a question of the Premier. The Premier answered back, and I don't want to say I liked his answer, in honesty that poverty reduction in his plan will have to look at or have to be predicated on three things: a growing economy—and it's not—help from the federal government—and there's no help forthcoming from there—and a society that embraces that change. I'm still hopeful for the third aspect, but I think the other two cannot, and should not be, conditions for alleviating poverty at this time.

Second, the message from other jurisdictions is that poverty can be reduced through concerted government actions. I look to the province of Quebec in this particular regard. I thank the Library of Parliament because they prepared a wonderful little paper back in 2007 talking about poverty reduction strategies in both Quebec and Newfoundland. I would like to read into the record why I think the Quebec plan has been so effective and so superior to the one that is being proposed here in Ontario.

From page 2 of this report: "Quebec's legislation establishes a 'national strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion' that 'is intended to progressively make Quebec, by 2013, one of the industrialized nations having the least number of persons living in poverty.' The act adopts a definition of poverty that goes beyond a simple relation to low income. Poverty is defined as 'the condition of a human being who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain economic self-sufficiency or to facilitate integration and participation in society,' a definition that integrates the concept of social exclusion."

Flipping over to page 4, this report goes on to state: "The approach adopted in this plan"—that is the Quebec plan—"evokes policies similar to those pursued in some English-speaking European countries such as the United Kingdom and Ireland. The plan promotes 'economic security and social inclusion through employment' and increases 'protection for people with significant employment limitations.'

"The action plan includes a comprehensive set of initiatives and programs to raise the standard of living of social assistance recipients and low-income earners, and to assist people in making the transition from social assistance to employment. For example, the plan provides for the full indexation of social assistance benefits for those with significant work limitations; the creation of a participation premium for social assistance recipients who are able to work, as well as partial indexation of their benefits; the establishment of a work premium; an increase in the minimum wage; and a new universal

refundable tax credit for low-income families with children. Among other measures, the plan also includes initiatives to improve access to affordable housing, adapt the dwellings of people with disabilities, support employment for people with disabilities, facilitate the integration of immigrants and members of visible minority groups, continue to develop high-quality early learning and child care services, support young parents and children, facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market, support academic success and literacy programs in underprivileged areas, and promote social participation of seniors living on low incomes."

Skipping down a bit: "The government also indicated its intention to work with aboriginal groups to fight poverty and social exclusion."

This, I believe, is a comprehensive program. This is what I had hoped this government would have done. I was present on the day when the government announced its new policy and gave us this shiny booklet *Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy*. I know that the people who were there were well-meaning. I know that when they talked about ending poverty, they had that well-meaning thought in their hearts. But I was disappointed, and profoundly disappointed, and I remain profoundly disappointed because the only poverty reduction strategy that is evident to me here is one that is based on children. Now, I'm happy that children are being helped. I am absolutely delighted. But when I compare what is happening here in Ontario to what happened in Quebec half a decade ago, I have to say that I find us wanting. When I compare what is happening here to what I see happening in other jurisdictions around the world, I find this strategy wanting.

0920

The government of Quebec has succeeded in reducing their poverty rate from 19.3% in 1997 to 11.8% in 2005. That is a huge reduction. They went about it in a great way. They did not just isolate only a few of the poor as deserving. They did not say it is only children and people who have children in their families who are going to benefit from the poverty reduction strategy. They looked to everyone. They recognized that poor people, whether they have children or not, are in desperate need of help from their government.

I look at what is happening in other jurisdictions. The government of Ireland has succeeded in reducing its long-term rate of poverty from 5.8% in 2003 to 3.7% in 2005. The United Kingdom government managed to lift 800,000 children out of poverty between 1997 and 2005. All of these governments, every single one of them, developed and implemented comprehensive poverty reduction strategies to help achieve these results. They set public targets—I know this government has set targets too—and they set targets for all, for everyone. They set targets not just for children; they set them for everyone.

They also took action on a number of common areas. They increased social assistance rates. They invested in affordable housing and child care. They increased minimum wages. They invested in public education and employment training.

About three or four years ago in this province, community activists noticed other jurisdictions—Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador—were having success in reducing poverty through the development of poverty reduction plans. They feared that Ontario was falling behind and, in 2007, they put considerable effort to convince this government to change. I think they did a good job. Quite honestly, I think they did quite a brilliant job to get government moving in this province. An impressive array of labour, faith, social services, health and anti-poverty groups came together to form a coalition to push the Ontario government to commit to develop a poverty reduction strategy. They were out there yesterday. I went out and talked to them yesterday and the day before yesterday. There was a little tent in front of this Legislature and there were some poverty activists. When I went out to talk to them, they told me they prayed for me. I was welcoming of that. They also told me they prayed for everyone else in this Legislature. I'm welcoming of that as well, because what they want us to do is the right thing, and what I am asking this government to do is the right thing.

I think that the poverty reduction strategy that has been set out for children is a fine document. I guess, like the proverbial Oliver Twist, I am coming and saying: "I want more. I want more. I've got my soup bowl in my hand. I want more." The poverty activists were successful in getting the McGuinty government to publicly commit to develop and implement a poverty reduction strategy in Ontario, but I want more. What has been done or what is proposed to be done for children needs to be done for all of those others who live in poverty.

We are concerned that because it is not, it fails to include key actions such as improving access to affordable housing and child care and increasing social assistance rates and the minimum wage. These were all very successful actions in other jurisdictions. We have made it clear that the plan, as it currently stands, is seriously underfunded. We acknowledge the introduction of the plan and we recognize that it is a significant step in the right direction, but now we're asking the government to do more. We're looking at the economic turmoil of this province. We are looking at literally tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of primary breadwinners losing their job or jobs and we're looking at a whole economic downturn that is going to affect not only children, but literally hundreds of thousands of hard-working people.

The government has responded, again, but we don't think it's enough. We believe that people living in poverty in this province and all Ontarians deserve more than that. To be worthwhile, it must actually lead to differences in poor people's lives in places like Windsor, which has the country's highest unemployment rate, in places like North Bay and Kingston, where poverty is increasing at an enormous and alarming rate.

Mr. Paul Miller: We're catching up.

Mr. Michael Prue: My colleague here from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek has just reminded me that Hamilton is fast catching up. With the layoffs announced at Stelco, or

US Steel as it's now called, over the last couple of days, we know that poverty in that city is going to rise exponentially. To this end, we want to be constructively critical of the bill, for we do feel that as currently worded, it has significant weaknesses.

We need to monitor the indicators that measure the causes of poverty, not just the effects. We need to know what causes poverty. I do know it's not like Dickensian times where it's some moral weakness that you're poor. I never saw any moral weakness in the people who lived in Regent Park. I saw people who struggled; people with disabilities.

One of my neighbours, the couple were both blind. I remember that they struggled in their poverty. I remember single mothers who worked there, who were abused and had to get out and who looked after their children as best they could, and how they struggled in poverty. I saw people who were new immigrants who came and could not get jobs in their chosen field and who struggled at low-wage jobs and how they struggled in poverty. I saw a lot of hard-working people who worked in factories, who worked for minimum wage or near-minimum wage, who struggled in poverty too. It is not a moral weakness, and we ought never to think that. We need to know why they are constantly stuck there and the causes of that poverty.

It requires government to regularly report on or review their plans in consultation with Ontarians, including low-income Ontarians. One of the things that despaired me, and I'm glad the minister's here today, is that there was a poverty consultation. She knows, and I think all the members of this Legislature know, how central and crucial this is to me personally. I grew up there, and I promised myself as a very young man—because I was politically keen and active and wanting to get involved, even in grade 9—that one day, if I ever became a politician, I would do something about the place where I lived and the people who lived there and the people like me. I was disappointed, and I will state that I am still disappointed, that the poverty consultations throughout this government's time were by invitation only. I was disappointed, when I attended myself as a member of this Legislature, to be denied access to the first four places that I wanted to attend to hear what poor people and others had to say.

We went out and we did our own poverty consultation. We went out and talked to poor people, and we especially invited those who lived in poverty. We made extraordinary efforts by providing food so that they could come. We offered subway tokens here in Toronto and car passes in Ottawa and in places so that people could come. We offered babysitting services so that single mothers could show up and tell us what it was like. We heard from poor people, and what we heard did not surprise me at all: the hope in their hearts for their children and for themselves and the very common solutions that they thought could alleviate their poverty. But it requires a government to listen to them and to regularly report and review their plans in consultations with Ontarians, especially low-income Ontarians.

I'd like to point out again some more stuff about the Quebec model. It can be noted at the outset that the Quebec law comes in at about 6,500 words, not that words are all that important, whereas Bill 152 is less than 1,000 words. Perhaps it is fitting that the Quebec law is six times longer, since the Quebec government invested about six times as much money in their strategy on a per capita basis as the Ontario government is proposing to invest in theirs. Of course, longer bills are not necessarily better. But in this case, the Quebec act is in many ways stronger and more comprehensive than Bill 152.

0930

I want to speak about three ways in which this is true.

First, this sets no ongoing specific and strong targets for poverty reduction. It does require the current government to pursue its current 25-in-5 target, but it sets no minimal guidelines for future poverty reduction targets. In other words, future governments can choose to set poverty reduction targets as low as they choose. That's what's here in this bill. The 25-in-5 target might well become 5 in 25 in the future. Additionally, written into the preamble to the act is the following escape clause—and this is what I talked to the Premier about the other day: “The implementation and success of the strategy will require the sustained commitment of all levels of government, all sectors of Ontario society and a growing economy.” So there in this bill is the escape clause for this government. As the economic conditions worsen, as the federal government says they're not going to be participants or as the public say they're not willing to have their taxes raised, as invariably will happen, this government has set out in the preamble of their own bill an escape clause.

The Premier has regularly stated that without economic growth and billions of dollars in federal money the province can't meet its 25% poverty reduction target. This was written into the poverty reduction plan that was released in December, and the bill reiterates these conditions.

One has to wonder, what is the use of enshrining a requirement to set targets for poverty reduction if that requirement is contingent on so many vague conditions outside the control of the government? Governments are begging off action all the time by blaming other levels of government. I hear it in this Legislature almost every day. I hear the government talking about the government in Ottawa. I hear the government saying, “Oh, that's a municipal concern.” I believe that this is a concern to all of us.

In contrast, the Quebec poverty reduction law sets strong and precise targets for their poverty reduction strategy, namely to progressively make Quebec one of the industrialized nations having the least number of persons living in poverty by 2013. That is the kind of goal that is needed in Bill 152, not unspecified targets with escape clauses.

The second thing is that there is a problem in the lack of comprehensiveness of this bill. There is no requirement in Bill 152 that the poverty reduction strategies

developed be comprehensive. From the start, the Premier and the minister have repeatedly promised a comprehensive poverty strategy for Ontario. However, as I have already mentioned, the government's current strategy focuses only on children. It ignores other groups at risk of poverty: seniors, youth, people with disabilities, women, unattached adults, people of colour, aboriginal people and new immigrants.

I had an opportunity, a day or two after the government released its report, to attend a news conference. It was held by the Colour of Poverty campaign. They released a report, and I would like to read a little bit from this report because it is chilling. It is absolutely and totally chilling what is happening to people in our society. The Colour of Poverty campaign starts out, “Greater Trouble in Greater Toronto—Child Poverty in the GTA (Report - Children's Aid Society of Toronto - December 2008).”

It goes on: “Poverty is racialized, that is, disproportionate to people of colour who are Canadian-born and newcomers. Among broad ethno-racial groups in the Toronto CMA, the 2000 LICO before-tax rates of child poverty were about”—and here's where it gets chilling—

“—one child in 10 in low income among global European groups;

“—one child in five for East Asian groups;

“—one child in four for aboriginal, South Asian, Caribbean, South and Central American groups;

“—one child in three for children of Arab and West Asian groups; and

“—one child in two for children of African groups.

“Rates of LICO-BT family poverty among two-parent families in 2000 range from between 5% for European groups to 29% for Arabic and West Asian groups. Rates of family poverty among female lone-parent families range from between 26% for European groups and 65% for African groups.”

This is the great problem that I had on the day that this poverty report was released. I was perhaps the lone person at the news conference who did not effuse about how wonderful this was. I looked at it as a lost opportunity. Although I still welcome what is being done for children, I wonder what is happening to seniors, to our youth, to people with disabilities, to women, to unattached adults, to people of colour, to aboriginal people and new immigrants, and I am still disappointed.

I have spoken in this Legislature before—and I want to say it again today—about people with disabilities. People are disabled almost always through no fault of their own. Whether they were born with a disability or whether they developed one as a result of an accident or a disease, we in this province ought not to be treating them as people who are destined forever to live in poverty. In this province, ODSP rates are abysmally low. The maximum you can get in this province on ODSP is \$999 a month or just short of \$12,000 a year. That is approximately \$8,000 below the low-income cut-off figure, which defines poverty for a single person. Most people on ODSP have no children for whom they collect addi-

tional benefits. That should not surprise people when you understand that the disabled who were born that way or who became that way early in life generally do not have children—or if they had them, if they're older and they're disabled, the children are grown up, because disability often happens in older age. It is not surprising. So any poverty strategy that targets only children leaves them completely out.

When you look at a disabled person, you see how they struggle, how they want and need to belong to society. I have pointed out to this minister, to other ministers and to the Premier on numerous occasions, and I give the example again today, that the child born in this province with Down's syndrome grows up, and we attempt as best we can in society to give them the education and the training that they require in order to function as best they can, and we do, I think, a pretty admirable job. But that child grows up to be 18 or 19 years of age, and generally, the education system ceases to work. I mean, I wish it didn't, but it does: It ceases to work. We can get them through high school, we can do that—and I'm proud that we can do that, because we couldn't do that when I was a young man, but we can today.

But then that young person wants to go out and contribute. They want to go out and get a job. They want to go out and do things and be somebody, and they go out and get a job. I have seen people stacking shelves, I have seen people sweeping floors, I have seen people working in McDonald's and in other stores. But the sad reality is, because we give them \$12,000 a year for being disabled, this government claws back half of everything they earn. I know that there's a little bit they get to keep at first, but after just a little, tiny period, they start to claw back everything that they earn so that you have to literally earn about \$18,000 a year to keep the \$8,000 that will bring them from \$12,000 to \$20,000 so that you can, in your life, live above the poverty line. I think that that is disgraceful in this province; I think it is absolutely and fundamentally disgraceful.

When I ask the Minister of Community and Social Services this question on numerous occasions, she says that it's not an income supplement plan, the ODSP—you can call it what you want—but I do say it is a plan that puts that person, through no fault of their own, in everlasting poverty, because trying as hard as they might, trying to fit in as hard as they might, trying to get that job as hard as they might and to work all the hours that can be given to them, they cannot ever hope not to be in poverty.

I've just given the example of someone with Down's syndrome, but it's equally true of many other diseases, it's equally true of many other afflictions: People want to contribute. Sometimes it's limited; sometimes it's very limited, that they can only go out a day or two because their physical health will only allow it or because of the work environment or their capabilities. But I don't want that money to ever be clawed back again.

I asked in estimates how much this government clawed back from all of the programs. It was about \$850

million; that was the answer I finally got. It took, I don't know, 10 or 12 weeks for that answer to come forward. That's how much this government makes off the backs of the poor. They claw it back.

0940

I'm suggesting that there should be something in this poverty strategy to end that. I would suggest it start with people who are disabled. The disabled should be allowed to keep the first \$8,000 a year without having it clawed back, so that disabled persons do not have to live in poverty for the rest of their lives. I think that's a strategy that, if you went out on the street and asked people, every single person would agree with. Nobody wants the disabled to live in poverty. If they are capable of working and they can make \$8,000 a year, I would like to let them keep it.

I don't feel good about knowing that \$850 million is clawed back from all the groups and that at least half of that is clawed back from the disabled. I don't feel good, and I don't think this government should feel good. I think any poverty strategy has to look first and foremost at our disabled, because being disabled in this province and in this country means that you will live a life of poverty.

I also want to talk about our First Nations people. I've had an opportunity, since coming to this Legislature, to travel across Ontario. I have had a chance to go into First Nations communities that are accessible by road, and I've had a chance to go into many of those northern places that are not, places like Attawapiskat and Peawanuck and Fort Severn and Marten Falls (Ogoki), where the only way you can get there is by plane. You go into those places and see the poverty and the despair, and you see what is happening to our First Nations people.

Now, I know that some people opposite and even some on this side will say this is a federal jurisdiction, but I also know that we have an obligation. I also know that the province of Quebec has recognized the unique structure of our federation and the uniqueness of our First Nations community. They have endeavoured, notwithstanding that it's a federal jurisdiction, to do everything they can to alleviate our first peoples from poverty.

I go into places like Peawanuck and Attawapiskat and look at the enormous cost of everything. I told one of my colleagues, Mr. Zimmer from Willowdale, that the biggest education he was going to get in a particular town—I think it was Fort Albany at that point—was to go in to the Northern Store. That was going to be his biggest education, not the ramshackle houses, not the poverty, not the kids hanging around with nothing to do, not the lack of a good school. The biggest education he was going to get was going into the Northern Store. He went into the Northern Store with me and came out with his eyes bulging, because in that location, a bag of potatoes that can be bought for \$2 in Toronto cost \$25; a bag of milk to give to your kids, which could be bought for \$3 or \$4 in Toronto, cost \$30; two apples cost \$12.

Do you know the only thing that didn't surprise him and didn't surprise me? The two things that cost the same

as in Toronto were a can of Coke and potato chips—exactly the same. You wonder about the nutrition of those kids. If you go into the schools that had to be shut down—there's no money—because of the fumes from the diesel generators that were in them, if you go and see the electricity that is shut off every day, if you go and see that about 80% of the people live on some form of assistance and you look at that community, then your heart has to go out to them and you have to say, "Why do we have this poverty in Ontario?"

The line between Ontario and Quebec runs right down the middle of James Bay, just on the other side of Moosonee and Moose Factory. If you go to the other side of James Bay and look at the First Nations community, you will see a starkly different world. You will see roads and sewers and schools. You will see people in prosperity who have jobs. You will see costs that are enormously lower than on the Ontario side. The reason is that the government of Quebec has invested billions of dollars into those communities. Part of that, I would agree, comes from the James Bay Project and the hydroelectricity and the need to get the communities on board. But they have continued to develop those communities to the place where they are very little different from southern Ontario, and the level of poverty and despair is not there.

When I look at this bill, I'm saddened to see there is only passing mention of First Nations communities. We cannot live and acknowledge and know of this poverty. I know it is hidden from most Ontarians. I know it's difficult for most Ontarians to hop on a plane and go to Marten Falls-Ogoki, Peawanuck, Fort Albany or Attawapiskat, probably names they couldn't even find on a map. It's difficult. But it exists and it's there and we know it. Everybody in this room knows it and there's nothing in here about that.

There's nothing in here really about the whole issue of new immigrants. I have also talked about this many times in this Legislature, the whole issue of people who come to this country. Some of them are fleeing violence; some are coming here for economic gain, not so much for themselves but usually for their children. They have hopes and dreams in coming to this country that their children will have an enormous opportunity in terms of education and opportunity. When I worked at the immigration department for some 20 years, before I became a full-time politician, you could see at the airport and the landing sites that hope and gleam in their eyes; how they wanted to come here and make a success of themselves, yet that is not happening and I don't see anything in this bill to deal with that.

I have advocated and will continue to advocate that Ontario should take a much stronger position on immigration than we do. Other provinces, particularly Quebec, take a much stronger position, as does Manitoba, in helping to recruit new immigrants. Quebec even has its own grid system and visa officers, and there is nothing that would prevent Ontario from doing the same thing. I believe we should be doing that in order to bring people to this country and for them to know in advance that their

skills and abilities will be recognized. As the choosers of the immigrants, we are also the ones who assess the documentation they bring forward. We can do that while the applications are being processed, so that a doctor or a nurse or an engineer or a nuclear scientist in another world jurisdiction will know in advance that when they come to this country, when they come to this province particularly, their credentials will be recognized and it is more likely than not they will be able to work in their field and they will not then succumb to poverty. I would suggest that the government needs to do that and it is a strategy that is not outside of this strategy of poverty.

The McGuinty government poverty strategy also fails to take comprehensive action on a full range of areas related to poverty. As mentioned, it fails to improve access to affordable housing and child care and fails to improve adequacy of social assistance rates. The rates are far too low. The rates are absolutely abysmal and I know when they were frozen for eight or nine long years in a row, huge—first of all they were reduced by 21% and then they were frozen for all of those years. People who live on those rates cannot do so, they cannot live. I would challenge any one of you to try to live on what is taken home.

Twice in my political career, once as mayor and later on as a megacity councillor, I took up the challenge of the Daily Bread Food Bank to try to live on a welfare diet for a week. The first time I did it for nine days because I wanted to prove that I could. The second time I did it for 10, again, to prove that I could, and it's a real stretch.

The first time, I was given \$12 to feed myself for a week and it taught me some incredibly valuable lessons, the biggest one of which was when I went out as the mayor following a council meeting. A councillor's wife had had a baby and he wanted to take us out to celebrate, but I had promised not to ingest anything other than the \$12 allotted to me. So when they came around with food and stuff, I declined. I did want to be part of the group though, so I had a Diet Coke. To my chagrin, at the end of the night, because I had wanted to be part of the group and living the welfare diet, when the bill came for the Diet Coke in the restaurant, it was more than \$2. I understood from that more than any other thing what it is to live in poverty and on welfare, because that literally meant the next day I couldn't eat. Because I had a Diet Coke in the restaurant and I wanted to be part of a group and belong, I couldn't eat. So the next day I didn't. That's the daily life of a person on welfare.

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The second time I went on the welfare diet was a few years later, and because transportation and other costs had risen, I had \$10 for 10 days. I ate a whole bunch of starchy things, skipped every breakfast and most lunches. Dinner was always the same thing. What was on sale that week was chicken legs for 79 cents a pound, and that's what I had. I had chicken every day. I made chicken soup. I did everything I could to stretch that \$10. But both times, I lost four pounds in a week. This might be the new fad—go on the welfare diet. Get rid of Atkins

and all of those other people, just try to live on the welfare diet in Ontario. There's nothing in here about that. I am looking forward to a budget that actually does something about those who are on social assistance, giving them adequacy.

I saw the Toronto Sun today. The Toronto Sun likes great big huge headlines. They're talking about some doctor in Chinatown who is giving letters to people so that they can have sufficient nutrition, and "Isn't this a scandal?" I think the bigger scandal is that we give them \$500 a month on which to live. It is not surprising that they can't eat. It's not surprising that almost everything they put in their mouths they get from friends, the Daily Bread Food Bank or one of the social agencies, or they go without. That's the bigger scandal to me. I would like the Toronto Sun, if they're listening, to write a story about that. How does one exist on \$548 a month if you're a single person? In the city of Toronto, it costs you that for a single room. There's nothing left.

We need to start looking at the welfare rates. I know that this government will stand—and they've stood before and told me they've raised the rates five times, and they have. They've raised the rates five times in six years. But they've raised them incrementally at such a low amount that it has not, at 9.2% overall, covered the cost of inflation in the last six years—it has not. So a single person today—not families—on welfare or ODSP is worse off than in the deepest, darkest days of Mike Harris, and that's pretty sad.

If you want to do something about poverty, you have to do something about those who live on assistance—ODSP, Ontario Works. I would suggest that since we're going to have so many people joining these ranks in the next year or two that we look at increasing those rates well above the rates of inflation. Inflation this year is only going to be 1% or 2%. Things are really bad; that's what's happening. I look at the inflation numbers; they're down around 1% or 2%. If the government comes back and gives 1% or 2%, then it's not going to alleviate all of the problems that have manifested themselves over the last many, many years.

Bill 152 lacks a requirement that the current or future poverty reduction strategies be comprehensive. It leaves open the possibility that future strategies will be even more restrictive than the current one in terms of which populations of low-income people are included and what range of initiatives are adopted. Quebec law does better. It requires that a comprehensive range of actions be included in its poverty reduction strategies and it requires, by law, actions to: (1) promote access to employment; (2) strengthen the social safety net; (3) improve education; (4) provide work supplements for low-income workers; (5) improve the availability of decent and affordable housing; (6) improve access to early learning programs and child care for children; and (7) increase supports to seniors.

Quebec law ensures comprehensiveness both in terms of target populations and the range of government initiatives needed to reduce poverty; Bill 152 does not.

Quebec's law also sets clear goals that ensure that their poverty strategy gets at the causes of poverty by requiring that strategies reduce inequality, increase solidarity between citizens, reduce prejudice, and improve social and economic conditions. For example, the Quebec law states: "Action to strengthen the social and economic safety net must be aimed at ... raising the level of income granted to persons and families living in poverty ... to meet their essential needs."

The third key concern I have with this bill as it currently stands is its failure to forge new ground in ensuring citizen participation and public accountability. The McGuinty government has talked a lot about the importance of working in partnership with Ontarians on poverty reduction and in working in collaboration with low-income people in particular. However, Bill 152, as it currently stands, misses a wonderful opportunity to put in place new, more deliberative and meaningful forms of citizen participation. In fact, it calls for little beyond the usual tired ways of government consultation. The model is still that the ministry decides when consultation is necessary; the government solicits information and input; and then the government officials go away and decide what needs to be done. That's the way it happens around here. Despite calls from the 25 in 5 Network, the government chose not to include new and more direct forms of accountability, such as a citizens' advisory committee, which the network called for. Nor did the government put in place a poverty reduction secretariat to coordinate action on poverty between ministries—another recommendation of the 25 in 5 Network.

Contrary to that, Quebec's law, in contrast, includes a number of innovative measures to increase transparency and public accountability on poverty reduction. It formed an advisory committee to advise the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity on the planning, implementation and evaluation of the poverty strategy. This committee monitors government policies to ensure that they are moving the poverty reduction strategy forward. That's the job of the committee. The act enshrines a social initiatives fund to promote the emergence of local strategies to fight poverty and social exclusion in designated priority areas. The fund stood at \$16 million a year in 2004-05. I am aware that the McGuinty poverty plan includes a community mobilization fund, but it is only going to be funded at \$5 million a year, and it is not enshrined in the legislation. So it's one third of what Quebec puts in—Quebec has fewer people than we do—and it's not enshrined in the legislation.

In addition, the Quebec law created a new research centre to provide reliable and rigorous information on poverty in the province to help assess the extent to which the government's strategy is actually reducing poverty. A further important requirement is that all ministers must consider and report on the potential impacts of new legislation or regulations on people living in poverty. This bill does not do that either.

In summary, poverty reduction strategies and poverty reduction acts do have a significant potential to stimulate

effective action to reduce poverty. But to actually have the intended impact, poverty reduction acts and strategies need strong targets. They need to be comprehensive. They need to ensure strong citizen participation and government accountability.

I am hoping that when this bill goes to committee, as it surely will, the government takes heed of what is being said in this Legislature, but more importantly takes heed of what the 25 in 5 coalition is trying to say, what the good people who are out praying on the lawn have to say, what the people who live in poverty have to say, and makes some meaningful changes. I welcome, as I said at the outset, that we are going to do something to help poor children. I grew up among many poor children. I grew up with children who didn't really have a chance, children who came to school in dishevelled clothes, who didn't have enough food to eat, who were constantly sick or at risk of being sick, who dropped out of school at the end of grade 9 or grade 10 to go out and get worthless and meaningless jobs that paid minimum wage, because there was nothing else they could do. I don't want to see that happen again. So as I said, I welcome anything that is going to stop that kind of child poverty from continuing. But I am also mindful and I am also asking the government to show some pathos, to show some pity for those who are living in poverty today who are not children. I have talked about the disabled. I have talked about our First Nations communities. I have talked about new immigrants. I think there's a very strong case to be made for senior citizens, and for all of those people who, through no fault of their own, are living in conditions of poverty that none of us in this room would want to live in, and in fact none of us do live in.

I am asking the government to make a fair bill—I'm not going to say a good one, but a fair bill; a good bill; an excellent bill. I'm asking for this government to look at what can be done, what needs to be done, and do not ignore a whole generation of people who live in poverty, a whole generation who are disabled, a whole generation who live in abysmal poverty in northern and isolated communities and on the streets of our big cities. Look at them and see what we can do to help them while we're helping children. We need to do that, and we need to be bold.

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I will tell you, if you raise the social assistance rates and the ODSP rates by 10%, I will be over here clapping. I know not all members of the Legislature will be clapping, but I will guarantee you that I will be one of those who say, "This government understands it." This government needs to take that kind of bold initiative and this kind of bold step.

Every day I see what is happening in the stock market. Every day I read the papers about those who are losing their jobs. Every day I despair, if we are not going to take that kind of bold action, of the social turmoil that will result in this province.

March 26 is a key day. I don't know what's going to happen, but I do know what I heard from the Premier, again going back. He's looking for an expanding econ-

omy, which is not happening, he's looking for a federal government that is not supportive, and he's looking for people in Ontario to be supportive and do what they can. I believe that the last one is the only one that's there. I believe the last one: that the people of Ontario will support a government that takes this initiative even in trying times, even in deficit, even if taxes have to increase to make sure that those among us who live in such dire straits have an opportunity.

I ask the minister to do everything in her power to convince her colleagues in cabinet that this bill is not enough. I know in her heart of hearts she knows it's not enough. I'm asking that the effort be made to make this into a bill that will make all Ontarians proud and that will take literally hundreds of thousands of people off the poverty rolls and give them the kind of dignity, the kind of opportunity, that they have never before and that they can only dream of.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I want to start by thanking the member from Beaches–East York. This is clearly an area that drives him. He is here in politics to help those with less than they deserve and less than they need. I want to thank you for your passion, I want to thank you for your understanding, and I want to thank you for your ongoing commitment to making the lives of those living in poverty better.

I have to say that it is a refreshing contrast to some of the other speeches that have been made on this bill coming from the Conservative Party. I have been terribly disappointed at the lack of understanding and just the ignorance that has been expressed by members of the Conservative Party when it comes to this legislation, so I thank the member of Beaches–East York for taking the time to understand what it is we are trying to do.

We are starting with children. Reducing poverty in this province—it's going to take us a long time to get to where we want to go. We had a very difficult decision: Where do we start? We chose to start with breaking the cycle of poverty because, the member opposite knows, there are families in Ontario where there is an intergenerational cycle of poverty out of which it is very difficult to break. We want to give kids the opportunities to achieve their full potential. We had to start somewhere. Starting with kids is the right place to start. However, all people living in poverty will be better off as the result of this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Shurman: I found the words of my colleague from Beaches–East York to be rather interesting, especially when he related his own experiences at trying to be somebody who lived in poverty for a day or even a week. It's not something that I've tried—not that I have not experienced poverty when I was a young boy. I'm pretty sure that you would describe my parents' conditions as being such, but they always hid it well from me.

There is no disagreement in this House, I don't think, on the part of any party that poverty is an issue for On-

tarians and a growing issue, one that will grow exponentially, very sadly, over the next period of time. The issue we're discussing is how you address it, not whether or not it's there. I think there's a fundamental disagreement between the three parties on the way to go at it, not the fact that it should be done.

I take umbrage at what the minister has said in her response—albeit I acknowledge the fact that as a minister it's great that she's here and listening—to the comments about the Conservative Party, the party that I represent, being in some way ignorant about it.

The difference between the Liberal approach, which is too little, too late—and it's been on your watch, Minister, for almost six years, okay? You're not going to address poverty with a strategy that is weak; you're going to address it with one that's strong. It dovetails with pretty well everything we're doing and facing in Ontario now, with people losing jobs in the thousands. The Conservative Party's approach to this has always been, and remains, to preserve the dignity of the person at an individual level and to create conditions that allow everyone to earn a paycheque that allows everyone to have a job. That's what the Liberal strategy doesn't address, and on the NDP side it's "Tax double, and we'll redistribute it."

You can't have it all of these ways. You've got to have it one way. I say the personal dignity route wins.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: First of all, when somebody does something or tries to do something that's decent, they should at least get acknowledgement. I do believe that the minister's heart is in the right place. I do believe they're trying to address children's poverty in the province. But I must concur with my colleague from Beaches–East York; he hit a real chord when he talked about the total poverty issue.

Speaking from my own personal experiences, I can remember in 1990, when I was on strike at Stelco, that we had a five-month strike. I missed mortgage payments. I had three little girls. I even went and got my cab licence and drove cabs 16 to 18 hours a day in Hamilton, with not a lot of business, due to the strike. I was lucky if I took home \$30 a day for 16 or 18 hours. But I did it to feed my girls and keep my family together. But I could not even imagine what it would be like to live every day of your life in that situation. It would be just terrible. It creates social problems. It creates divorces. It creates havoc in the community. In my community, 18% of the people are already below the poverty level—this was before the devastating news at Stelco—so I can only assume that it's going to get worse before it gets better.

This bill does not go far enough. To my colleagues from the Conservatives: You don't get by on dignity. You get by on help, you get by on a cheque, you get by on support from social services, and that definitely has to be addressed.

We don't want to give away the store, but I think priorities in both parties are a little mixed up. The people come first, not your—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: J'ai écouté attentivement les points soulevés par mon collègue de Beaches–East York. Laissez-moi vous dire que, lorsqu'il a référé au temps de sa jeunesse, les temps ont changé.

I keep saying that times have changed, and every one of us has a role to play.

La pauvreté du temps des années 1930, 1940, 1950 et 1960 est complètement différente de la pauvreté des années 2000. Il faut dire que dans les années 1930 et 1940, on pouvait s'assurer chaque matin que nous aurions trois repas. La nutrition était complètement différente. Les collations n'existaient pas avant le coucher.

Mais aujourd'hui la pauvreté est complètement différente. Aujourd'hui on s'aperçoit que les enfants se rendent à l'école le matin avec l'estomac vide. Personne ne vient les aider. Les parents n'ont pas l'argent nécessaire. C'est pour ça que le gouvernement McGuinty reconnaît l'importance de mettre en place ce projet de loi, pour essayer de réduire la pauvreté. Tous les cinq ans on va regarder de nouveau les progrès que nous avons faits, et c'est très important, pour que le gouvernement McGuinty puisse avoir l'appui des deux partis de l'opposition afin de pousser davantage l'importance de répondre aux besoins.

Il y a certainement des objectifs qu'on doit rencontrer. Lorsque je dis qu'on doit réduire la pauvreté par 25 % d'ici cinq ans, laissez-moi vous dire que c'est avec consultation et le rôle que chacun d'entre nous va jouer afin de venir en aide au gouvernement McGuinty et au projet de loi qui est débattu ce matin; que tout le monde joue un rôle d'importance pour atteindre notre objectif.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Merci beaucoup. I'll now return to the member for Beaches–East York, who has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Michael Prue: I would like to thank the Minister of Children and Youth Services and my colleagues from Thornhill, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for their comments. It seems readily apparent to me from their comments that all of them listened to what I had to say. So this is a good thing.

To the member from Thornhill, though, you know he talked about the dignity of the person. I agree that dignity of a human being is an absolutely essential aspect for each and every one of us, but I asked him to reflect on the thought of the dignity of a person or how difficult it is to have dignity when one lives in destitution, when one lives in poverty, when one lives in hopelessness and in disease, when you are sick all the time because you don't have the proper food, when you don't have the opportunity to get a good job—that try as hard as you might, you cannot escape from that grinding and crushing poverty of the place where you live.

I asked him to think about that dignity of the person. It is that which I am talking about and that which I want the minister and others to reflect upon as well. That's why people need a hand up—not a handout but a hand up—in order to get out of that, to get an opportunity to develop

themselves. I do agree that they have to work at it, too. We all agree they have to work at it.

In terms of taxing double, the accusation, never did I say that I would tax people double. What I'm saying is that this government and all governments have to have priorities. I believe that this is a priority whose time has come. It can no longer be allowed to fester. If there is a priority in this upcoming budget cycle on March 26, I believe that that priority has to be poverty, and I will judge that tax bill and that budget on March 26 by what it contains on this issue and this issue alone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Second reading debate adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Culture.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: There is no further business this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That being the case, this House stands adjourned until 10:30 later on this morning.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. David Zimmer: It's my great pleasure to introduce Wendy Yan, who's in the gallery here. Wendy is the proud mother of page Xiao Yan Guo, who is over here. Xiao Yan is a student at Bayview Middle School in Willowdale. She has come to observe her daughter participate in the proceedings. Welcome.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'd like to introduce some people in the west members' gallery. Tariq Haji is one of the pages in this session, and his parents—Farhana Haji, his mother, and Hanif Haji, his father—and Alysa Haji, his sister, are all here to support him. I'd like to welcome them to the gallery and congratulate Tariq on the wonderful job that he has done as a page.

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: I also am lucky enough to have gotten a page. Zaman Dubey has been here as a page for the last couple of weeks. His parents have come to observe him this morning: his father, Zakir, his mother, Asma, and his brother, Abbas. Welcome.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Today in the government gallery, I am expecting from my deputy minister's office Peter Evans, Michael Dougherty, Tina Lee, Deeple Vyas and Melanie Lucas. They are great people who work with me every day, and I'm delighted that they're going to be here today with us.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm pleased to introduce Lee McKenna from the Association of Ontario Health Centres, who's in the gallery, as well as Heather Brown from the Ontario Nurses' Association.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from Vaughan and page Arjun Gandhi, I'd like

to welcome his mother, Hema Gandhi, his father, Sanjay Gandhi, and his sister, Anjali Gandhi, sitting in the east members' gallery today. Welcome.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery His Excellency Tomaz Kunstelj, Ambassador from the Republic of Slovenia to Canada, accompanied by the Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Slovenia at Toronto, Mr. Joseph Slobodnik. Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

NURSES

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Minister of Health. Today, nurses from across Ontario have travelled to Queen's Park because they are very concerned that your policies are forcing hospitals to lay off nurses, eliminate nursing positions and not fill vacancies. They're also concerned that you broke your promise to hire 9,000 more nurses.

Minister, will you take action today to stop the elimination of nursing positions in our hospitals, and will you commit to funding at least 3,000 new nursing positions in your 2009-10 budget?

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member for the question because we on this side of the House feel that nurses are an incredible cornerstone of our health care services. In fact, it's their expertise, their skill and their dedication which have meant so much for us to be able to drive down wait times, to be able to engage in new models of family health care, like nurse practitioner-led clinics, which we have moved to. That's why this government and the commitment of this Premier to hire 8,000 nurses in our first term has been a promise fulfilled. In fact, so far we are at almost 10,000 nurses hired in the province of Ontario. And, yes, the member is quite correct: We do have a plan to hire an additional 9,000 nurses in the province of Ontario. We are proceeding with that; I can confirm that for the member. It is perhaps going to take us a little bit longer than we had originally anticipated, but I do want to assure this member and all members of the House that we are proceeding with hiring an additional 9,000—

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Despite all the blubber and the rhetoric coming from the other side, I would suggest to you that the nurses have come to Queen's Park today to protest because they do not feel that the government policies are creating the new nursing positions that were promised, and they're also concerned about the firings throughout the province.

We've seen 72 nursing positions gone from the Rouge Valley Health System. Sault Ste. Marie: five critical care RN positions; two oncology. Quinte Health Care cut the equivalent of 45 full-time nursing positions. Cambridge will eliminate 30 full-time—and it goes on and on.

Mr. Minister, if your government is not cutting nursing positions, then why have these nurses travelled to Queen's Park today to protest your cuts?

Hon. David Caplan: In fact, nurses are being hired today in the province of Ontario. If you were to go to one of the job sites, Workopolis for example, you will find somewhere between 300 and 400 positions for nurses in the province of Ontario today.

In fact, the record of this member and her government, when they were on this side of the House just a few short years ago—a quote from Premier Mike Harris: “Just as hula hoops went out and those workers had to have a factory and a company that would manufacture something else that’s in, it’s the same in government,” Harris told reporters before a cabinet meeting when referring specifically to nurses. In fact, that member was a part of a government that fired nurses in its first year, to the tune of 6,300 nursing positions lost in the province of Ontario. I’m happy to contrast that record with the record of success of this government in hiring over 10,000 nurses today in the province of Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: It’s obvious that this minister is incapable of dealing with the crisis at hand.

We are very proud of our record. Between 1999 and 2001, we created 12,000 more nursing positions—nursing positions that we have been recognized for by the RNAO.

However, today the nurses are here to protest your policies. It’s time for you to assume responsibility and not go back years and years and years.

I say to you today, your Premier said he would not fire nurses. I’ve got the quotes right here.

Do you not know, Minister, that the research that ONA has states that every patient added to the workload of a registered nurse increases the rate of complications and patient deaths by 7%? That’s what your policies are forcing hospitals to do.

I ask you again on—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. David Caplan: Nothing could be further from the truth. And the only one who is proud of the record of the previous government is the member opposite.

In fact, Linda Haslam-Stroud, president of ONA, said on February 3, “In the mid-1990s, the Conservative government likened RNs to ‘hula hoops’ and fired more than 10,000 of them, setting the stage for today’s nursing shortage.”

We need those nurses. We need them in our hospitals, in our long-term-care homes, and in our community.

I note for you, just yesterday the member’s colleague was saying we are spending too much, that we should be cutting those positions, that we’ve hired too many people within the public service of the province of Ontario. I disagree with those comments.

I think Conservative members need to have best-before dates on all of the statements they—

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

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Minister of—Economic Development. It’s such a remote concept in this province, I have trouble with it.

Minister, in 2005—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Halton.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Minister, in 2005 I put an opposition day motion before this House calling for an immediate plan to deal with manufacturing job losses in Ontario. The resolution called for meaningful job action in hard-hit places like Hamilton, Welland, Guelph, Windsor and other Ontario manufacturing towns. The resolution passed that day in 2005, but the resolve of your government failed. Since then, we have seen nearly 300,000 manufacturing jobs lost across the province, with a large number added this week. Today, we heard about 1,200 more jobs lost in Windsor, one of those hard-hit cities the Premier and yourself promised to protect in 2005.

1040

Minister, yesterday the Premier said he was not responsible for job losses in Hamilton. You will probably say that you can’t do anything about the 1,200 workers laid off today in Windsor. If this is your stance, Minister, what is it that you can do for the hard-hit people of Ontario?

Hon. Michael Bryant: The member raised the events of yesterday in Windsor, and obviously, for the people affected who were on the third shift at Chrysler, it’s a very difficult time. It was anticipated since last August, but that doesn’t make it any easier for those workers. It was actually one of the last plants on the continent in which there were three shifts. Obviously, we’re hoping that the second shift will have enough production that some of those people will be able to continue to work.

We also, with respect to US Steel, see the impacts of the drop in auto sales.

What does a government do? Probably the best contribution that provincial and federal governments can make for the auto industry is the work we’re doing to try to create and support a viable auto industry. Probably the best thing we can do for the steel industry is to create more demand and increase supply by providing assistance to the auto industry, and that’s exactly what the provincial government is doing right now.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Boy, that’s faint hope for people in the manufacturing business in Ontario.

Minister, you have two ministers in your cabinet from Windsor. You would think they might urge you to come up with a plan to save these jobs. The minister of trade is probably too busy spending taxpayers’ dollars in fancy hotels overseas; the Minister of Finance would rather be

in Toronto creating a record budget for the province of Ontario.

Had you listened in 2005, the people at Chrysler in Windsor might still have jobs. But you frittered away the good times. You set us up for disaster with your tax-and-spend policies, and the continuing inaction is making things worse.

Minister, tell me, tell the people of Ontario and tell the people in Windsor, Hamilton, Guelph, Oshawa, Kitchener, Welland and all those other great manufacturing towns, under your leadership, is this the end of manufacturing in Ontario?

Hon. Michael Bryant: It's thanks to the members for Windsor that there's a future in Windsor and there's a future in the manufacturing industry in the province of Ontario. There is no way in the history of this province you have had two MPPs in Windsor, and all the MPPs representing Windsor from this party, who have fought for their communities harder than these MPPs you referred to.

The Minister of International Trade is travelling around the world to bring investments into all parts of this province, but you can bet she works very hard to bring investments into Windsor. The Minister of Finance, making investments in the advanced manufacturing strategy and through the Next Generation of Jobs Fund, has seen millions of dollars invested directly into companies, leveraging hundreds of millions of dollars of investments that create jobs in their communities and communities across this province. So don't tell me that we don't have the best members for Windsor, because we do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: If the future of Ontario is based on what Windsor is doing today—it's got the highest unemployment level in Ontario—then Ontario is headed down the wrong road, if that's your answer.

Minister, you pretend to understand the severities of these issues, but your actions or inactions do not fill me with confidence. Instead of dealing with the big questions that your Premier talked about over Christmas, you've reverted to your usual routine of ignoring the economy again. Instead of actually dealing with issues like red tape, high taxes, competitiveness and productivity, your government would rather talk about young offenders housing, cosmetic surgery—worthy subjects surely, but not right now. Right now, we need a plan. Right now, we need leadership. Right now, we need some reprieve for the people of the manufacturing cities of Ontario.

Minister, will you commit today to a serious change in your economic approach? Do you realize that you can make a difference if you try?

Hon. Michael Bryant: In fact, the member talks about a plan. It's the plan that the member voted against. It's the plan that put into place investments in the advanced manufacturing sector that led to a loan commitment of \$10 million to Roxul Inc. Where's Roxul Inc? It's in Milton, to the member who asked the question. An investment and a loan commitment of \$3 million to

Procter and Gamble Inc. of where? In Brockville, in Leeds–Grenville. We also have investments in Koolatron in Brantford, for the MPP for Brant. We have investments, in Oxford and Cambridge, in Toyota Canada.

This government's economic strategy, amongst other things, involves direct investment of industry funds into businesses. It's something that that member calls "corporate welfare" and this government calls "economic investment" to allow and jump-start companies so that they can jump ahead of their competitors. We stand for that economic stimulus and you voted against it.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The leader of the third party.

Applause.

Mr. Howard Hampton: If some people believe in a diversion strategy, it won't work.

My question is for the minister who claims to be the minister for industry investment in the province. Two days ago, 2,100 jobs at Stelco in Hamilton—gone; 261 jobs at Vale Inco in Sudbury—gone; yesterday, 1,200 jobs at the Chrysler minivan plant in Windsor—gone. The common thread: While the McGuinty government has been handing out hundreds of millions of dollars to some of the world's largest corporations, the McGuinty government has been getting no investment guarantees, no job guarantees and no product guarantees. The result: While the corporations get hundreds of millions of dollars, tens of thousands of Ontario workers get the pink slip. Minister, how does the McGuinty government justify handing out hundreds of millions of dollars to global corporations while the same corporations give their Ontario workers the goodbye slip?

Hon. Michael Bryant: Yes, the member is citing companies that have announced layoffs—US Steel—very, very significant layoffs; brutal news for Nanticoke and Hamilton. As well, the news yesterday at Chrysler with respect to 1,200 people affected on the third shift, as I said. It was anticipated, but that's of cold comfort to the people of that community, some of whom we hope will be involved in the second shift.

This government has made investments in small, medium and large enterprises. In every circumstance that we do so, we do it in order to grow the economy, and we do it through a process that I know the member voted against, but it's a process that allows these companies to see those investments, leverage those investments into larger investments and expand their footprint. It has resulted in significant expansion as a result of this, and at the same time—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: The McGuinty government says that handing out hundreds of millions of dollars to global corporations has resulted in significant expansions. About the only significant expansion we see is the expan-

sion in the number of workers who are unemployed, and that is the sad truth. This is the same old thing you've been doing now for five years: handing out the money, holding press conferences telling everyone in Ontario, "This is going to be wonderful, this is going to be fantastic," and then five months later, six months later, 1,000 workers get laid off; 2,000 workers get laid off; 3,000 workers get laid off.

When is the McGuinty government going to go back into the meeting room and say to itself, "This strategy of handing out hundreds of millions of dollars without job guarantees, investment guarantees and product guarantees isn't working"? When are you going to rethink a strategy that obviously hasn't—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Michael Bryant: I know that the member wouldn't want people to think that, in fact, the circumstances at US Steel, for example, involved the government making investments and then there being a change of circumstance. In fact, that is not the case. US Steel is a company that previously in Hamilton was Stelco. It was a company that the government, yes, intervened in to try and save the company, and saved it, thanks to the workers and, as well, some investments from the provincial government. As a result of that, pensions were saved—pensions were guaranteed. Those pensions are being paid and will continue to be paid, just as the obligations to the province will continue to be paid.

1050

The leader of the third party can't have it both ways. You can't complain when we make investments in corporations that have jobs in Ontario and then complain when we don't make investments in those same corporations, but we will continue making those investments, and we will continue growing the economy where we can grow the economy—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Well, I would say to the McGuinty government, "You can't have it both ways." We support making investments in Ontario's industries. We've been advocating for four years that the McGuinty government take a look at the forest sector and the destruction of jobs that is happening there.

But let's look at US Steel. US Steel got \$150 million. Did the McGuinty government get an investment guarantee? Did it get a job guarantee? Did it get a guarantee that US Steel would consider even other alternatives before simply laying off? No, you didn't. As a result, 2,100 workers in Hamilton are staring at unemployment now.

Again, when is the McGuinty government going to rethink its strategy instead of simply handing out money to global corporations? When are you going to demand product guarantees, job guarantees and investment guarantees so workers don't get a pink slip six months to a year later?

Hon. Michael Bryant: Well, the role of the provincial government in 2006 with Stelco was to move in and guarantee the pensions. It was to provide assistance for those people. I think you'd be hard pressed to find a single individual receiving that pension today as a result of that deal who would say that that was not in the best interests of those people and that community.

I want to assure those people that the pension obligations will continue to be paid. Certainly, I want to assure this House that the obligations to the government of Ontario will continue to be paid, and we will make sure that these legal obligations are met.

At the same time, we need—and I know the member would want to support this—management to come to the table, which they have not to date, and work with labour, work with the union and work with the workers to come up with alternatives other than simply the layoffs, including early retirement. It's something I've spoken to Leo Gerard about, and I know it's something that US Steel is going to want to get on very—

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

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton: Again to the minister: The minister talks about US Steel. It seems to me when \$150 million was handed out to US Steel, the government could have insisted, "Look, if you're facing layoffs or you're facing a declining economy, this company will consider other measures than simply laying off. This company will consider work sharing. This company will consider those kinds of measures." Those are things that you were in a position to demand of US Steel before you handed out \$150 million.

The question is, why doesn't the McGuinty government go to the table and demand these things? Why are you so happy to hand out hundreds of millions of dollars to global corporations and get nothing for Ontario workers?

Hon. Michael Bryant: The fact is that, had the government not made the intervention, nothing would have gone to those pensioners. Those pensioners would have looked at this bankrupt company and said, "There goes our pension." Instead, this government intervened to guarantee those pensions. That investment, that loan that the Ontario government made, because—and I'm happy to spend the entire question period talking about what the provincial government did to save the pensions of people in Hamilton in the dealings with Stelco in 2006. I'm happy to continue to have this question period on this front.

The investments were made to save the pensions. As a result of that, the pensions were saved. Notwithstanding the brutal news by US Steel recently, the pension money will continue to flow, and we will certainly make sure that the pensions continue to flow because that deal in 2006 was about the pensioners.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: Well, we will see in due course how guaranteed pensions are. But, again, I want to return to the 2,100 workers at US Steel in Hamilton and at Lake Erie who are now out on the street—out on the street. At the same time, the corporation that's putting them out on the street got \$150 million of Ontario taxpayer money. The McGuinty government can turn all kinds of circles and somersaults trying to avoid this, but this is the reality. It has been the reality with General Motors at \$235 million; it has been the reality, sadly, with Chrysler, which got \$77 million; it has been the reality with Ford, sadly, which got \$100 million; and it's the sad reality with US Steel.

The question remains: When is the McGuinty government actually going to insist on some measures—product guarantees, job guarantees or an Ontario-first strategy? When is the McGuinty government—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Michael Bryant: The province came to the table. We insisted upon pension guarantees, and we got pension guarantees. That's what we went to the table to achieve, and that was what was achieved.

I think that the member is underestimating the productivity of those workers at US Steel. Remember, 4,000 people at US Steel plants across the United States in the last few months have seen shutdowns—some temporary, some permanent. Four thousand US Steel workers saw that happen before this bad news hit Canada. That is a testament to the productivity of those workers. That is a testament to the knowledge and skills of those workers, and it's because of that that there is certainly a lot more potential at those particular plants than a number of plants in the United States that have already faced a closure.

Again, I would urge the member to support this effort to get management and the workers together to try—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Some days, I can't believe what I'm hearing from the McGuinty government. This is a steel plant that functioned throughout the Great Depression. This is a steel plant that continued to function through the very deep recession of 1981 to 1983. This is a steel plant that continued to function through the last recession in the early 1990s.

Today, the McGuinty government is saying, "They should be thankful they were only laid off and shut down now." Again, is this the full measure of the McGuinty government jobs strategy: "Be thankful that you held on to your job a few weeks longer than someone else somewhere else"? Is this the McGuinty government jobs strategy: hand out hundreds of millions of dollars to global corporations, then watch as they lay off tens of thousands of Ontario workers? Don't you think, Minister, that Ontario workers and Ontario citizens deserve something more, something better from the McGuinty government than this?

Hon. Michael Bryant: The strategy is, in addition to providing assistance to the companies in this extra-

ordinary circumstance with respect to the auto industry, to provide direct investments into businesses. Yes, some of them are multinational businesses; no question about it. Some are homegrown businesses here in the province of Ontario. Regardless, they create wealth, they create economic activity in the province of Ontario, and they create jobs. The member is standing up and he's trying to drive this theme through that the government of Ontario should not be making investments in multinational corporations. Firstly, that's wrong. Secondly, these multinationals create jobs. I can tell you, the people who are working at US Steel want to be working at a multinational corporation right now. That's why we need to get management and labour to come to the table and look at alternatives. At the same time, the government will continue to make investments in multinationals and otherwise—

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

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Minister of Finance: Minister, families in my area in Stoney Creek, Glanbrook and Niagara are reeling from the devastating news of 2,100 job losses at Stelco and 111 job losses at Court Valve in Beamsville, on top of the 800 John Deere losses happening this year.

It was largely from the wallets of working families and seniors like these that you raked in some \$27 billion in increased revenue over the past five years. Now as they lose their jobs, they learn that you took all of that money and blew it out the door, leaving no cushion whatsoever for when times got tough, plunging us into the deepest deficit in our province, surpassing even the fiscal ineptitude of Bob Rae.

Minister, not only is this an extraordinary failure in leadership; isn't it an extraordinary betrayal of these folks who worked hard, gave you more money and find now that you have no plan to bring jobs back to our province?

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Hon. Dwight Duncan: To those people who have lost their jobs in Hamilton and my home community of Windsor, we will continue to work to find solutions to the challenges they face and we certainly won't turn our backs on them at this point in time. They join workers in Michigan, Indiana, England, France, Germany and China who are losing jobs hand over fist. I don't think anybody buys for a moment that we are going to be exempt from that reality.

In fact, where we saw remarkable growth in taxes over the last few years was in corporate taxes, not personal income taxes, and that was due to rising profits. We invested that in health care and education. We paid down debt. We eliminated the previous government's deficit. That was—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Let's review, Minister, the McGuinty economic record at the five-year point. We learned that despite the \$27-billion tax windfall, you've plunged our province into the biggest deficit in our history, surpassing even Bob Rae. We have, under Dalton McGuinty, become a have-not province, and we have a have-not Premier when it comes to any ideas to get us out of it. Unlike Dalton McGuinty's outdated tax-and-spend policies that chase jobs from our province, we on this side believe that the best way out of deficit and have-not status is to grow our way out through private sector job creation. Sadly, with your WSIB tax hike, your energy rate increases and audits, and your goal to close down temp agencies that are trying to place folks in the few remaining jobs that there are, Minister, aren't your job-killing policies actually going to make Ontario's deficit worse in the coming years?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Governments around the world are accumulating very substantial deficits in the interest of stimulating employment. This crisis is not going to end shortly. There are no quick fixes, and to suggest that we will be exempt from that is, I think—I spoke to the head of the union at Chrysler yesterday, both the local as well as the national, as well as one of my neighbours who lost their job. I think they understand that this goes well beyond the kinds of pat hyperbole that the member opposite offers. We will put forward a plan, we will take that to the people, and we will continue to build a better, stronger and more prosperous Ontario for everyone.

L'ÉCONOMIE DU NORD NORTHERN ECONOMY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines. Des résidents du nord de l'Ontario ont vu les moulins à papier et à scie à bois fermer l'un après l'autre avec des effets dévastateurs sur leur famille, les travailleurs et la communauté. Pendant ce temps-là, notre demande sous l'accès à l'information a découvert que 75 % du fonds de prospérité pour le secteur forestier et le programme de prégarantie est demeuré dans les coffres du gouvernement pendant que le nord de l'Ontario perdait des milliers de bons emplois. C'est l'industrie minière qui a alimenté l'économie du nord, mais maintenant c'est cette industrie qui perd des emplois.

J'aimerais connaître le plan du gouvernement pour l'économie du nord de l'Ontario.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much for the question. I appreciate it very much. Certainly we are incredibly conscious of the challenges that are facing the northern Ontario economy, particularly in the mining sector, which I'm responsible for, and the forestry sector under Minister Cansfield. I can tell you that we continue to work incredibly closely with the mining companies. The announcement earlier this week of further job losses at Vale Inco, 261 job losses, was devastating. I think it's incredibly important that we recognize that the global

financial crisis has had a great impact on the mining sector as well.

We are pleased to be able to say, though, that through work we're doing on the northern Ontario growth plan, which I'm co-chairing with my colleague, the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, we are developing an economic blueprint for the north. We had an incredibly important gathering recently, the Think North Summit, bringing northerners together, recognizing that during these challenging times it's even more important that we develop an economic plan for the north. With the growth plan, we—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: The economy in northern Ontario is shrinking. According to the Sudbury Star, Sudbury alone lost 3,550 direct and indirect mining sector jobs since last fall. This government has let down forest workers, their families and northern communities by holding back 75% of the money that was supposed to support that industry through difficult times. Now, mines are laying off hundreds of workers. In my riding alone, in Nickel Belt, 1,000 people lost their jobs in the last month. There aren't that many jobs in Nickel Belt; 1,000 jobs hurts lots.

What is the plan of the Minister of Northern Development and Mines? What is the plan for the mining sector?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Again, I very much appreciate the question. We are incredibly aware, obviously, of the challenges that are being faced in the mining sector. Certainly there were extraordinary economic opportunities there in the past that are being impacted by the global financial crisis and the job losses. You illustrate the number there, and it's very, very difficult.

I can tell you, having just attended the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada convention in Toronto this past week with 18,000 delegates from all across the world, 100 jurisdictions, there is still very much a belief that, indeed, we've gone through difficult times before, the mining sector has been down, and it's going to be back up again. There's no doubt that, with the commodity prices being where they are, except for gold, those challenges are there. But there is still real optimism. I spoke to so many people who believe that indeed we're going to be back. Certainly, we're going to continue to work very, very closely with our mineral development strategy for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to see a prosperous future. Mining will continue—

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

NURSES

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: My question this morning is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Time and time again, we hear about the shortage of nurses in this province. That's one of the reasons why in 2003 the McGuinty government pledged to hire an additional 8,000 nurses and why in the 2007 election the govern-

ment committed to adding 9,000 more nurses over the coming years.

Yet in these difficult economic times, I know that some nurses in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga and across Ontario are concerned. They want to know that their hard work is appreciated by this government. They want to know that this government will hire nurses, not fire them as previous governments have done. I ask the Minister of Health, is he truly committed to the nurses in Ontario?

Hon. David Caplan: I'm glad the honourable member asks this question. It gives me a chance to express my appreciation not only to the more than 100,000 nurses who are keeping our province's health care system strong, but to their leadership, who are here with us today in the gallery at Queen's Park. I welcome you here today.

Our hospitals, our long-term-care homes and our family health teams are thriving because of the expertise, skills, diligence and dedication of our nurses. Our government and I are absolutely committed to increasing the number of nurses working in this province. According to the most recent data from the College of Nurses of Ontario, we've hired 9,669 nurses since we were elected in 2003. That's almost 10,000 nursing jobs created in the province of Ontario.

Today, I am pleased to tell you that the College of Nurses of Ontario is reporting that there are officially more than 1,300 nurse practitioners entitled to practise in the province. According to the college, in 2003, there were 535—

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

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: There are currently a number of hospitals in Ontario attempting to balance their budgets. Like this government and like many Ontario families, hospitals are trying to figure out how to thrive in difficult economic times. Many of them are working closely with their LHINs to find solutions that will not compromise patient care, examining ways to maximize resources and capitalize on the expertise of highly qualified health care professionals. Occasionally, this may mean that nurses have to change jobs, and some of them could end up in positions that require more training.

Can the Minister of Health tell this House what the government is doing to support nurses through this difficult economic transition? What is the government doing to ensure that nurses land on their feet?

Hon. David Caplan: I want to tell my honourable colleagues about an initiative that was created back in 2005 to help to address this specific issue. We invested in a \$40-million strategy called the nursing retention fund. In fact, it's managed by our three major nursing partners. This fund provides additional resources to help hospitals retrain and retain nurses. It helps nurses build on their skills and train for more specialized positions. It's designed to help safeguard nursing jobs when Ontario hospitals seek to reorganize, reallocate or redeploy resources.

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I want to encourage more Ontario hospitals to take advantage of this fund, because the applications that have

been submitted to date—I know more hospitals and nurses could benefit from the opportunities that this fund can create for them.

We want to empower Ontario hospitals to strengthen and develop their nursing staff as they reallocate their resources, and this fund is designed to do just that. I think it's a promising solution, one that will—

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

TOBACCO CONTROL

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion.

In a recent RCMP document, lab reports showed that bagged cigarettes with unknown names, manufactured offshore, contained a lot more than tobacco. The report shows the bodies of small insects, insect larvae, insect feces, all embedded in the tobacco used to make the illegal cigarettes smoked more and more frequently by underage smokers. So not only is the rapid rise of illegal tobacco product use by underage persons being recorded while you try to sell the no-smoking message, but these kids are smoking things that have no business being sold anywhere, much less outside the law and near schools.

Is the minister aware of these horrific ingredients in what Ontario's kids are smoking, and will she commit to this Legislature and the people of Ontario that she'll start doing the job to which she was appointed?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I'll refer the question to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Certainly, the short answer to the question is yes. That's why we on this side of the House discourage anyone from buying illegal cigarettes. That's why our provincial police services and our municipal police services across the province of Ontario are actively engaged with the RCMP and with international police services to minimize that amount. And do you know what? We look forward to the continued co-operation of the RCMP, the OPP and international police services so that we can get rid of this scourge.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: To that list of ingredients, I think we can add baloney.

Recent statistics—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just ask the honourable member to choose better words and try to maintain decorum. You saw what it did.

Mr. Peter Shurman: It was a joke; I withdraw it.

Recent statistics say that despite all of the minister's efforts, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act just isn't working. Over 50% of all tobacco sales in Ontario are now illegal. Last year when I raised this subject, it was about 40%.

Stakeholders say you're telling them that your objective is to eliminate smoking altogether, and if that's true, perhaps saying so publicly is appropriate.

You are not protecting Ontarians, especially our young people, who can purchase illicit cigarettes and other

tobaccos in strip malls, parking lots, near most schools. The plan is no plan.

Minister, will you or will you not undertake to ensure that you are doing what you say? Will the McGuinty government apply the law—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Let me tell you that it isn't baloney when you get the international—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just ask the honourable member to listen to what the member from Thornhill just said. He withdrew the comment. Don't start it back and forth.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I withdraw, Speaker.

I think it's very, very important that the member over there, who purports to be such a champion, remember the fact that the ingredients in those cigarettes can do an individual a great deal of harm, and so it is important that he understand that the RCMP, the international police services, the Ontario Provincial Police service, every border municipal police service, every municipal police service in Ontario, take this as very, very important.

We know that 90% comes across the border. We're doing everything to ensure—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister.

NURSES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

The Ontario Nurses' Association is marching to Queen's Park to deliver a message to the McGuinty government. ONA was forced to launch a media campaign called Cutting Nurses, Cutting Care to try to stop the McGuinty government cuts to nursing positions and nursing hours of care, which threaten patient care. ONA has received notice of hundreds of cuts to nursing positions and expects the numbers to balloon as Ontario health care facilities grapple with balancing their budgets. The minister talks about job offers on Workopolis. My question: Is the minister denying that nurses are being laid off?

Hon. David Caplan: Under the NDP government, in fact, 3,000 nursing positions were lost. I certainly acknowledge the history of my colleague opposite. Under this government, 10,000 nursing positions have been created in the province of Ontario. The future for nurses in the province of Ontario is equally bright. We are going to continue to hire nurses. The member should be familiar that in Sudbury we began the very first nurse-practitioner-led clinic in 2007. This clinic is providing care to 2,000 patients who previously did not have access to family health care. These are the exciting opportunities that we are creating for nurses within a hospital environment, within long-term care and within the community. We will be driving out an additional 25 of these nurse-practitioner-led clinics, the next—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Maybe I should have tried my question in French because I didn't seem to get an answer. In the last election, the McGuinty government promised 9,000 more nurses, but he said that the promise would have to wait. In order to maintain good quality care with our aging population, we need a minimum of 3,000 new nurses this year. Instead, nurses are being laid off and patient care is suffering. My question again: Is the minister denying that nurses are being laid off right now?

Hon. David Caplan: In fact, I will quote from the RNAO Queen's Park 2009 backgrounder: "Based on College of Nurses of Ontario figures from 2004-08, government met its promise to add 8,000 nursing positions."

In fact, we are adding an additional 9,000 nurses in the province of Ontario. As we speak, there are nursing positions that are open. We are looking for nurses to be able to fill those positions anywhere on a daily basis, from 200 to 300, and sometimes even more, every single day. We need nurses. We need them in our hospitals, we need them in our long-term-care homes and we need them in our communities. Their skills and expertise are our cornerstone to better health care, to lowering wait times and to the better care that Ontarians expect.

I have extended an offer in my hand to the leadership of the Ontario Nurses' Association and the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario to work with us to be able to provide—

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

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. Reza Moridi: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, everybody is talking about the need to invest in infrastructure. My constituents and I understand the significant infrastructure needs that many municipalities are facing. One of the ways that the government can help to address these pressing infrastructure needs is through investing in our health care infrastructure.

In my community of Richmond Hill, we have had the good fortune to recently see a new chronic kidney disease program open up as part of the phase one redevelopment of York Central Hospital. This investment will mean that people in my community will get treatment closer to home and will benefit from this expansion and renovation. Minister, what are you doing to improve health care infrastructure in Ontario?

Hon. George Smitherman: Over the course of the last several years, our government has increased approximately threefold the amount of annual investment that we've had available in the province of Ontario related to infrastructure, and health infrastructure has played a very crucial element of that. In fact, in the last five years we've constructed more new hospital facilities or ini-

tiated more construction than just about four or five governments in the province of Ontario before that added together. And the pace continues, at a very torrid one indeed.

At present, in our alternate financing model, we have more than 20 new projects that are under way in a variety of communities. I know that the local construction in Richmond Hill is being met with good acceptance. The point of the matter is, we've made a lot of progress already, but we certainly expect to continue moving forward and bringing new hospital infrastructure to communities all across the province of Ontario.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Reza Moridi: Minister, I know that there are many communities across the province that would benefit from these projects. My constituents recognize the need for these important investments in health care infrastructure. However, my municipality and others across the province are also experiencing problems with aging infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and water and waste water facilities. During times like this, we recognize that we need to do everything we can to support our local economies and invest in those projects that will create jobs and improve our quality of life.

Minister, what are you doing to improve other types of infrastructure in the province and create badly needed jobs in our communities?

Hon. George Smitherman: At present when we look at all of the infrastructure investments ongoing in the province of Ontario, we see 100,000 people in the province working to contribute substantially to its rebuilding—stimulus yes, perhaps in the short term, but transitioning our infrastructure to being able to support the strong economy of the future.

Recently, working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, we had our communities component announcement, where the federal government, provincial government and municipalities teamed up: \$1 billion of additional funding for 289 projects across the province of Ontario.

We're looking for opportunities, working in partnership with other levels of government, to continue to make investments in the essential infrastructure: water, waste water and roads. In the member's very own riding in Richmond Hill: \$5.8 million through Investing in Ontario, \$2.25 million in the Pioneer Park stormwater management project and \$1.9 million for local roads and bridges.

PESTICIDES

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of the Environment: At a time when Ontario needs a plan for business, this minister is knowingly and intentionally shutting down businesses and shutting down jobs across the province. In fact, with his publication of 250 pesticides banned yesterday, he has essentially knowingly created serious difficulties for businesses across the province. In

fact, his colleague the member for Oak Ridges–Markham agrees, and agrees with the industry that many of the pesticides that are on this list should not be there. She wrote him a letter dated February 20 in which she asked him to revisit this issue. I'd like to know from the minister, has he read Dr. Jaczek's letter of February 20, and why did he not take her advice on this important issue?

Hon. John Gerretsen: It's unfortunate that this member and the vast majority of his caucus did not support this bill, which is doing something very necessary for our children who play in our front yards, our backyards and schoolyards. What we are doing is we are taking away unnecessary risks that children should not be exposed to.

I would prefer that he would align himself with the words of Dr. David Suzuki, who said, "We congratulate the Ontario government for raising the bar on protecting people and the environment from needless pesticide exposure." I would prefer that he would take the position as taken by the Canadian Cancer Society, which said that they congratulate the Ontario government "for passing strong regulations supporting the Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Act."

I would prefer that he would take the position that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario are taking when they say—

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

Mr. Frank Klees: No one in this House opposes banning pesticides that are harmful—no one—but I will align myself with the words of Dr. Helena Jaczek, a Liberal member of this Legislature who is a former medical officer of health for York region. I'll read the letter, which obviously the minister has not read. She says, referring to only one of those, "Imidacloprid would be affected by the ban... Health Canada concluded that the human health and environmental risks" associated with its use are acceptable. She goes on to say: "This suggests that the current view of [it's] health implications by the provincial government is worthy of reconsideration." She goes on in the letter and encourages the minister to take a scientific approach to this issue.

Why will he not listen to the former medical officer of health, his colleague sitting across the floor? Why will he not—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Gerretsen: We did exactly that: We took a very scientific approach with respect to all of the products that we have banned. What Health Canada basically says about any of the individual products is that it's an acceptable risk. We believe that it's much better to take a precautionary approach and not allow any of our children to be subjected to unnecessary risks. There also haven't been enough studies done to look at the cumulative effects that all of these pesticides have on the human body, particularly on young people.

This is the right way to go. The people of Ontario agree with us, and I would only hope that the members of that caucus would agree with us as well to deal with this

unnecessary risk that our children should simply not be exposed to.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just remind the honourable member that we have a practice in this chamber of not dealing with points of order during question period.

The honourable member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. A recent report by the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada painted a bleak picture on affordable housing in this province. One in five tenant households spent more than 50% of their income on rent. The affordable housing waiting list is now at a shocking 124,000 households. In 2003, the McGuinty Liberals promised 20,000 new units of affordable housing. One election and six years later, less than 10,000 units are occupied, with another 3,000 in the planning process. Why won't this minister finally take responsibility for this government's lack of contribution to our housing stock?

Hon. Jim Watson: One of the last times the honourable member asked the question, she referred to the \$100-million investment that this government put into repairing housing as "meagre." I don't know about you, but on this side of the House, \$100 million, which was the single largest investment in housing repair in the history of Ontario, is extremely significant, and it's helping individuals and helping improve their lives.

Just this last month—340 units were occupied in December 2008 and in 2009, including 31 units at Vaughan Road in Toronto; 11 units at the youth and family resource centre in Windsor; 12 units at the Melco-Campbell in Windsor; 213 home ownership units and 64 northern units. We have invested \$734 million in a joint program with the federal government. We're proud of that investment and we're proud of the fact that this government pressured the federal government into getting back into the affordable housing—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The Liberals love history.

Despite the fact that we got no federal help, during the NDP government we built 70,000 new affordable housing units. The report suggests the recession will make this crisis even worse. In 2007, more rental units were lost to demolition than were created. Now is the time to build affordable housing. The NDP's stimulus plan calls for an additional 7,500 units this year alone to meet the desperate need and to create jobs. There's a 21-year waiting list for affordable housing in Peel region. Is that how long it's going to take for the McGuinty government

to take housing seriously and make a waiting-list-busting investment, finally?

Hon. Jim Watson: On the eve of the NDP leadership, let me quote one of the delegates who appeared on November 15 in Sudbury at the all-candidates' leadership questions. She said, "I'm going to preface my question by saying that the mailings I've received from the Ontario NDP ... have, more often than not, not mentioned housing and homelessness." Where is the NDP on housing and homelessness? They talk an awful lot about it. This government acts. We brought in the rent bank, which so far has prevented 16,000 evictions in the province of Ontario. We also brought in the lowest rental increase in Ontario history. Every single time we've brought a progressive measure to help in the battle against homelessness and to create more affordable housing, the NDP talk a good tale but they vote—

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, specifically about the repair of social housing here in Ontario.

A year ago in the budget, our government committed \$100 million to social housing repair. The city of Toronto received \$36 million. The NDP member for Parkdale has called this investment of \$100 million a meagre investment; \$100 million is no meagre amount of money. Certainly, that investment in Toronto and in other communities across Ontario has made an impact on repairing social housing.

Minister, what's the status of this investment in the repair of social housing in Ontario?

1130

Hon. Jim Watson: Let me begin by thanking the honourable member, a former chair of community housing in the city of Toronto, who did excellent work before he got here to the Legislature and who continues to be a great advocate for those individuals seeking affordable housing, not just in his own riding of Willowdale but throughout the city of Toronto.

When the province announced funding for repairs and renovations, a total of \$36 million went to the city of Toronto. When the NDP, in their last platform, talked about money to Toronto, they wanted to invest just \$30 million. We've already increased, by their base level—\$36 million.

These investments have reduced the backload for capital repairs in Toronto significantly from \$300 million to \$200 million. I congratulate the city of Toronto for using funds—\$75 million from the sale of Toronto Hydro Telecom—to put into affordable housing. That's the kind of partnership we're very proud to be part of.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Minister, in these very tough economic times, the need for affordable housing is even more urgent, more critical. In Toronto and throughout the

GTA, I hear many stories about families struggling with the cost of rental housing. These families are struggling with difficult decisions, often ones beyond their control. They're hard-working families trying to provide the best for their children, a good education for their children, a safe, clean place to live and, indeed, hope for the family. Sometimes, through no fault of their own, it's difficult or impossible to make ends meet.

Minister, what are we doing to help these Ontarians in need of housing?

Hon. Jim Watson: The NDP may laugh at these kinds of questions because, quite frankly, they're embarrassed by their own track record. Even their own members are criticizing the NDP for not doing more than simply just talking about helping those individuals. Well, we've done more than talk; we've acted.

The rent increase guideline for 2009 is 1.8%. We have had the pleasure of bringing in rent control that makes sense and is affordable, tied to the consumer price index. It's simple and transparent for the public to understand.

Rent bank assistance in the city of Toronto, for instance: \$5 million invested province-wide in 2008; Toronto received \$1.8 million of that. As a result of the money we put in the rent bank just in the city of Toronto, in the member's community, 3,261 individuals have stayed off eviction, which is something we're very proud of.

The ROOF—rental opportunities for Ontario families—program: a \$100-a-month subsidy, \$185 million, 21,000—

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

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a question for the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services. Minister, small businesses in Ontario are being hit by the double whammy of a global economic meltdown and the McGuinty government that burdens them with an unforgiving load of regulations. Every bill you introduce makes it harder to stay in business in this province.

Your new temporary help agencies bill, Bill 139, is a good example. It's going to create higher costs for business, and it's going to create more red tape for workers. Just at the time when our economy is struggling, we need those businesses; we need those workers.

I ask the minister, haven't you throttled small business enough with your red tape? How can you support this bill when you know it will only hurt small business, not help it?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to thank the member for asking the question. I'm very much aware of the contribution that the small businesses make to our province. They are about 360,000 in total. They contribute about \$250 billion, and our government has been working very, very closely with them to make sure that some of the challenges they are facing in the global economy right now get addressed.

I want to talk about one special program that we have introduced so that we can help the small businesses more. These are peer-to-peer round tables that are conducted by Direct Engagement. I participate on a monthly basis in this program in the very first week of the month. What this does is—basically this is a webcast program where people can actually sign up on the webcast, and the people can actually participate—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister.

POINTS OF ORDER

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to make my point of order, but I would also like you to clarify, if you could, for me and other members the issue of raising a point of order. I was under the impression that the standing orders provide for any member at any time to be able to raise a point of order, realizing that it's up to you to decide whether it is a point of order. But to rule it out before the member has the opportunity to make the point, I find of interest, and perhaps you could clarify why that would be the case.

I would like to speak to my point of order, and it relates to the Minister of the Environment's response to my question. He made the statement that every member of this caucus voted against the act, which is not true. It was a recorded vote. I would ask that you give the member an opportunity to withdraw that statement.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for his point of order. I cannot compel a member to withdraw a comment that he may or may not wish to make.

On the issue, I think if you were to look back under a number of Speakers from all parties who have sat in this chair, the convention within this chamber is that we want to ensure a good flow through question period. I would encourage you—and I'd certainly be happy, in consultation with the clerks' table, to provide you rulings from a number of Speakers who have stood behind the no points of order during question period.

If it's an issue that he chooses to pursue, I would encourage him to take it up with his House leader. Perhaps it's an issue that House leaders may want to discuss, but it has been standard practice in here not to recognize points of order during question period.

Hon. John Gerretsen: If I did say that all of the members of the Tory caucus voted against it, I was incorrect. Certainly the vast majority did. There may have been—

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: Further to the point of order made by Mr. Klees and your comments on it, you might also then, sir, want to counsel the members of this Legislature about frivolous points of order that are used from time to time to interrupt the 20 minutes of an opposition member's participation in the debate in an effort to simply consume time. They're almost inevitably made at the 18th minute to deny that person—and I've witnessed

it in this chamber over the last couple of weeks, several times by one particular member.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Mr. Norm Miller: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wanted to advise that I'm unhappy with the answer I received from the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services and will be filing a late show.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I encourage the member to send that to the table. I think for any member, whenever they're dissatisfied with an answer during question period, that's the practice to follow.

DEPUTY CLERK'S ANNIVERSARY

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just ask all members to join me in congratulating Todd Decker on his 25th anniversary of employment at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Congratulations.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Frank Klees: Last evening, I met with residents, family members and staff of the Southlake Residential Care Village in Newmarket and heard first-hand of the serious effects the McGuinty government's underfunding of long-term-care homes is having on the quality of care and safety of their residents. Staff also described how impossible it is to provide a reasonable level of care at the current staffing levels and how staff reductions in housekeeping and kitchen services have resulted in the downloading of additional workload onto personal support workers. I heard how, on some shifts, one personal support worker is expected to look after 32 residents—an impossible task.

Dawn Khoury, who is the only social worker at Southlake Village and cares for 192 residents, presented me with these 446 cards signed by residents, their families, friends and staff, with a request that I bring their concerns to the attention of the Premier and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and I'm doing that now by way of this statement.

I'm calling on the Premier to ensure that he and his cabinet prioritize the needs of long-term-care residents in our province and, as the card states, "correct the six-year erosion in funding for housekeeping, maintenance and other services that support resident care, comfort and safety," and "fully implement the already promised 2,500 extra personal support workers and 2,000 nurses."

There can be no greater priority than ensuring our seniors' safety and comfort through the quality care they deserve. It's up to the Premier to do that.

RICHMOND HILL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Mr. Reza Moridi: This past Saturday, I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, together with the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honourable David Onley, as well as Mayor David Barrow and hundreds of guests.

More than 20 years of hard work have gone into making this dream a reality. The centre is in the heart of Richmond Hill and features a 631-seat auditorium, a multi-purpose rehearsal hall, gallery space for visual arts and an outdoor plaza. The centre will also be able to hold film exhibits. The heritage building beside the centre was formerly the Richmond Hill High School and has been restored and included as part of the project; it now houses the centre's administration offices.

The mayor and the councillors of Richmond Hill are to be commended for their vision of the centre and the importance that this project will have to the economic revival of downtown Richmond Hill. On a personal note, I would like to congratulate Michael Grit, the theatre manager, for his tireless efforts in bringing this significant project to completion. The centre will be a place for all ages and cultures to join the celebration of the arts.

YORK SUBWAY EXTENSION

Mr. Peter Shurman: I rise today to ensure that the government of Ontario, in delivering its 2009-10 budget, includes meaningful funding for the extension of the Yonge subway line into York region, a project that has been identified as a top priority by Metrolinx and has the support of York region council, municipal councils throughout the region and the Toronto city council. It is time that the McGuinty government got on board as well and committed adequate funding to support this very important investment in Thornhill and beyond.

The proposed 6.8-kilometre Yonge line extension would add six new stations and benefit hundreds of thousands of people living in Thornhill and the surrounding communities, including ridings of Richmond Hill, Newmarket-Aurora, Vaughan, Markham-Unionville and Willowdale, just to name a few.

This project is not only about the movement of traffic but about the movement of people and the enhancement of their quality of life. The extension would stimulate the economy, create new jobs and encourage use of public transit, thereby alleviating the impact of smog and car pollution on our environment and our health in the entire GTA.

Today, I am asking the McGuinty government to break its track record of irresponsible spending and to end its streak of misguided investments. I am asking that the McGuinty government recognize York region's enormous economic potential by investing in its people and in the infrastructure that is so necessary for our future success.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I rise today in honour of International Women's Day and, in fact, International Women's Week and the fact that this has been a proud protest tradition for decades now.

What we, in the New Democratic Party, ask this government to acknowledge in their 2009 budget is the fact that women's programs need funding. They need core funding, and they need sustained funding. We need funding for transition housing. We need funding for child care. Certainly, without adequate child care, one of the core demands of the women's movement, there can be no equality for women, and we don't have adequate child care in this province. We don't have adequate child care the way they do in Quebec, where you can get child care for \$7 a day. We need that here in Ontario, if they're serious about the women's movement and celebrating International Women's Day.

We also need them to fund the equity process, with women making 71 cents on the dollar.

Finally, we need them to fund nursing. Nursing is still a predominantly women's profession. Nurses are demonstrating outside as we speak. Nurses are being cut across the board across Ontario, despite assurances and promises to the contrary. Despite assurances and promises to hire new nurses, what we're actually doing in Ontario is cutting nurses who are already there.

If the McGuinty government is serious about women's equality, the McGuinty government will act on all these issues.

MATTHEWS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Michael A. Brown: St. Joseph Island lies down the St. Mary's River from Lake Superior. It is a beautiful place, inhabited by strong, independent folks.

As with all islands, there's a special society that thrives there. During the 1930s, Canada's first publicly funded universal health care system was put in place on the island. The Liberal member of the Legislature at the time, Lynn Miller, had a bill passed to permit this universal, township-sponsored plan.

Today, the islanders and their mainland neighbours are faced with a consultant's recommendation to the Sault Area Hospital board to close their hospital, Matthews Memorial Hospital, which is more than 60 kilometres from the Sault hospitals.

I was one of 400 people gathered this week to clearly indicate that the closure of Matthews Memorial Hospital was unacceptable to the residents of central Algoma. Their message is crystal clear.

The residents of St. Joseph Island and central Algoma have been strong supporters of health care in the area, including in Sault Ste. Marie. Many have been generous in their support, not only for their local hospital but also for the capital program for the new Sault Ste. Marie hospital.

It is time that the Sault Area Hospital board dismiss this ill-founded recommendation now. The Sault Area Hospital board needs to focus their attention on the real problem and keep their hands off Matthews Memorial and Thessalon hospitals.

SKILLED TRADES

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: It is an honour today to stand in this House and congratulate my colleague Garfield Dunlop, MPP for Simcoe North. Today, Mr. Dunlop will be recognized for his very significant contribution in the area of skilled trades, when he receives the prestigious Klaus Woerner Skilled Trades Hall of Fame Award.

Mr. Dunlop will be the first politician to receive this prestigious award. It is his extensive background in skilled trades that has set the foundation for his passionate advocacy for the skilled trades.

Mr. Dunlop is one of the few MPPs in this Legislature who has a background in that area. As many of us know, he is a licensed plumber and operated his family's plumbing business, Dunlop Plumbing and Heating, for almost two decades before entering politics.

In 2002, he was the author of a Ministry of Education report on apprenticeship, elements of which have been reflected in both our government's budget and the Liberal government's budget.

Mr. Dunlop was nominated by Brian Tamblyn, president and CEO of Georgian College, where Mr. Dunlop has played a vital role in establishing a skilled trades centre on their Midland campus.

We on this side of the House, and I know all of my colleagues on all sides of the House, are very proud of Garfield's accomplishments and his continued leadership in the advancement of skilled trades and apprenticeships, and we congratulate him today.

1310

NURSES

Mr. Charles Sousa: I rise today to remind this House of the outstanding job that Ontario nurses do on a daily basis and to recognize their role in ensuring a high standard of care for all Ontarians. Nurses provide a variety of functions far beyond the hospital bed, and the McGuinty government is committed to standing beside Ontario's nurses.

After eight years of drastic cuts to nursing levels, the McGuinty Liberals have taken prudent action to ensure that nurses have the resources needed to deliver the level of care Ontarians deserve. We've hired 8,000 new nurses since 2003 and ensured that 76% of recent graduates obtain full-time employment. We have provided funding for 1,200 registered practical nurse positions in our long-term-care homes, ensuring at least one new nurse in every home, and provided funding for 500 nurses in a new OMA agreement, making it easier for doctors and nurses to work together in family practice.

These investments underscore this government's commitment to our health care system and its workers. Nurses do incredible work in all aspects of care and should be rightly commended for their dedication to improving the health of all Ontarians. So, on behalf of this House, I wish to say thank you to all Ontario nurses.

JAMES PAGE MACKEY

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise in the House today to pay tribute to one of Toronto's finest, the late Chief of Police James Page Mackey. James Page Mackey was born on May 27, 1913, in Scarborough, Ontario, and died February 27, 2009, in Bracebridge, Ontario, at age 95. He served as chief of police from 1958 to 1970, making him the longest-serving chief in the force's history. After graduating from high school in Scarborough, the young Mackey wanted to be a chemist or a builder like this father, but the challenges of the Depression prohibited his choices.

James Mackey, then a milkman, finally joined the Toronto city police in 1936 with the encouragement of then-sergeant Michael Byrt. He was the 20th of 20 men recruited for the force at that time. This remarkable Scarborough native jumped ranks and became the chief of police of 2,300 officers and civilians of the Toronto police force. He was hailed as a man of the future when appointed chief of police in 1958. By all accounts, Chief Mackey was successful in keeping the Buffalo mobsters out of Toronto. He was dubbed an honest cop by those who upheld the law and feared by those who didn't.

Chief Mackey continued serving the public following his retirement by becoming the chair of the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario, a trustee and later chair of Muskoka's school board.

On behalf of all members of this House, the city of Toronto and particularly the residents of Scarborough, we say, "Thank you, Chief Mackey, for your service to this great city of Toronto." We also extend our profound condolences to his family and friends on his passing.

JOE TORCHETTI

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to rise in the House today to talk about a great Canadian who has been lost, and he is Joe Torchetti. Joe Torchetti was the founder and president of Lady York Foods in my riding. Lady York Foods is a real iconic supermarket that is known to people all over the city of Toronto. It was founded by Mr. Torchetti basically through his blood, sweat and tears.

He came to Canada as an immigrant and never took one day off in his whole life. He got up every morning at 5 o'clock to go down to the Ontario Food Terminal to ensure that he could choose the best and freshest of products for his customers, and he never complained—a most positive and inspirational entrepreneur, family man, father, husband and a great supporter of the Earls Court Rotary Club, a great supporter of the city of Toronto and all its newcomers, and an employer beyond repute. We

have lost a great citizen, a great entrepreneur, a great Canadian—Joe Torchetti—and we shall never forget his contribution to the city and this province.

PROVINCIAL PURCHASING POLICY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: You'll be aware there are refreshments for the members in the east and west galleries. There are also apples there. In a great apple-growing province such as the province of Ontario, I wonder why those apples can't be from the province of Ontario as opposed to the country of Chile.

Could you look into that, Mr. Speaker, and please try to support the Ontario apple growers and the wonderful products that they produce in this province?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member, and to my staff, who I'm sure are watching right now and listening, that shall be attended to quickly, because I am with you. There's nothing better. If you're going to buy an apple, the best one is the honeycrisp.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: They're grown in Elgin county.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): They're grown in Elgin county.

MOTIONS

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

Hon. Brad Duguid: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding a report of the Integrity Commissioner.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I move that the Legislative Assembly accept the report of the Integrity Commissioner dated December 11, 2008, and approve the recommendation contained therein.

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

Report adopted.

PETITIONS

PROPERTY TAXATION

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians are angry over the volatility of the MPAC tax assessment system, the near impossibility to predict one's assessment or to understand how it is arrived at, the patent unfairness of assessments and that the current system leaves many homeowners worried they may be forced to sell their homes; and

"Whereas changes are needed that will make Ontario's property tax system stable, understandable, fair, and sensitive to homeowners; and

“Whereas property assessments in Parkdale–High Park have risen between 28% and 45% between 2005 and 2008;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: Support the ‘freeze till sale’ plan to bring fairness to Ontario’s property tax system so that new assessments happen only at the time of sale and when a building permit is obtained for renovations totalling more than \$40,000.”

I certainly agree with this, will affix my signature and give it to Jacob to deliver.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario sent to me by Tamarack Swine Genetics in the great riding of Elgin. Their address is in Port Stanley. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, has publicly stated that she ‘absolutely’ wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

“Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

“Whereas the safety net payments—i.e., Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payments (OCHHP)—are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding farmers were not in business or just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales; and

“Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program or payment that meets their needs;

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

“To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector.”

I thank you for the privilege of presenting this petition and I affix my signature as I agree with the petition.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition from various citizens in the city of Toronto.

“Whereas innocent people are being victimized by the growing number of unlawful firearms in our communities; and

“Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

“Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and found in motor vehicles; and

“Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver’s licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms in motor vehicles would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities.”

I support this petition and I affix my name to it.

1320

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Mike Colle: I have another petition about gun crime.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas too many innocent people are being victimized by acts of violence while using public transit; and

“Whereas too many public transit employees are being victimized by acts of violence while working to serve the public; and

“Whereas we need to send a strong message of zero tolerance for violence on public transit; and

“Whereas anyone harming or carrying a weapon on public transit should be dealt with by the full force of the law; and

“Whereas public transit riders and workers have the right to ride and work on public transit, free of violence, intimidation and harm;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to put an end to violence on public transit and ... support” Bill 151 “to crack down on violence on public transit.”

I support this petition and I affix my name to it.

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas to impose a total ban on an activity or sport under the guise of protecting the public from injury as presented by MPP Helena Jaczek in Bill 117 to amend the Highway Traffic Act, section 38.1, ‘No person shall drive or operate a motorcycle on a highway if another person under the age of 14 years is a passenger on the motorcycle,’ would be an injustice to us, the people of Ontario; and

“Whereas the restrictive aspects of this proposal far outweigh the minor risks associated and confirmed by the annual Ministry of Transportation statistical safety reports, and further, there is no clear distinction that ‘motorcycle-related injuries’ apply to Ontario streets or highways, as stated in defence of Bill 117;

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

“Request that Bill 117 be rejected and not become law.”

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I have a petition from some people in Kingston. It says,

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 117, presented by MPP Helena Jaczek on October 27, 2008, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit the driving and operation of motorcycles with child passengers, says,

“The Highway Traffic Act is amended by adding the following section:

““Prohibition of passengers under 14 years old on motorcycles

““38.1 No person shall drive or operate a motorcycle on a highway if another person under the age of 14 years is a passenger on the motorcycle””;

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

“That Bill 117 be removed from the agenda and never become law.”

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there is no law in Ontario prohibiting pornography and other sexually explicit material from being viewed on computers in public schools and libraries; and

“Whereas there are public schools and public libraries that do not use Internet filtering software on computers that blocks such inappropriate material; and

“Whereas parents in the province of Ontario have the right to ensure their children are protected from pornography and other inappropriate material available on the Internet in their public schools and libraries;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: That all public schools and libraries in Ontario be required to install Internet filtering software on computers to avoid screening of sites with inappropriate, explicit sexual content.”

I agree with this petition and I'm glad to sign my name to it and pass it to page Jacob.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Kim Craitor: I'm pleased to introduce this petition. I want to thank Mr. Alexander for bringing it to my attention. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents, as requested in Bill 33....

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

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

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

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

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

I am pleased to sign my signature in support of this petition.

BATHURST HEIGHTS ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition from Walter Faion and the good folks at the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre, operated by the Toronto District School Board, in partnership with the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas this is the only ... ESL learning centre in” the area, located right on the subway; and

“Whereas newcomers” to “Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre so they can succeed in their career opportunities; and

“Whereas the proposed revitalization of Lawrence Heights threatens the existence of the centre;

“Therefore we, the undersigned,” request “that any revitalization of Lawrence Heights include a newcomer centre and ensure that the Bathurst Heights centre continues to exist in the present location.”

I support Walter Faion and the good people of Bathurst Heights, and I affix my name to this petition.

PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY FRANCHISE

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment has the highest average ticket revenue per game in the National Hockey League; and

“Whereas the Toronto Maple Leafs are ranked the most financially valuable team in the NHL; and

“Whereas many Hamilton and greater Toronto area hockey fans are unable to attend professional hockey games due to a lack of adequate ticket supply; and

“Whereas the Hamilton and greater Toronto area boast the biggest and best market in the world for hockey fans, with Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment bringing approximately \$2.4 billion to the local economy over 10 years; and

“Whereas a new franchise in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area is valued at \$600 million by some economists; and

“Whereas competition in both business and sports is healthy for both the Hamilton and greater Toronto area economy and sports team performance; and

“Whereas despite having the most loyal fans in the world, the Toronto Maple Leafs have not won the Stanley Cup in over 40 years; and

“Whereas Hamilton and greater Toronto area fans deserve competitive professional hockey teams;

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

“To request that the government of the province of Ontario express its strong support to the board of governors of the National Hockey League for the relocation or expansion of a second NHL hockey team in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area in order to realize the economic advantages to the taxpayers of the province of Ontario and”—finally, Speaker—“to provide healthy competition to the existing Toronto NHL franchise.”

I obviously agree with this and will be affixing my name.

LUPUS

Mr. Kim Craitor: I’m pleased to introduce this petition on behalf of the Lupus Foundation of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas systemic lupus erythematosus is under-recognized as a global health problem by the public, health professionals and governments, driving the need for greater awareness; and

“Whereas medical research on lupus and efforts to develop safer and more effective therapies for the disease are underfunded in comparison with diseases of comparable magnitude and severity; and

“Whereas no new safe and effective drugs for lupus have been introduced in more than 40 years. Current drugs for lupus are very toxic and can cause other life-threatening health problems that can be worse than the primary disease;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to assist financially with media campaigns to bring about knowledge of systemic lupus erythematosus and the signs and symptoms of this disease to all citizens of Ontario.

“We further petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide funding for research currently being undertaken in lupus clinics throughout Ontario.”

I’m extremely proud to sign my signature in support of this petition.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There appearing to be no further petitions, orders of the day.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (PUPILS WITH DIABETES), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L’ÉDUCATION (ÉLÈVES DIABÉTIQUES)

Mr. Martiniuk moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 137, An Act to amend the Education Act to allow pupils with diabetes in schools to receive certain monitoring and treatment / Projet de loi 137, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l’éducation pour permettre aux élèves diabétiques dans les écoles de recevoir un suivi et un traitement.

1330

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: It is with great pleasure that I introduce today the second reading of Bill 137. I dedicate this bill to the Bordman family of Cambridge and to all of the dedicated families across our province who are meeting the challenge of type 1 diabetes.

Long gone are the school nurses many of us recall with fondness. I was not aware of the lack of support for elementary school children with diabetes until Terry Bordman shared with me his experiences as the father of six-year-old twin girls, Jade and Brooke, who suffer from diabetes. Both Terry and his wife, Beata, work outside the home, and their oldest daughter, Fallon, assists with the twins wherever possible. So imagine their stress and frustration to learn upon registering their young children for school that there would be nobody available to assist their children in school to manage their diabetes, either in blood sugar testing or insulin shots.

With your indulgence, I’d like to introduce the Bordmans, who are in the east gallery: the twins, Fallon, and Mr. and Mrs. Bordman.

The sole purpose of this bill is the health and well-being of our young children who suffer from type 1 diabetes and require care during each and every school day, as they are too young to assist themselves. Currently, many of the parents and caregivers of diabetic children must visit their child’s school several times a day to test their child’s blood sugar levels. Imagine, if you will, the stress this places on working parents, who must make arrangements to be absent from work several times a day, five days of the week. I expect there are

many families who sacrifice a second income in order to provide for their diabetic child.

Many diabetic children in our elementary schools are just too young to care for themselves. They cannot monitor their own blood sugar levels, and they are often unable to recognize when medication is required. These young children deserve our help, and if school staff presently attempts to assist the children they are probably not protected from lawsuits or school board rules and regulations. It is our duty to protect these young children of our province, and they presently receive no protection.

Let me share with you some facts about diabetes. More than 200,000 Canadians have type 1 diabetes. Canada has the sixth-highest occurrence rate of type 1 diabetes in children 14 years old and younger. The type 1 diabetes occurrence rate is rising by 3% to 5% per year. The greatest rise occurs in five- to nine-year-olds. The number of children under the age of two with type 1 diabetes has tripled in the past few years. Children with high or low blood sugar suffer from diminished capacity not only to learn but to concentrate as well.

Last year, the Ministry of Health for this province predicted that 1.2 million people in Ontario would have diabetes by 2010, more than double the figure from the year 2000. In September 2008, the Canadian Diabetes Association called on the provincial governments to enact legislation that would require all publicly funded schools to accommodate and protect students with diabetes, severe allergies, epilepsy or asthma while attending classes or any school activities. With the exception of New Brunswick, there are currently no provincial or territorial policies, regulations or legislation requiring schools to accommodate and protect students with diabetes or other life-threatening illnesses, except, of course, Ontario's own Sabrina's Law.

Following first reading of this bill last December, I was contacted by a parent from Thornhill, Mr. Brian Hook. He wrote as follows: "As a parent of a six-year-old boy with type 1 diabetes in Ontario, I want to say thank you on behalf of my entire family for your efforts. We have been fighting a continual battle with the school system for the past three years to provide a safe environment at school so that my son can receive the same education as every other six-year-old in the province. I'm sure you've heard many stories similar to mine; I know I have.

"Apparently following ambiguous board policies and collective agreements is more important than the health and safety of children. It's become so ridiculous that the York region school board is telling us that the policy ... that staff cannot give medication by ... injection means that they can't help my son with his blood glucose monitoring. I'm not quite sure how performing a blood test is injecting medication. What I find really disheartening is that a law must be created in order for people to help children with life-threatening conditions.

"Regardless, I understand that it is a long and difficult road for private members' bills to see the light of day.... As I've said to just about everyone I've contacted about

my son's diabetic care, it took a tragic incident to light the fires to create Sabrina's Law. I don't want the next law named after my son or anyone else's child because preventative action wasn't taken soon enough."

Allow me to discuss the particulars of the bill. This bill recognizes the problem and amends the Education Act, authorizing the training of staff members in our schools to provide for the monitoring and treatment of diabetic pupils. Those trained staff members are authorized to provide monitoring and treatment to any pupil who has or may have diabetes if they have reason to believe that that pupil is suffering a medical emergency.

Any parent or guardian who enrolls a diabetic pupil in an elementary school must provide the school with a notice stating that the pupil has or may have diabetes and setting out the details of the monitoring and treatment that a duly qualified medical practitioner has prescribed for the pupil. Those trained staff members are required to provide the monitoring and treatment described in the notice if the pupil or his or her guardian or parent, as applicable, consents to the monitoring and treatment.

To the extent that it is reasonably feasible, a pupil has the primary responsibility to provide the medication that the pupil needs and to administer it himself.

There are included provisions to provide protection from liability for such staff members who so act in good faith.

Just as Sabrina's Law requires treatment of children who suffer from life-threatening allergies, my bill protects the health of children who suffer from the effects of diabetes and assists them in emergencies. I would prefer, as I believe most people would, to have nurses stationed in each school, as in the past in Ontario. Unfortunately, in the present time that solution is probably not economically feasible, and the problem to be corrected is immediate and requires a practical solution now, which I believe Bill 137 is. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I will be supporting the bill—to refer this particular bill to committee for debate because it raises questions that I believe we as MPPs need to deal with.

The member talked about the fact that diabetes is the seventh-leading cause of death in Canada. That's serious. Four out of five people with diabetes die of heart disease. We've debated this issue now and then in this Legislature and talked about the seriousness of this problem. The government often talks about all of the money they spend treating this particular issue. I don't want to enumerate all the millions of dollars; I'm sure the Liberals will do that. They spend close to \$1 billion on the issue of diabetes. I don't know who's going to be speaking to it, but every Liberal will talk about the great things they've done; I understand that. But out of the \$1 billion that they spend, only 1% is given for prevention. The Liberals will mention prevention, possibly—I'm not quite sure; we'll see—but they spend only 1% of those dollars on prevention.

Diabetes is something that we can solve. There are preventable things we could do. The main factors around diabetes are obesity, lack of physical activity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol. These things we can change. There are things we cannot change. Body shape, age, family history, ethnic background: Those we can't change. But what we can change, we should be dealing with on a regular basis, and I don't believe that we, as legislators, or this government in particular, are doing this.

1340

There was a time when we had nurses in the school system who dealt with problems in the schools. We don't have nurses anymore. There was a time when we had physical education teachers to get young people to actually do physical activity in an intelligent way. It wasn't just, "Okay, kids, jump up and down." The Liberals might tell you, "Yes, we've got this going in the school system. We've got kids jumping up and down around the classroom for 20 minutes. You know how big the classroom is; we really get them to run around a whole lot in the classroom." Please. We need physical education teachers.

Only 37% of our schools in this province have physical education teachers. That should tell you and the public and those listening that we need more physical education teachers. They are trained, and they would train young people how to stay fit and healthy. If we had nurses, as we did a long time ago, they would be able to take care of the health concerns of our students rather than shifting that responsibility to the staff, meaning, I believe, teachers. That's what I think the bill refers to. When he refers to "staff," I assume he's talking about teachers.

How much, in the last 20 years, have we shifted responsibilities to the individual teacher? The teacher no longer teaches but has to do so much more. The teacher has to be a policeman or policewoman, a psychologist, a social worker, a mother or father, a disciplinarian—but not too much, because if you're too much of a disciplinarian, the parents will come down heavy on your disciplinarian activities. They're expected to do so much. I don't know if people are noticing it—I'm not sure politicians are noticing it—but parents sure ought to be noticing that we have shifted much of the responsibility of every social problem, including health-related problems, onto the back of the school system.

We used to have home economics classes, where young men and women could learn about healthy eating, healthy diets and what is good to eat, and how to cook. How bad could that have been? They're gone. Good old Mike Harris got rid of most of them, and the Liberals, of course, just kept going with the deletion of these kinds of programs.

All the things we could do and could have done are gone. Nurses, physical education teachers and home economics are gone, literally. The things that matter, in terms of what we could do, we're not doing. So we spend more and more money dealing with the problem—treat-

ing the problem—rather than preventing it. I'm just hoping that some Liberal doctors are going to stand up here and speak to this particular issue, because they have a better handle on this. I'm just going to see whether or not some good old doctor is going to stand up and say, "Yes, Marchese is right. We've got to do more of this."

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I don't think they'll agree with you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I don't know. We'll see. It's really hard to say.

That's what we should be doing, in my view. We should be spending most of the dollars that go into diabetes on educating the public, making sure that young people are physically active, and that the young, middle-aged and seniors are eating properly as a way of preventing physical problems from happening. We're not doing that as a government. In fact, we're not doing that and many other things as a government in terms of how we keep individuals, families and young people safe. We're not. We've lost touch with these things. But we spend billions of dollars treating the problem, and diabetes is but one example that I use.

So do people like me, as a New Democrat, does New Democrat Cheri DiNovo? worry about these things? Of course we worry. Do we think about how we should be helping? Naturally. That's why I talked about the whole idea of having professionals like school nurses, physical education teachers and home economists who would deal with that, so we'd talk about these things. But this particular bill says to the school, "You have another responsibility to worry about." Is it something that the school system could handle? Maybe. Does the bill speak to it? Maybe it can't, because you can't put money-related issues into bills. But would this bill, if it goes to committee, get the support of government to say, "Yes, this is okay, but we're going to need more staff in our school system to help them deal with the additional responsibilities that we're passing on"? Or does it not do that? Or does it simply say, "Here's another responsibility that we're going to have to engage principals and teachers in, most of the staff who know or are aware of someone who has diabetes, and make sure that they have a handle on monitoring and treating those students"?

I believe that's all this bill does at the moment. I believe we need to send it to committee for debate so that we can raise these issues and so that other people, parents and educators, can come and tell us how we deal with this issue in a much more effective and human way, rather than passing on yet another responsibility to the teachers and a school system that is struggling to maintain the services that it has and that governments have passed on to them.

So in this regard, I believe it's important to have the debate. It's important to raise the issues. As we speak, and hopefully people are watching these debates, they become aware of the facts. They become aware of the fact that diabetes is a serious issue that needs to be dealt with. They will become aware that two out of three adults and one out of three children aged 12 to 17 in Ontario are

overweight and obese. This is as of 2005. I'm not sure it's gotten better. And 57% of Ontarians are physically inactive. When we're physically active, the body works. In fact, it helps the mind to work a little better. When you're sitting on your derriere day in and day out, hour after hour, you're sluggish. Your body is sluggish, your mind is sluggish and you're not working those toxins out of your system. They stay in your system and cause greater illness. We've got to deal with the fact that people are inactive and most young people are inactive.

I understand that a bill is not intended to solve all those questions. I understand that. But we need to raise the level of awareness around these other issues, around the preventable things that could be done by governments and others and what our role and obligation as a government is to make sure that we give people the tools and the solutions. The answer isn't simply making sure that we treat the disease; rather, it's saying, "Here's what we can do to make sure that we prevent it." We're not doing a good job of that.

I'm going to be supporting the bill presented by the member for Cambridge. I look forward to the debate in committee. I hope the government will support it and I hope they will come up with constructive suggestions on how we can deal with this particular issue in a way that is responsible, in a way that helps those suffering with diabetes, particularly children in our school system, and in a way that gives teachers and others the tools to help.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

1350

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased today to speak to Bill 137, which would require that all staff members who have regular contact with diabetic students receive proper training to provide monitoring and treatment for those diabetic students.

I think we should begin by looking at what's happening now. Back in the days, in the 1980s, when special education students were coming into the mainstream school system, people needed to sort out who does what. The agreement at that time was that school boards will be responsible for the administration of oral medication, and for physically disabled pupils, the boards would also provide such services as lifting and positioning, assistance with mobility, feeding, toileting and general maintenance exercises. In other words, boards are responsible for administering oral medication.

Since then, we've seen Sabrina's Law, which has to do with students who are allergic. As part of that, boards will take responsibility for administering EpiPens, but it's useful to note that with an EpiPen, you simply have to punch in the pen. There's no particular skill involved in dealing with an EpiPen in an emergency situation.

In terms of what the health system is responsible for, the health system has been found to be responsible for doing things like injections, catheterization, manual expression of the bladder, stoma care, postural draining, suctioning and tube feeding.

What you see here is a recognition that teachers should be responsible for doing things that an average

citizen could do—basically, things that have to do with oral medications, toileting and feeding. On the other hand, where a medical procedure is involved, that's a health care procedure. Teachers are not medical practitioners. We need a health care practitioner to do that.

If we look at the details of what's actually in the bill, what we find is that the bill says that "all staff members in all of its schools who have regular contact in the schools with pupils who have or may have diabetes are trained in the monitoring and treatment" that would be required. Note here that it says "all staff members." Who are all staff members in a school? It would be all the teachers, because during the course of supervision, most of the teachers would come into regular contact with a student. You'd have the secretary, the principal, the vice-principal, education assistants and, conceivably, the custodians. A long list of people who are clearly not medical practitioners would be required to be trained.

What would they need to be trained in? They would need to be trained to do blood sugar checks of the pupil and determine what is the medically safe level of blood sugar for the pupil, and then to administer insulin or glucagon or appropriate medication. Note here that the administration of insulin in this context involves injecting the insulin; that is, you actually have to have some medical skill in being able to hit the vein. Perhaps more worrisome is that the initial step, which is to prick the finger and do the blood check, means that you have to be able to make a medical decision around the administration of insulin. If you make the wrong decision, grave harm could come to the student. That is why we and the school sector have always been concerned about forcing teachers and other staff to do a procedure that they're not medically qualified to do.

Now, I acknowledge that there are problems, that sometimes the health system has difficulty in delivering that end, and that's something we need to address with the health system, but I do agree with my colleague from Trinity-Spadina that the solution is not to expect teachers and other school staff to be medical practitioners; they're not. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill 137, and I would like to start by commending my friend and colleague the member from Cambridge for bringing this important matter forward, especially at a time when juvenile diabetes is on the rise.

This bill, if passed, would require elementary schools to have staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes. It also calls for trained staff to administer insulin and glucagon when necessary. The bill would also protect school staff by prohibiting any actions taken against them arising out of any assistance that they would provide. If this bill is passed and implemented, it would place Ontario among the leaders in Canada in the management of diabetes in schools. To date, only New Brunswick has legislation in place requiring school boards or schools to accommodate

and protect students with life-threatening illnesses, including diabetes.

I would also like to welcome the Bordman family to the Legislature this afternoon. The Bordmans have been community leaders in bringing this legislation forward, and we thank them for their persistence in this regard. When doing research on this bill, I was alarmed to see how difficult it is for children with diabetes within our school system. I would like to quote a statement from the Canadian Diabetes Association to illustrate to the members of this House the treatment which some children and family members have received in our schools:

“The Canadian Diabetes Association has heard from parents who have been told that their child cannot register at the school because of diabetes. Other parents have told us about their children being denied school trips or educational programs because of their diabetes. And still other parents have contacted our association to discuss how to convince their schools’ staff that denying access to orange juice during class or asking the child to test blood glucose levels unsupervised in a washroom or closet is inappropriate and potentially dangerous to the health of the child.”

I hope that these are exceptions to the rule, but more than anything, I believe that this further underlines the need to educate our educators on the management of diabetes. The bill does not ask educators to act as nurses, but rather to be prepared to respond appropriately in an emergency situation involving diabetes and to be informed as to proper blood glucose maintenance procedures in order to prevent emergencies from happening.

It’s been reported that once a child goes into diabetic shock, there are only a few minutes for action to be taken before the child will begin to suffer from brain damage and possibly death. That being true, even if a parent or guardian were to give up a job to visit their child at school whose blood glucose levels may need to be checked anywhere from two to three times in a school day, there’s still no real protection for the child without there being someone trained in diabetic emergencies on site and in the school.

In the time it would take to call a parent to administer life-saving medication, brain damage would already have begun to set in. A 2001 Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation position statement regarding diabetes in schools states:

The “Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation believes that it is essential that children with diabetes be able to monitor their blood glucose levels, eat food and administer insulin, when necessary, in order to manage—to the maximum extent possible—their diabetes. Failure to do so could lead to life-threatening insulin shock and coma caused by low glucose levels and long-term complications such as kidney failure, blindness, amputation, heart disease and stroke exacerbated by high blood glucose levels.

“Children with diabetes need to be able to test their blood glucose at school and apply whatever means necessary to bring these levels to near normal quickly

and with as few encumbrances as possible. For some students this can be done independently; other students—who are young or who have less experience with the disease—need assistance from trained school personnel. All students with diabetes need assistance from trained school personnel in the case of medical emergencies. These trained personnel need not be medical professionals.”

In a time where the incidence of type 1 diabetes is rising at a rate of 3% to 5% annually, with the greatest increase among five-year-olds to nine-year-olds, and diabetes diagnoses in children have tripled in recent years, it’s imperative that we do something proactive about this situation. We need to develop a level of inclusionary practices in our schools so that children with diabetes are afforded the same opportunities as their fellow students.

I’m pleased to lend my support to this bill and I urge all of the other members of this Legislature to do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I’m pleased to enter the debate on Bill 137 on the monitoring and treatment of diabetic students in schools. I was listening to the honourable member from Cambridge introducing this bill. I know he has the good intention to help kids in schools, but when I looked at the bill and read it in detail, I thought that it’s a really complicated issue; it’s not as easy as he says.

1400

I was listening to my colleague from Guelph and the member from Trinity–Spadina talk about the complexity of the issue. It’s not fair to expect our teachers or staff in the school to do this procedure, because it’s very complex, especially with type 1 diabetes, because it’s very dangerous if you deal with it. So you have to have some kind of health qualification in order to do this procedure.

As a matter of fact, I know that our government, as the member from Trinity–Spadina mentioned, spends almost more than \$1 billion on this project across the province of Ontario, trying to create some kind of a strategy in order to deal with it, because we believe strongly that it’s important for all of us to create a healthy society, a healthy environment, healthy communities and healthy populations. So therefore we are talking about prevention; you’re right. You were part of the committee that debated banning junk food from schools and also trans fats from schools. All these initiatives have been taking place in this place—in this amazing and historic chamber. Many people from different parties participated in the debate, because our interest was to create some kind of mechanism in order to prohibit trans fats from schools, junk food from the cafeterias and from the machines of schools, and also create a habit to exercise and also promote healthy activities.

I was part of a project in London that was launched by the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health Promotion to award all the schools who participated in this initiative to introduce healthy food to schools, like

fruit and vegetables. instead of junk food, pop or Coke or chocolate bars.

It's a long way to achieve our goal, but we are taking the right steps in the right direction in order to make sure our schools are free of trans fats and also to create an activities program. We invested many, many millions of dollars in many different communities to come to schools and exercise and also initiate all these programs in order to keep the people healthy and active as part of our strategy as a government to create a healthy community and healthy populations.

In turn, asking all the teachers and the staff to be able to deal with type 1 diabetes, I think is unfair, this strategy. We have to be logical in terms of—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We're going to bring back school nurses?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Maybe. It's a good idea for discussions. I don't mind that.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Speak to it. Say it.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: You know what? Whatever it takes in order to create prevention and whatever it takes to create a healthy school and a healthy environment—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Say that, because you didn't say it.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: The member from Trinity–Spadina was trying to tell me. You know what? That's why we are here. Everything is open for dialogue. Everything is open for debate. I'm open for everything. Everything is to protect our population, our students, because they're the future of this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak and comment, and the member from Cambridge.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I want to congratulate my colleague the member for Cambridge for having listened to the concerns of his constituents Terry Bordman and his twin daughters, Brooke and Jade, who Mr. Martiniuk has indicated are with us today. That's what an MPP is supposed to do. An MPP is supposed to listen to the concerns of the constituents that he or she serves and then make their best attempt to address the issue. That's what the member from Cambridge has attempted to do today. He has listened to the story that was presented to him. We have a situation where there are two young girls who suffer from diabetes. It was, of course, their own personal experience that has prompted the legislation and encouraged Mr. Martiniuk to bring forward this bill, which would help these young children to be able to manage their disease while at school.

I think one of the things that we've always prided ourselves on in our province—was to ensure that our schools are accessible and able to provide opportunities for all of our children and that we can provide them with a safe, secure environment. In this instance, Mr. Martiniuk is specifically referring to the fact that those children—whose numbers are on the increase—who suffer from diabetes should have the opportunity to be able to participate fully. Also, I think it's important to know that

he is supported in this bill and in requests for changes by the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

We've heard some different comments. No doubt, this is a bill that is going to require some further discussion. It's going to require some further debate. It needs to go to committee. There needs to be an opportunity to receive some of the opinions of other parents, some of the health stakeholders, and some of the other experts who would like to provide some input as to the recommendations contained within the bill that Mr. Martiniuk is introducing today.

We do know that if you are the parent of a child with type 1 diabetes, it can be quite stressful. I have a neighbour whose daughter was diagnosed this past year with diabetes, and it was a very stressful time for that family. Her daughter was beginning school, and she was really quite concerned about what might be expected of her, as a parent who had a job and also an infant. Fortunately, she reported to me that the school is able to provide the support that is necessary and she won't have to make the daily trips into the school. However, not all families, not all children, in the province of Ontario have the type of support my neighbour and her daughter had. Sometimes schools are simply not able, for many, many reasons, to accommodate the needs of children with diabetes in their classrooms. We need to look at how we can make this possible, and so we have this legislation that is here before us today.

We've heard about how this may be of some concern to the educational sector, and I think we have to take a look. We have all these silos, and maybe we need to take a look and move beyond just involving the Ministry of Education in finding a solution. Maybe we have to take a look at what role there may be for the Ministry of Health. We have a Ministry of Children and Youth Services in this province. So maybe the solution to address the needs of these children can best be found if we have all of the ministries that are responsible for children's services in one way or the other working together.

But regardless as to what solution is found, we need to find a solution. This is a very serious problem. Parents need to have confidence that the needs of their children, their health needs and their other needs, can be addressed within our school system.

So I congratulate my colleague, who has responded to the concerns that have been brought to his attention. I would encourage us to send this bill out to committee so that we can have a fulsome debate and we can make sure that we can find the answers to the needs of parents whose children have diabetes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm certainly pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 137, An Act to amend the Education Act to allow pupils with diabetes in schools to receive certain monitoring and treatment.

I would like to thank the member from Cambridge for introducing this private member's bill because it led me

to actually inquire very specifically as to the situation in York region with both school boards. We've heard from the member for Guelph what the overall policy is, and I wanted to find out a little bit more as to what was actually happening for those constituents in my riding with diabetes.

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My investigations resulted in what I would call a very reassuring situation, particularly in my board. The basic philosophy these days is that most diabetics, including those very young students, in fact are capable of managing their own sugar and insulin intake. Where they are very young, and where they need some assistance, both boards establish a medical care plan that is approved by a physician, parent/guardian, and the school administrator. It clearly outlines the procedures to be followed in the school setting for the monitoring of insulin levels and response to a perceived emergency diabetic reaction.

I inquired as to whether, in the York region board's area, there were concerns amongst certain parents, and I was told by a superintendent that there was perhaps a handful of parents. In fact, they've been continuing to work with those parents. The public board is going to be releasing a little bit more of an advanced policy, to include an educational component as well and a number of other different mechanisms.

Of course, the community care access centre is available in those situations where the child is unstable.

Children are coming to school with insulin pumps. There's no question, as the member for Cambridge has said, that we are very concerned about the increasing incidence of diabetes. Prevention is certainly something that our government has embraced very, very strongly, as so well detailed by my friend from London—Fanshawe.

There was some allusion to the day when nurses were in the schools—public health nurses. I remember that very well in 1988, when I first started as the medical officer of health for York region. I would like to remind everyone that the Premier at that time was David Peterson.

Since then, subsequent governments' cutting back on public health funding—downloading—has resulted in the situation where we have public health nurses available for consultation, not necessarily in the school, because our philosophy very much these days is for responsibility, for individuals taking personal responsibility for their health and doing all they can.

In the case of children, clearly parents want to be front and centre in those decisions and this is why the current Education Act allows for boards to engage with parents and come up with the best solution for their child.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

The member for Cambridge, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I would like to thank the members for Trinity—Spadina, Kitchener—Waterloo, Guelph, Whitby—Oshawa, London—Fanshawe, and Mississauga—Brampton South.

With nurses no longer working in our elementary schools, I urge all of you to support this bill as a way of extending our support to the thousands of young children in our province who must meet the daily challenges of type 1 diabetes.

This bill is supported by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the Canadian Diabetes Association, two not-for-profit organizations dedicated to improving the lives of those touched by diabetes.

Just as we protect children with life-threatening allergies, we have a responsibility to care for young children with diabetes. I believe that this bill deserves your consideration and should be referred to a committee in order to refine it, if necessary, as it really is important, especially with the increase of the incidence of type 1 diabetes in our society.

MUNICIPALITIES

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I move that, in the opinion of this House, a Select Committee on Municipal Governance for municipalities with populations greater than 500,000 people be appointed to consider and report to the House its observations and recommendations with respect to alternative governance models for larger municipalities. In developing its recommendations the committee will:

(1) Work with municipal politicians, academics, experts and other interested parties to determine better governance models for larger municipalities;

(2) Recognize the low turnout of voters for municipal elections;

(3) Recognize the very high rate of incumbents re-elected;

(4) Recognize the difficulty of a mayor to get consensus from a large number of independent councillors;

(5) Recognize the difficulty electors face in determining the platforms of the candidates with regard to broad municipal and fiscal issues;

(6) Consider the pros and cons of the current municipal governance model;

(7) Consider the terms, timing and conditions of a referendum for the approval by municipal electors of any municipality for any change of governance in their municipality;

(8) Consider the introduction of political parties and party financing at the municipal level;

(9) Consider term limitations for elected municipal officials;

(10) Consider models from other large municipalities in jurisdictions outside of Ontario;

That the committee shall present, or if the House is not sitting, shall release by depositing with the Clerk of the House, its final report to the assembly no later than the date provided in standing order 6(a)(ii) for the end of the fall meeting period in 2009, except that if the committee determines that more time is required to complete its final report, it may present or, if the House is not sitting, release by depositing with the Clerk of the House, an

interim report in which an alternative date for the final report is established, which is not more than 90 days later;

That the committee have the authority to meet at the call of the Chair, to call for persons, papers and things, to employ counsel and staff and, as the committee deems relevant to its terms of reference, to commission reports and adjourn from place to place; and

That in the event of, and notwithstanding, any prorogation of the House before the presentation of the committee's final report, the committee shall be deemed to be continued to the subsequent session or sessions and may continue to meet during any such prorogation; and

That the committee may examine any other matter it deems relevant to its terms of reference; and

That the committee be composed of four members from the government, two from the official opposition and one from the third party. The membership of the committee shall be filed with the Clerk of the Assembly by the whips of the recognized parties no later than Thursday, March 26, 2009.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Pursuant to standing order 98, you have 12 minutes for your presentation.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I want, at the outset, to indicate what the effect of this resolution would be, if passed. This would not bind the House or actually strike the standing committee. All it is is an opinion of the House that a standing committee with these particular recommendations should be struck. I am quite willing to accept other suggestions as to the terms of reference, the timing of the report and that kind of thing.

My overall thrust in this is to seek some kind of resolution from the Legislature that (a) there is a problem with regard to the governance of our large municipalities, and (b) we are the body, as given by our Constitution, that should deal with this and the only body that can deal with it.

A few short years ago, three new large cities were formed that now have more than 500,000 people in them. Those are the city of Toronto, the city of Ottawa and the city of Hamilton.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I remember that.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I remember it, too. As well, the city of Mississauga, which was already formed, has over 500,000 people.

Since that time, some of those municipalities have struggled with the governing of their new municipalities. I think that that fact has been recognized by many citizens, many editorials and many reports, which I'm going to refer to shortly.

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As well, it has been recognized by some of our municipal politicians. In fact, I'm proud and glad that ward 16 councillor Karen Stintz is here to support my resolution today from the city of Toronto. I've also had support from some of the councillors from Mississauga: Carolyn Parrish. As well, I've had support for a review from

former councillors and some present councillors in the city of Ottawa.

The purpose of this resolution is not to take a position on any of the specific issues. It's not to take a position on whether we should have political parties. It's not to take a position on whether we should have term limitations. But it is to recognize that there is a problem and that we should collectively, in a select committee, sit down, talk to our municipalities, talk to academics and talk to other people who are interested in the subject to see if we can come up with a better model.

My principal concern with regard to this issue is the disconnect that exists between the mayor, who is seen as the chief executive by the electorate, and the individuality of the councillors who sit on the council. I'm referring, first, to a report put out by the Institute on Governance, which was a collection of academics prior to the 2006 municipal election. They said, which I believe illustrates or shows my central concern, "A broader approach to improving accountability should consider issues such as: the difficulty of ensuring any accountability at a broad level in the absence of a vision, or a coherent agenda for change that is endorsed by several members of council, that is presented to citizens at election time, and that provides a basis for assessing what has been achieved during a mayor's or council's term in office."

This week, the city of Ottawa made public their study, *Governing Ottawa: Strategic Thinking for a Winning City*. The "task force on governance found that city council does not operate effectively and cannot provide the strategic leadership the city of Ottawa needs because of systemic problems with governance. Without addressing these governance shortcomings, council will remain ineffective no matter how hard councillors, the mayor and staff work."

My concern is not with how hard our councillors are working in the city of Ottawa or anywhere else. I believe most councillors work very hard to represent their constituents. My concern relates more to the fact that the elector does not have any idea, other than the name of their councillors, when they step into the ballot box, as to what the views of their councillor are with regard to the broad city issues and long-term strategic issues, and so we have a serious disconnect in our system. We have a serious disconnect with regard to how a mayor can run, and there is no executive effectively in these very large and important institutions that we have.

The Ottawa task force identified three major governance problems: Strategic thinking is missing, councillors are not contributing effectively to city-wide government, and citizens are disengaged because of that. In Ottawa in the 2006 election, which of course I am most familiar with, coming from that area, the major focus of that election was on the mayoralty campaign. We had a very high turnout because of that. People thought, in voting for Mr. Larry O'Brien, who is now the mayor of the city of Ottawa, that his vision was what they were voting for. They did not realize that he was only one of 23 council-

lors and that subsequent votes or decisions in the city of Ottawa council would be controlled not by Larry O'Brien or an executive, nor would he have any more power. Each and every councillor only had one vote. I think that we have that problem here in the city of Toronto, as I have read on numerous occasions in the paper here as well.

The results are that people are disengaged from the process. They only vote on the basis of the name and not on the basis of policy for the good of their city as a whole. This is demonstrated so clearly by the statistics in the 2006 municipal elections across the four cities that I mentioned.

In the city of Toronto there were 275 candidates for 44 council seats. When it came down to council seats, 36 of 37 incumbents were returned. The only incumbent who was defeated was by another former councillor and MPP, Tony Perruzza. In Mississauga, there were 76 candidates for 11 seats on council, including 23 in one seat. All of the incumbents were re-elected in Mississauga. In Ottawa, all of the incumbents were re-elected in all 23 council seats. In Hamilton, all incumbents were elected save one, and the incumbent in Hamilton lost to a former MPP of our Legislature, Brad Clark, who I believe was also involved in municipal politics before he became an MPP.

In all, 73 of 75 incumbents in our four largest cities were re-elected and the other two lost to former councillors, former MPPs who could almost be described as incumbents themselves. This is the result because, in my opinion, there is little difference between one candidate and the other candidate with regard to broad issues.

I believe that we should examine whether we can come up with a better model. They have different kinds of approaches for municipal government in large cities in other provinces in our country. Vancouver has a different model, as well as the cities and municipalities in the province of Quebec. I think that the case has been proven that there is need for study on this matter. I am not here to stand and say what that case should be. I think we should work with municipalities. I think we should work with the people of these four great cities in the province of Ontario and come up with a better solution than the governance model we have today.

I was a great supporter, a long time ago, of the board of control model which we had in the old city of Ottawa. I thought it should be under consideration as well, but far be it from me to come to the conclusion as to what the fix should be. All I'm saying is, there is a problem. Let's have a select committee look at this, call in the players, work with the municipalities and see if, in fact, we can come up with a better governance model for our four largest cities in our great province of Ontario.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I'm very pleased to rise to the debate today. I do want to be very upfront to the member from Mississippi Mills—

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: Thank you.

I will not be supporting your motion, and I want to be very clear why I'm not. I think that it is always important to constantly review things, constantly look at things, and to make sure they provide the accountability and the transparency that the people expect. So I'm very pleased to report to the House that this is under review and it has been under review. The Municipal Elections Act and the City of Toronto Act are under review as we speak, and prior to this motion coming forward. A thorough review will be conducted. I know that you want to know who's going to be a part of that review: AMO, the city of Toronto, AMCTO, the federation of urban neighbours, MPAC, municipal submissions, Elections Ontario. There will be feedback from the public and stakeholders and members of the Legislature.

Also, just so that you know, because I know you're part of this committee, the member from Vaughan has formed a select committee to review the provincial election legislation. I know there have been comments made on municipal elections as well that have been sent to that committee, and I know that you are a member of that committee, so I know that you are very aware of this.

We start from a different place, though, from the members on the other side of the House. I know that you don't start at the same place. We start on this basis: We will work with our municipalities and we will respect them. We will come together and work on common solutions that are in the best interests of the people of Ontario. That's why we came forward with the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review: \$1.5 billion uploaded, and we know who downloaded that. That came from the previous government. So I've got to tell you I think it's just a little rich when I'm sitting here and once again we're getting the approach about, "We'll tell you what's good for you." You did not have any conversation with AMO. You did not have any conversation with AMCTO. Those are the bodies that we will work with. That did not happen, and I've got to tell you it's déjà vu all over again today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to commend the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills for bringing forward this motion. I want to say this isn't a motion—and obviously we heard the member read it earlier in the proceedings—of fixing a problem. This is a motion about setting up a select committee of the Legislature to consult with all the people who are involved to come up with a plan that would deal with the problem that's here. As we hear from across the aisle, "We're not supporting this resolution because it hasn't had enough consultation," I just want to point out that the consultation the member opposite is talking about is a consultation that has been taking place each and every time after municipal elections or after elections. They set up another committee to review how the process went and then, when they've reviewed that, they tweak changes.

But at no time in the history of Ontario have they changed the structure of how municipal government works. Back in 1850, when the Baldwin Act was implemented, they set up municipal government. That included electing local people. At that time, if it was a large area that they were covering, it was five people. If it was a small area, it was three people. Every one of those who were elected knew every person who was going to vote. They only met once or twice a year to deal with the issues of the municipality, which only included making sure we all got the roads built that needed building to get to the next place, where we were building a new sawmill.

Times have changed since then. There are things now that the municipalities do that have nothing to do with the next sawmill. It has to do with all the services the people in the municipality require. I think the introducer of the motion was very clear on the challenge we're facing of how reluctant people are now—not who voted and who didn't vote and whether the right number of polling stations were open, but how people are elected based on the individuality of the individual.

When I ran in politics in 1980, the first time, I shook every hand in the ward that got to vote for me. Those people knew me and still do, I suppose, in that small area. But somebody running in the city of Toronto—and I think that points out that the challenge we face with the election of incumbents almost all the time is because people don't know the individuals personally. No one, incidentally, has a platform that they're running on. They all have views. Some are views that want to do one thing and some are something else, but at the end of the day, it makes no difference because in fact not even the mayor of the municipality who will be elected by all the people in the municipality can implement that policy on which they ran.

When I was running for mayor, it was great to go around and tell people, "If you elect me, I will do this, this and this." Then as soon as I got there, I read the Municipal Act and it said that I am one of nine equals. It doesn't matter what you want to do unless four other people who were elected, who incidentally may very well have had a totally different view of the situation at election time—unless four of those will support the mayor, nothing happens.

That's why I think it is so important that we look at the structure of local government. I said that this was in place since I think it was 1854 or somewhere in that neighbourhood, through the Baldwin Act. The only one I'm aware of that has somewhat changed is in the City of Toronto Act, where the government saw fit to give a different status for the mayor. But they didn't go so far as to actually change the structure so that the mayor would have the support of members of council in any way, obligated by the way they ran for council.

Unless there is some system that says that we will have like-minded people in sufficient numbers to actually implement the policies that are put forward, chances are it's not going to happen. That's why I'm so pleased to support this resolution: not because the solution is in this

document, but in fact it's setting up the committee to look at what the solutions might be, and we can implement those and have better government for the local people in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm pleased to be able to join this debate. I'm going to say from the outset that I will be supporting this particular item introduced by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

I know that there are going to be a lot of municipal politicians who are going to be really unhappy with Norm, the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, but we do have a constitutional right to review, to change, even to beat up on municipalities if we want to from time to time. That's not something that I advocate, of course. There have been governments that have done that and they've done it with glee; it's not as if it's unnatural for governments to do that. But yes, they will be unhappy because they will have said in the end that whatever changes we make should be in the spirit of collaboration, that we should consult and talk to them, which the Liberals say they have done, which is what Tories say they have done—although if you look at what Mike Harris did, you'd never know it.

The point is that I believe that doing a review of this sort is a very useful exercise. I disagree with some of the elements in this bill, but a review is helpful. Whether or not the creation of an alternative governance model for larger municipalities will address any one of these issues is up for debate, because I don't believe governance addresses some of these issues; I don't believe it does or ever will. But is it useful to have a select committee on municipal governance to talk about some of these issues or other issues that I'm going to touch on? I think it is.

"(1) Work with municipal politicians, academics, experts and other interested parties to determine better governance models"—okay; that's a useful thing. I'm not sure anybody would disagree with that.

"(2) Recognize the low turnout of voters for municipal elections." That is a huge issue, a huge issue for everyone, in fact, and if it isn't, it ought to be. Is it connected to governance? I frankly don't believe it. But it would be useful to have some academics speak to this. Does governance determine voter turnout? One way or the other, are there some political models here in Canada or beyond that can show us the way in this regard? And if there are, maybe some academics can help.

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I don't believe governance is the issue. We have a provincial problem where turnouts in every election are getting lower and lower. It isn't just municipalities that suffer this problem; it's provinces, it's the federal government. Every election, fewer and fewer people vote. It should concern all politicians that the turnout is very low. I happen to believe that we should be working with young people in our high schools as a way of creating an educational awareness of politics and the effects of politics on their lives as students, and on their families.

We do a poor job of that. Provincially, we do a poor job of this, and federally, even poorer. There are two civics courses in our curriculum—half-time courses. That's it. How can any young person ever hope at the end of a half-time course or two to say, "I like politics. Gee, I want to get involved. I didn't know that politics affected me this way. I didn't know who my municipal councillor was but now, with this half-time course, I do." By the end of the half-time course, no one is engaged, and those who are engaged come from middle-class, professional homes or from homes where their mum or dad might have been a politician, or granddad or grandma might have been a politician somewhere down the line. It's very much class related.

In my family, we never talked politics. In my high school, Harbord Collegiate, we never spoke of politics. There was a young socialist and I thought, "My goodness, what is he and what does it stand for?" A young socialist, grade 12 or 13—never heard of it. I didn't know what it meant. But in the eyes of those who knew, he was some radical. The point is, you could count the number of students in any one high school who are connected to politics or have an interest; the vast majority have no knowledge and do not want to be involved. Is a municipal governance model going to change that? I don't believe that—I don't. I believe very much in a proportional representation system that Tories didn't support and neither did Liberals, with the exception of a few of them. But will that change the voter turnout? I think somewhat, not radically; I believe it's a fairer system. But unless we get young people involved in the political process, to understand it, they will be like me—not involved for a long, long time, until chance comes along.

It was pure chance that got me involved. I could have been, and would have been, a teacher of English and French all my life until, by accident, I acquired an interest, through reading, in politics and connected left-leaning readings to me and my life. But it was an accident. My point is, we need to include in this kind of discussion or review how it is that we get young people involved, otherwise the voter turnout will never, ever change. In fact, it can get worse, if anything.

There have been politicians, both provincial and federal, who have turned off the public to politics and politicians. There are politicians today both in the provinces and in Canada who make it their vocation to diminish politics and politicians. There are newspapers that revel in dirty politics, thus diminishing the roles and obligations of politicians and governments. We do ourselves no favours, some of us, because the attacks sometimes are on individuals. They're not on ideas, but they're on individuals, and there are quite a number of people—left, middle and right—who do this and diminish the political process. It's not part of this for you, but it should be.

We have anti-political movements. We have anti-politician movements. People take pride in it. How often do we hear people saying, "Ah, you're all the same"? When I hear that I say: "If we're all the same, why am I

with the NDP when we only have 10 seats? Why don't I just quickly join the Liberals where I can be in government and be a minister, and we're done. Have a better raise, have a better life, take it easy, drive in neutral, always take that balanced approach—beautiful, that balanced approach—that's neither here nor there." It would be so nice and easy, but I can't do that because, you see, I don't believe in that kind of stuff.

The things I speak about are not part of this motion. "(3) Recognize the very high rate of incumbents re-elected." Yes, I understand that, but you know what we might want to look at? It's the fact that we allow corporations and developers to contribute to the majority of these city councillors and, by and large, those developers that support those city councillors get re-elected over and over again.

Let's get rid of corporate donations and union donations, as Manitoba and Quebec have done. Why can't we do that? Why can't we take the developer out of the political process through those donations? Some city councillors say, "I'm not affected by that." Of course you are. If you get \$750 and the guy asks for a meeting, you're going to give him that meeting. If that developer comes to influence you in one way or the other, you're going to say, "I'll do my best." Some of them are very well connected to them, if you know what I mean. Some of you do know what I mean, because many of you come from the city councillor profession. So I'm telling you, get rid of corporate donations. That's how you get rid of the influence, and that's how you might bring on board some different individuals.

By the way, wouldn't it be nice in Toronto and the GTA, where most of the people come from visible minority backgrounds, to do a big effort to make sure we get them to run and that we support them? If you look at city council, any city council, we don't have much diversity. If you look at Queen's Park, there isn't much diversity in this place. It's the same old stuff. Look around. With the exception of a couple of people, we all look the same, with a shade of difference, and some are whiter than others. That's true in more ways than one. I understand that.

"Recognize the difficulty of a mayor to get consensus from a large number of independent councillors." What the heck is that, Norm? I mean, who is independent? I don't know one city councillor who is independent. Every city councillor is either a New Democrat, and there are a few of them—most city councillors are Liberals, and most of the other city councillors, particularly outside the GTA, are Tories. There is no independent city councillor.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: That's Toronto. You're doing Toronto, Rosie.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm doing everything, Madam.

So I don't understand what that means. There is no independent politician that I'm aware of.

"Recognize the difficulty electors face in determining the platforms of the candidates." What about provincial

politics? Yes, we have party politics, but most people don't have a clue and they think we're all the same, so we have a lot of work to do. I only have had 34 seconds. We have a lot of work to do in terms of how we educate, how we politicize, how we get people involved and, yes, we must do that. If this motion does it, I'm willing to support it, and I'm willing to look at how we expand this particular motion to make sure that we do a better job of getting people to vote, but I'm willing to support it. Merci, monsieur le Président.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to follow the member for Trinity–Spadina, who I think, personally, would have made an excellent leadership candidate in what's happening on Saturday. It is not too late yet. I think there's still time for Rosario.

I spent 18 years on council in the town of Oakville, in the region of Halton. Actually, some of the best years of my life were spent on council. I was first elected in my 20s, I was still there in my 30s and 40s, and I had the privilege of serving under four Premiers who were in office during my term on council, and that goes back to Peterson, to Rae, to Harris and Eves. I went through some of the severe upheavals that were inflicted on local councils. Believe me, it wasn't a whole lot of fun, trying to run your community in a responsible way when the senior level of government was causing you nothing but grief.

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I have to say, when I look at some of my colleagues who are still on council, that the relationship I, as a member of the provincial government, have with those colleagues is the best it has been in memory. For the entire 20 or 25 years since I was first elected to council, I cannot think of a time when the relationship between the provincial government and local government was better than it is today.

I want to thank the member for bringing the issue forward. I'll be honest from the start: I will not be supporting it, and not because the issues individually don't have merit. They are issues that should be talked about. They are issues that I think could be the subject of debate. But in my opinion as an individual member, they don't add up to what a select committee is designed to do.

As I said, I have concerns with some reform I'd still like to see with local governments. But when the economy is experiencing the stress it is today, when nations around the world and their governments, and communities around the world and their governments, are trying to deal with some of the monetary problems we're experiencing, is now the time for a navel-gazing exercise as to how we should run our towns and cities? I'd suggest it's not.

There's some very even-handed wording in the resolution. I think the resolution is drafted well and, as I said, it raises some wonderful points. But at the end of the day, the point needs to be made that the issue of local

governance is frankly very different from the issue of local elections, and to try to tie them together—they're two separate issues that may be linked in some ways, but they're miles apart in the type of work that would need to be done to devote the proper attention to them that they really need.

We've been through some tough issues at the local level in my own community. We've been able to deal with it, with the relationship we've been able to forge. I don't think this is necessary.

I want to compliment the member again for bringing it forward. Perhaps at some point in the future, this type of debate could take place, and perhaps at that point the select committee would be the vehicle to do it. But I think the amount of emphasis being put on this today should be brought to bear on the finances of local government. In the future, they're going to have some real stress trying to meet their own budgets as we meet ours. That's where we need to be focusing our efforts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to rise in support of my colleague the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills with this important resolution. As is the character of the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, he's looking further down the road.

It has been about 10 years or so since the three large cities were created—Mississauga has grown tremendously to hit this level. Looking at how our traditional governance structures fit large municipalities is an issue that should be thoroughly investigated.

As members know, and as my colleague Mr. Sterling mentioned, Vancouver, Montreal and Quebec City have political parties in their makeup. Their councils—at least, Vancouver's—tend to be smaller.

In the United Kingdom and the United States, across the border from us, as Mr. Craitor certainly knows, it's common for municipal politicians to have political parties. It's actually rare that they do not. Toronto did. They ran a slate of NDP candidates back in the early 1990s. Jack Layton was the leader of the party, but suffered under the Bob Rae yoke at the time and was not successful.

I believe a healthy democracy needs healthy competition. If you have a good race for the individual council seats as well as the mayoral contest, that's in the best interests of everyone.

It is awfully difficult, in large cities, to get a message across if you are challenging an incumbent. I know, from some councillors and their offices, that in the city of Toronto, for example, campaign budgets are very limited. They can barely afford to do a couple of mail-outs, let alone buy an advertisement in the Etobicoke Guardian to take on an incumbent.

Political parties would give folks an opportunity to get their message across. It would take what is happening on a de facto basis and make it much more transparent and formalized.

Political parties often give the ability too for councillors to first set priorities, to caucus items ahead of

time, to forge coalitions and ensure that there are standards on the fundraising side.

There are major, expensive items that large city councils would deal with that go beyond the local issues. For example, should priorities in Toronto be subways and roads versus police, versus social services in the Hamilton area? We often hear a big debate about the Lister Block, Randle Reef or airport development. If there were identification along party lines, it would help voters understand where, ideologically, individual councillors line up on the spectrum, because I'm not convinced that voters will always know where we're going to stand individually on the issues. Alignments along parties give an important signal of where a councillor may approach an issue coming forward, one that may be unexpected as of election time.

There has been some academic research in this area that I think is important to add to this debate, and I do hope that we'll proceed with further debate. In *Local Government in Canada*, Richard Tindal and Susan Nobes Tindal say, "At the provincial and federal levels, voters are accustomed to selecting one name from three or four or so, all of them normally associated with a political party. In contrast, the municipal voter must make choices from within several different categories from among much longer lists of names, none of them further identified with any kind of party label," making it awfully difficult for an incumbent to fight his or her way through the noise.

Mary Louise McAllister in *Governing Ourselves? The Politics of Canadian Communities*, says, "From the perspective of strengthening democracy," Jack "Masson has argued that it would be easier to hold a governing party accountable for its actions at election time, rather than an assortment of individual candidates who stand for a mixture of issues."

Furthermore, as noted in the Institute on Governance's Forum on Municipal Governance and Accountability, it helps to forge a coherent vision and agenda so the voters can choose the major issues that are impacting large cities. That would be different from small-town Ontario.

Please support my colleague's motion before the House today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn): Further speakers?

Mr. Jeff Leal: It is a pleasure for me today to make some comments on the motion that's being put forward by the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

I have a municipal background. I was a six-term, 18-year veteran of Peterborough city council and then came to the Ontario Legislature in 2003. I can say right up front that when I was elected to city council in Peterborough, indeed I was an independent person, as were most of my colleagues at that particular time. I certainly admit that I look at this motion through the eyes of my experience in a city of some 74,000 people.

But over the years I did take the time to review the writings of Professor Andrew Sancton, who teaches at the University of Western Ontario and has certainly

provided a lot of commentary over many years about governance models and citizen engagement in municipal politics in the province of Ontario. Professor Sancton started to identify the problem going right back to 1975, when the then Duke of Kent, the Honourable W. Darcy McKeough, brought regional government to the province of Ontario.

Andrew Sancton's view always was that as we created these larger municipal institutions across the province of Ontario, there was a decline in citizen engagement because of the sheer size that these municipalities became. In fact, many of those citizens who became part of these amalgamated municipalities, of course, lost their distinct identification and therefore lost some of their engagement in the municipal process. Hazel McCallion, I believe, started her political career as reeve of Streetsville, which was a very small community in those days, and she talks rather longingly about that experience.

Many of the things that are identified in this motion today were certainly articulated very clearly prior to the big-city amalgamations, in the debates here in Toronto, in Ottawa and Hamilton. I note my next-door neighbour in Peterborough, Steve Brickell, who at that time, before amalgamation, was the deputy clerk in Scarborough. He came to Peterborough to become clerk there. I remember having long chats with Steve about what the amalgamation would mean and the real disengagement of citizens in the process.

So I won't be supporting this resolution.

1500

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn): Further speakers?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Thank you very much, and I'm certainly very pleased to support the resolution that's been put forward by my colleague the member for—

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Carleton-Mississippi Mills. I would also like to point out to you that the newspaper at home, and others, have taken a look at this resolution and are quite supportive. I think it's important to remember that. There is a recognition that this is a situation today that requires a thorough review. There needs to be, certainly, fairness and accountability brought to the municipal level.

The suggestion here is that that review take place here at Queen's Park. There is no predetermined outcome that is contained herein, but certainly if we were to set up an all-party committee, and if we were to take a look at municipal governance in Ontario's large cities, there would be an opportunity to look freshly again at an issue which I think is of great importance today in the province of Ontario.

And who knows? If we were to take a look at this issue again, in light of all that has happened in the intervening years, we may well come up with a blueprint which could move us forward and address some of the problems that we've seen in the past. It's really quite disappointing that people are not coming out to vote. On

the other hand, we have people who have been holding municipal office for years and years and years. I think those are both issues that need to be addressed.

In my own community of Waterloo, we don't have a problem with people hanging on to their seats. It appears that the voters in Waterloo are quite happy dumping mayor after mayor after mayor and council after council after council, but—

Mr. Dave Levac: Don't run, Liz.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: No. But in other communities, we know that certainly there have been people who have been there for a long time. So Mr. Sterling is not recommending that any specific reform be imposed; he's simply suggesting that we establish the select committee here at Queen's Park and that we would take a look at introducing political parties at the municipal level and take a look at term limits for members of city councils. Hopefully, at the end of the day, we just might get greater voter participation. I will be supporting this resolution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn): Further speakers?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a constituent who has a bit of a reputation. Her name is Hazel McCallion. Mayor McCallion often says to us who were elected from the city of Mississauga, "Do your homework." And I would have to ask here, has the member done his homework? Did he consult with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, with the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and on and on? No.

Mayor McCallion has 30 years in office. Some of the proposals that the member mentioned—well, he doesn't exactly advocate them, but he proposes them because he thinks they should be discussed—would disqualify someone with that body of knowledge, that wealth of experience, and for 30 years Mayor McCallion has been bringing home victories by margins of more than 90% of the vote.

The member points out that all the incumbents in Mississauga were elected—and that is very true. But when we have had a performance issue on Mississauga city council in the past, we have thrown them out.

The reason that people are re-elected in Mississauga with margins of between 80 and the low 90s is because generally people are happy with them. They're capable, they're competent and they do their jobs well. My councillor in ward 9, Pat Saito, has 18 years of experience; George Carlson, in ward 6, has 12-plus years of experience.

This makes as much sense as going to see your accountant at tax time and having the managing partner say, "I'm sorry, the accountant you had has more than 12 years of experience, so we just told him to go ahead and do something else with the rest of his life because he has been an accountant for too long." Or going to see your kid's orthodontist and having the managing partner of the office say, "I'm sorry, the orthodontist who has fitted your children for the last dozen years no longer works for us. We just decided that he'd been an orthodontist for too long, so we asked him to go and do something else."

This is not the reason that we should strike a select committee. We cannot justify investing the resources of the taxpayer based on very little more than the member's opinion, however well intentioned; and this is a long-serving member. No matter what the member may think, this just shows that we don't have the body of work, the homework, behind this resolution to justify striking a select committee to tour the province and to ask this particular set of questions. The long and the short of it is that while I respect the member in his long years of service here, I cannot stand and support his resolution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn): Further speakers?

Seeing none, the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I want to thank those members who spoke in support of this. I find the government's position on this very defensive, I find their arguments specious and silly, and I'm very disappointed. However, I find that not unusual or surprising in that this government continues to avoid addressing problems that are there on the horizon. I believe a good government should step up and try to meet those problems and deal with those problems when they are recognized. This problem has been recognized—is recognized—and we should deal with it now. I am really disappointed in how this government cocoons itself into the position that they don't want to do anything; don't touch anything that you don't have to right now. The next government will have to deal with this.

HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL DAY ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF DE L'HOLODOMOR

Mr. Levac moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 147, An Act to proclaim Holodomor Memorial Day / Projet de loi 147, Loi proclamant le Jour commémoratif de l'Holodomor.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Pursuant to standing order 98, Mr. Levac, you and your co-movers have 12 minutes.

Mr. Dave Levac: Let me explain first why we are seeing this bill. It's familiar to most. There have been two key developments that have taken place with the introduction of this bill that I think are very important to point out before I get started into the body of my comments. The first is that we do have new information and I'd like to share that with the members to explain why the bill is coming around again.

Since the first introduction back in 2008, I'd like to point out that the government of Ukraine, the United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate, the Parliament of Canada, the Senate of Canada, the governments of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the OSCE—the Organization for Security and Co-

operation in Europe—and the European Union, along with 64 other jurisdictions—previously over 40, now at least 64—have made official condemnation of Holodomor and recognize it as genocide. To that fact, I included in the bill, “On May 29 2008, the Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (‘Holodomor’) Memorial Day Act (Canada) was enacted to recognize the famine as an act of genocide and to establish throughout Canada the Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (‘Holodomor’) Memorial Day on the fourth Saturday in November in each year.” I think it’s appropriate for us to revisit this because of that particular fact.

I would also like to say that the second reason why this is an important aspect of private members’ time, which I have been known to speak very highly of in terms of our support and our opportunity to bring new ideas to this place, is that it’s the first time in the history of Ontario that this bill will be sponsored by three people—one New Democrat, the member for Parkdale–High Park, Cheri DiNovo, and the member for Newmarket–Aurora, a Progressive Conservative, Mr. Frank Klees. We’re making history today. I think that’s a proud moment about private members’ time, where we can set aside partisan ideological beliefs and understand that everyone has a right to bring to this place concepts and ideas that all of us can embrace. I’m sure, I’m absolutely confident, that we will be able to embrace this bill with three-party acceptance.

1510

I’d like to introduce today some very important people who educated me and, I know, many of you in this House about the importance of this historic moment: Olexander Danyleiko, the Consul General of Ukraine; Oleh Romanyshyn, the president of the League of Ukrainian Canadians; Mr. Volodymyr Paslavskiy, the executive director of LUC; Borys Mykhaylets, from the LUC executive; Taras Paslavskiy, from the LUC executive; Mr. Orest Steciw, the Holodomor projects coordinator; Chrystyna Bidiak, the president of the League of Ukrainian-Canadian Women; Halyna Vynnyk, from the LUCW executive; Mr. Andrew Gregorovich, Ukrainian National Federation; Oksana Prociuk Ciz, from the Council of Ukrainian Credit Unions of Canada; Mr. Paul Grod, the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress; Mr. Marc Shwec, the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Toronto; Valentyna Kuryliw and Mr. Eugene Yakovitch from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Toronto famine genocide committee; and Allan Rewak.

I got through every one of those names and I know I didn’t do them justice, but we want to welcome them to our assembly today.

I would also like to bring our attention to the fact that I was very fortunate to meet the First Lady of Ukraine. Her Excellency Kateryna Yushchenko honoured me with an award on November 27, 2008. I explained to her when they gave it to me, “Please give this back to your people.” That says it all to me.

I would also like to point out that on June 5, 2007, Borys Wrzesnewskij, the Member of Parliament for

Etobicoke Centre, played an important part by introducing to the House of Commons in Ottawa a private member’s bill, C-450, the Ukrainian Holodomor-Genocide Remembrance Day Act, that started the discussion. I would also like to honour and thank the Manitoba MP, James Bezan, whose private member’s bill was passed on May 29, 2008, so that every fourth Saturday in November of each year is recognized as Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (“Holodomor”) Memorial Day across Canada.

I want to quote from a booklet that has been produced by the Ukrainian community. Here’s the first quote: “I address you on behalf of a nation that lost about 10 million people as a result of the Holodomor genocide.... We insist that the world learn the truth about all crimes against humanity. This is the only way we can ensure that criminals will no longer be emboldened by indifference.” That’s a quote from Viktor Yushchenko, the President of Ukraine.

Here is another quote from the booklet: “Children comprised one third of all of the Holodomor victims in Ukraine. Large numbers of children after that were orphaned and became homeless.”

Here’s one that I know my friend Frank Klees would relish, not because it’s a bad thing but because it represents something he’s trying to do: “I speak of a horrendous crime that was committed in cold blood by the rulers of that period. The memories of this tragedy must guide the feelings and actions of Ukrainians.” It was an address by Pope John Paul II to the Ukrainians on November 23, 2003, on the 70th commemoration of the Holodomor.

I think there are going to be some fabulous words spoken today, and I understand why we say them. The third reason why I think it’s important for us to discuss this topic: It’s not something new; it’s something that we have to continue to do, and that is to speak of the unspeakable. Those who knew were forced not to tell or participated in holding back the truth. Those days need to be removed.

I’m honoured to speak today on our private member’s bill, Bill 147. First, I wish to thank and acknowledge my former intern Matt; my intern who just moved to the opposition, Emma; my LA, Susan Ho; and my EA, Chris Yaccato, for their support, dedication and hard work in presenting this bill. I’d like to thank them, all of them, including the introduced guests, for bringing the depth of this issue to my attention and to my knowledge.

For many here today, in particular the Holodomor survivors, there is no need to state the bill’s significance and obvious conclusion. We know that the survivors have bitter memories, tearful memories, many recollections of personal tragedy. You will recall people you knew, family and friends who died, entire communities that no longer exist. Now, across the years, you have to have your grief brought back to you. Little boys and girls who are now in their later years still cry at the name Holodomor.

Today, and every day, we pay tribute to those survivors and especially those who died. The second reading

of this bill is important for those who experienced the famine, but it's just as important for those who don't know about famine, who don't know about the tyranny of oppression. Too many Ontarians have no personal experience of forced, man-made famine or tyranny and no way of knowing the anguish that is associated with it. Unfortunately, we do know that there are some Ontarians who do understand that. They've lived through that circumstance.

For many of my colleagues and those who are watching at home, the Holodomor is unfamiliar as a human tragedy. But you've heard the name Joseph Stalin. Joseph Stalin did this. His followers did this. It's undeniable. What I learned over the last year or so—those who were doing the research in locked archives to hide the truth unlocked the door and began to tell us the actual plan to wipe a people out, the formation of the collectives, which brought me stories that I find the most reprehensible, about children.

Parents of those children sent them out to try to find food. Those children would be found in ditches, legs as thin as fingers, bloated stomachs, outreaching cheeks, never to be seen again, lying dead and alone in a ditch. Other unspeakable moments took place; most of us, when we have done our research, realize how catastrophic this was. Children in the collectives who could hold a few grains in their hands that wouldn't fill a shot glass would disappear and never be seen again. Adults were shot on the spot if they dared try to take some of that grain to feed their family. But they risked it. And for those who did receive a ration, they would often save other people's lives by thinning out what they were getting for their family. That tells me of the humanity that was in existence inside of the insanity. All of this took place in 1932-33 with a regime that kept it quiet, and those who knew didn't tell anybody.

It is time. It's time for each and every one of us to educate not only ourselves, but to stand up and work with these fine men and women to say that the world must know. I honour them, I praise them and I thank them for the work that they continue to do to ensure that we never allow this to happen again. Have you heard that before: "Let us never let this happen again"? How many times do we have to hear that before we learn that we must respect each other, that we must never use power in a way that allows 10 million people to be starved to death on purpose?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

1520

Mr. Frank Klees: Let me at the outset extend a warm welcome to the guests from the Ukrainian community who were introduced by my colleague from Brant. It is wonderful to have you here. You represent the very essence of this bill that we're debating today.

It is a distinct honour for me to join in this debate. I have the privilege to co-sponsor this bill with my colleagues the member for Brant and the member for Parkdale-High Park. The fact that members from all

three political parties in this Parliament have joined together to co-sponsor this bill is indicative of the historical importance of this initiative. It's only right that we unanimously and formally acknowledge the horrific Ukrainian genocide of 1933-34.

By way of this bill, we will entrench in Ontario law a day, which is the last Saturday in November of each year, on which the world joins with the government of Ontario, the people of Ontario and the people of Ukraine in commemorating the more than 10 million victims of that horrific genocide. The Holodomor is for the Ukrainian people what the Holocaust is for the Jewish people and the 1915 Genocide is for Armenians: a tragedy of unfathomable proportions that traumatized an entire nation leaving its people with deep social, psychological, political and demographic scars that Ukraine bears to this day.

Holodomor Memorial Day will provide an opportunity for us all to reflect and to educate the current and future generations, in this province and abroad, about the enduring lessons of this genocide and the totalitarian and inhumane system that caused it. This day will also provide an opportunity to reflect on other instances of the systemic destruction of peoples, human rights issues and the diverse reality of our society in Ontario and Canada today.

In passing this bill into law, the Ontario Legislature would follow in the footsteps of the Parliaments of Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Georgia and Estonia. In 2003, the Congress of the United States of America acknowledged the Holodomor as genocide, quoting the 1988 US Congress Commission on the Ukrainian Famine official report: "Joseph Stalin and those around him committed genocide against Ukrainians in 1932-33."

In May of last year, and in the presence of Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, the Parliament of Canada passed Bill C-459. It was passed into law acknowledging the Holodomor as genocide and established Holodomor Memorial Day.

In 2003, the Senate of Australia recognized the Holodomor as "one of the most heinous acts of genocide in history." And in the words of the Speaker of the Parliament of Ukraine in 2005, Alexander Moroz, "The issue is clear to me. I need not refer to the United Nations definitions for in my own village, more than half of the inhabitants perished. I consider that a genocide."

The American Holodomor scholar James Mace had this to say about the horrific origin of this genocide: "For Stalin to have complete centralized power in his hands, he found it necessary to physically do away with Ukraine and things Ukrainian as such. The calculation was very simple, very primitive: no people, therefore, no separate country, and thus, no problem. Such a policy is genocide in the classic sense of the word."

Enforced starvation in Ukraine reached its peak in 1933 when an estimated 25,000 persons died every single day. As a result of the Holodomor, one quarter of the entire population of Soviet Ukraine was exterminated. In late spring 1933, over 300,000 homeless children were

recorded in the Kiev region alone. Since orphanages and shelters were already overcrowded, most of these children died on the streets as a result of starvation and disease.

A characteristic shared by all genocides is the denial by the perpetrators and their supporters that the genocides ever occurred, notwithstanding even the eyewitness accounts of the families of the victims. That's why this occasion here is so important, because it is an admission that there has been a denial, and thanks to those survivors who were passionate to ensure that the world would remember and the truth would be told in places like this and Legislatures throughout the world, there is an awakening to that reality and, more importantly, a commitment that it should never, ever happen again.

Stalin and his Soviet government took careful steps to prevent news of the Ukrainian famine from leaking out to the west. There were even western journalists who acted as apologists for Stalinism and who joined with the Soviet regime in denying what was occurring in Ukraine in 1933-34. However, there was one exception in the person of Gareth Jones, a well-known and highly respected journalist of the time. I'd like to take the opportunity to focus on the heroism of this man who first made public to his international audience the existence of the Holodomor in Ukraine.

Gareth Jones was born in Wales in 1905; his mother was a tutor of the children of Arthur Hughes, whose father was a steel industrialist who founded what is today the modern city of Donetsk in Ukraine. His mother's stories about Ukraine inspired Gareth with a desire to visit Ukraine. Years later, in 1930, he did that as the foreign adviser to British Prime Minister David Lloyd George. Gareth Jones toured Ukraine again in 1933 and on March 29 of that year, he issued his famous press release that was published by many newspapers, including the New York Evening Post and the Manchester Guardian, describing what he experienced. I want to quote from his article:

"I walked along through villages and 12 collective farms. Everywhere was the cry, 'There is no bread. We are dying.' ... I tramped through the black earth region because that was once the richest farmland and because the correspondents had been forbidden to go there to see for themselves what is happening....

"I stayed overnight in a village where there used to be 200 oxen and where there are now six. The peasants were eating the cattle fodder and had only a month's supply left. They told me that many had already died of hunger. Two soldiers came to arrest a thief. They warned me against travel at night, as there were too many 'starving' desperate men.

"'We are waiting for death,' was my welcome, 'but see, we still have our cattle fodder. Go farther south. There they have nothing. Many houses are empty of people already dead,' they cried."

Gareth Jones's report was not welcomed by most of the international media at that time, the result of sympathy with the Soviet regime of the day.

On March 31 the New York Times published a denial of Jones's statement, written by Walter Duranty under the headline "Russians Hungry, But Not Starving."

"Russian and foreign observers in the country could see no grounds for predictions of disaster," the rebuttal came. But on May 13, Gareth Jones published a strong rebuttal to Duranty in the New York Times, standing by his report. He wrote, "Censorship has turned journalists into masters of euphemism and understatement. Hence, they give 'famine' the polite name of 'food shortage,' and 'starving to death' is softened down to read as 'widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition.'"

It's important to add here that on September 26, 1933, Walter Duranty, despite his public denial of the famine, privately admitted to William Strang in the British embassy in Moscow, "It is quite possible that as many as 10 million people may have died directly or indirectly from lack of food in the Soviet Union during the past year."

Why the denial? We don't have an answer for that, but what we do have an answer for is why we are doing what we're doing here today, and that is to ensure that it would never happen again.

This bill honours the victims of Holodomor, it honours the memory of Gareth Jones and others like him, and it honours the memory of those who resisted Stalin's terror, especially the leader of the Ukrainian insurgent army, General Roman Shukhevych, who fell in the struggle against Stalinism 59 years ago today. It also honours the enduring struggle of the Ukrainian people for freedom.

1530

This bill honours the relatives of my executive assistant, Alex Roman, as well, including his great-uncle Theodore, who died in the Holodomor; his uncle Leo, who spent 10 years in Siberia for seeking to intervene on behalf of victims of the Holodomor; and his grandparents, Reverend Father John and Irene, who ministered to victims.

I want to acknowledge Alex Roman for his contribution to this debate through his thorough research, and for sharing with me his very personal insight into the Holodomor and the need for us all to acknowledge and to remember.

I join with all members in this House in calling on the government of Ontario to declare Holodomor Memorial Day in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's both a pleasure and a privilege to be able to stand on this historic day.

First I want to welcome our distinguished guests, who have worked so hard for this day and who have finally been successful. Dobroho dnia. Welcome.

I want to thank my colleagues Dave, the member from Brant, and Frank, the member from Newmarket-Aurora, for this historic moment in the House. This is the first time ever in Ontario's history that three parties have come together as one and supported a bill. I can think of no better bill for that to have happened; hopefully, it

won't be the last. But as the first, you also are witness to that historic moment.

This is a historic moment primarily because, finally, a very ugly silence has been broken. A historic silence has ceased. Voices have been raised, not only here but, as the member from Brant discussed, all around the world, and finally here, to say, "This happened." This happened.

But the work isn't finished yet, because there are still Holodomor deniers out there. It is still denied in certain circles. I remember, as a young woman—always a member of the New Democratic Party, always a social democrat—brushing shoulders with Communists back then who would be working on various issues with us. They denied it, and they supported the actions of Joseph Stalin, even after we knew about the gulag, even after we knew about the Holodomor. That denial continues.

I want to make the point that this is not about Ukrainians versus Russians. This is not about the Russian people. This is about the Russian government of a period, the government of Joseph Stalin, a totalitarian dictatorship. That's what that government was. Despite what they called themselves, that's what that government was.

It's interesting to me as a Christian, as well, when I have debates with atheists about genocide and they talk about all the problems of the world that have been caused by people of faith. I always say to them that the worst of genocide has been committed by atheists: by Hitler, by Stalin, by Pol Pot—the list goes on.

Today I also think about a journalist in a different genocide, a Norwegian socialist who went to Cambodia while Pol Pot was literally actively killing; the killing fields were ongoing. The journalist was taken and whisked around by government officials and came back with a report: "It's wonderful here. It's wonderful here. Nothing is wrong."

The member from Newmarket–Aurora spoke about the number of western journalists who went to Ukraine in the years 1932-33 and came back. One of them, who will go unnamed, a Pulitzer Prize winner, came back and said, "Nothing's wrong here. It's wonderful here." He as well was whisked around by government officials, shown only what they wanted him to see, never seeing the truth.

What was the truth? The truth was that 10 million people were starved to death in a planned famine that was politically motivated. It was designed to break the spirit of the Ukrainian people. It was designed to eliminate the Ukrainian people. That's what it was: 10 million people, 25,000 people a day—many of them, as you heard already, children; children, many of them—were starving to death when their barns, the barns of the Soviet Union, were filled with wheat. There was enough food to feed them, but the food was going to the animals in many instances and not to them—to the horses and not to the children. This horror, this planned horror, has been denied and has been silenced too long. The very bones of the victims cry out for this day to be acknowledged, for this genocide to be named.

When I first spoke about this bill, about my good friend whom I'll call Anne—and she was the one who

brought the horror of the Holodomor to me. She's a member of my congregation, a phenomenal community activist in Parkdale–High Park. She was involved in everything. She's an amazing woman. I did not know the story of Anne's childhood. I did not know what she had gone through as a child in Ukraine until she asked me, "Do you think God will forgive me?" I couldn't imagine what this sweet little old lady had ever done that she would ask for God's forgiveness, and she said, "I would ask for forgiveness for having tasted, having eaten, human flesh," because it was during the Holodomor that families who were trying to keep their children alive had to—they were driven to engage in cannibalism of those who had dropped by the wayside. This kind of horror, this poor woman lived through as a child. Imagine being confronted with that. I said, "Of course, Anne; God understands," and I believe God does understand. What God I don't think would understand is if we keep silent about it, if we do nothing about it, if we say nothing about it. So that's what this bill is meant to redress.

I feel a particular weight upon me, too, of course, as someone who now supports, and very vocally so, the plight of the Tibetan people, who are up against the same kind of totalitarian government that the Ukrainians were up against. The Tibetan people are coming up to the 50th anniversary of their circumstances. Imprisonment and killings go on; again, no western journalists go; again, nobody speaks about it. Again, it's not about the Chinese people; it's about the government they have. I always say to them, "There's hope. Despite the fact that you're a small voice in a big world against a big power, look: The wall came down. The Soviet Union, the Stalins of the world and all who supported them—they're over now. It's over. It's finished." So the voice of truth and the voice of freedom will come out. It will be heard, even if it takes a while. They take great, great comfort in the fact that, for example, Ukrainians finally are seeing justice done about that genocide so long ago.

You are an example to the world still—still—to those who deny oppression and who deny totalitarianism still. It still goes on; it's still happening. You are here as a witness against that, in the present, on behalf of those who suffered in the past, so I thank you. We all thank you for that.

Certainly, as a social democrat, when I look to those countries that we see as doing things better than we think we are doing in Ontario and Canada—countries like Sweden, Norway and Germany; certainly countries that have more of a social services network; countries that may call themselves socialist, even—I feel it is particularly incumbent upon social democrats to stand up and say, "We have nothing in common with that system; we have nothing in common with that government; that has nothing to do with the ideals and principles and values that we hold." It is incumbent upon us, and so I feel that weight as well, that we must say something.

Whenever ideology clouds humanity, this kind of horror happens. Whenever people refuse to see the human in front of them and see only a symbol in front of

them, this kind of horror can happen. Whenever humans don't accept, in all the humanity, each other, this kind of horror happens. In some small way, the joy of being part of a three-party bill, an all-party bill in this House, is our little way too of saying that we may be Liberals, we may be Conservatives, we may be NDP, but we are all humans and we see each other as such. When it comes to humanity, when it comes to suffering and when it comes to historic injustice, we can agree and we should agree, and we should move forward as one.

1540

It's these big questions where you really see the mettle of people. I'm proud today. I'm proud not just of my own team over here; I'm proud of all of us. I'm proud of Liberals. I'm proud of Progressive Conservatives. I'm proud of the New Democratic Party. I am mainly and mostly proud of our distinguished guests, and I'm proud of all of those like my friend Anne who spoke out, who finally told the truth about the horrors they had witnessed. It takes courage to tell the truth. It takes courage always and ever. Truth-tellers tend to do it in the face of no agreement. That's the historical reality. Those who did not tell the truth encouraged that horror to continue. Today, we're undoing a historic wrong, we're making history in this particular government of Ontario, and we're doing it for such a worthy cause.

I want to thank you; we all want to thank you for what you have brought about today. I want to thank my colleague from Brant and my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora. I want to thank all of those voices around the world that tell the truth and still tell the truth in their particular circumstances against totalitarianism, against the forced suffering of people, even when it isn't popular or easy to do so. Thank you all.

It's been a privilege, as I say, and a pleasure to finally get this bill before this House and, with any luck at all, passed very quickly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Before I start, I want to also welcome all the guests who are with us here in the gallery, and especially Dmytro Nebor and Luba Kaipainen. I'm not sure if they are here or not.

I'm privileged and honoured to stand up today among all my colleagues from both sides of the House to speak in support of Bill 61, An Act to proclaim Holodomor Memorial Day.

This bill is an historic bill, as has been mentioned, because for the first time ever in this place, a bill is being sponsored by three parties, all of us standing up together, united, to speak about an era, a dark era, that happened in our history; to stand up to speak about the dictatorship, to speak up against the killing of innocent people which ended the regime of Joseph Stalin. Ten million people perished, 25,000 on a daily basis, being killed for no reason except love of power. He loved himself so much, he loved his authority so much, he went and killed everyone who went against him. So today, we're standing up together—Liberal, Conservative and NDP—to say

no to all the dictatorships, to say no to all the killers on the whole globe, not in order to bring back the history, but to protect our present and also to make sure we have a bright future, a safe future for all of us.

Ladies and gentlemen, my friends, my colleagues, to all the people who are listening to us, today is a historic day because all of us stand united under one banner and under one direction against the killers, against dictatorship, and stand up for the lives of all the people from different faiths, from different religions, from different ethnic backgrounds, because all of us deserve to live in peace, dignity and respect.

Again, I want to congratulate my colleagues from Brant, from Newmarket–Aurora and from Parkdale–High Park for bringing this bill together to show the whole earth, to show Ontarians and Canadians that we are united against dictatorship.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Is there any further debate?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: On behalf of myself and my colleague Jerry Ouellette, the two members of our caucus of Ukrainian descent, I would join in and, first of all, congratulate my friend David Levac for bringing this forth, An Act to proclaim Holodomor Memorial Day, which recognizes the victims of the Ukrainian genocide. It lifts the veil of secrecy that has lasted so long on Joseph Stalin's crime against humanity in murdering millions of Ukrainians. I congratulate and commend all members of the House to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of Bill 147 and to support my colleagues on all sides of the House, the members from Brant, Parkdale–High Park and Newmarket–Aurora, who have brought this important debate to the floor of the Legislature once again.

Ukrainian communities around the world commemorate Holodomor Memorial Day on the fourth Saturday of November each and every year. If this act is passed, I look forward to the opportunity when we in Ontario will be able to stand along with those from the Ukrainian community and others who care about this most significant, important and tragic issue, to turn our minds and to move us one step forward in bringing greater light to these tragic circumstances, to raise awareness about what transpired in Ukraine.

As MPP for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I want to pay tribute to the Ukrainian community in my riding, which is strong and vibrant and which has welcomed me with open arms. I want to acknowledge the work undertaken in raising this issue by the League of Ukrainian Canadians, the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, and Ukrainian Canadian communities across Ontario, including so many individuals who have told their personal stories, their families' stories, with the goal of helping all of us better understand, and ultimately to help us ensure that such a tragedy would never occur again.

To my colleagues around the House, to those from the community and the faces that I know well who have joined us here today, diakuyu, thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Is there any further debate?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I too want to join all the members of the House in our support of Bill 147. It's certainly a great privilege to be part of an all-party bill.

As I was doing my research into the Holodomor, I was taken aback by the absolute deliberateness and fierceness of what happened there. As I was reading, it said that the famine was even worse in the rural parts of Ukraine than it was in the cities. That goes totally against everything that most of us know about agriculture. I read that in 1933, 1.8 million tonnes of grain was shipped out of Ukraine. So it wasn't a case of there being a failure of a crop, like with the potato famine. This was very deliberate. This was taking the crop away from these people. As a farmer, I know that the farm families must have had to go into their fields and use the zeis—that's Dutch—to cut the grain and then put it into sheaths. The hunger and the internal drive to want to take some of that grain that is really your grain as a farmer—to have to steal your own grain so you could eat. I'm sure that Stalin must have had an incredible number of soldiers—the amount of manpower it would have taken to watch these farmers to make sure they didn't take some of that grain for themselves. It was so deliberate, so fierce. It's beyond what any of us can imagine because, like I say, for most of these people, the temptation—they would risk death, I think, to try and get a mouthful of grain. And that's a terrible, terrible, thing as a farmer and for anyone to have to do.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): The member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: First, I want to commend and support my good friend and colleague the member from Brant, Dave Levac, for this bill which commemorates victims of the man-made famine of Ukraine. This proposed bill is being brought forward by members of all three parties, and I commend the members from Newmarket–Aurora and Parkdale–High Park. We all understand that the emotional, psychological and physical pain, suffering and death that was inflicted on millions of Ukrainian women, children and men should be remembered and never allowed to happen again—never again.

My wife is of Ukrainian descent—her name is Christina Yaremczuk—and she and her family have shared with me their horrific stories of the Holodomor. I also have a large Ukrainian-Canadian constituency in my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville. They're wonderful neighbours, friends, great citizens, volunteers, hard-working and strong people.

In the middle of my riding there is also a beautiful Ukrainian church, St. Mary's. St. Mary's hosts many different events. Last year they had an exhibit detailing the Holodomor, the man-made famine that killed 10

million Ukrainians through hunger. In that display there were pictures and words that were sad and disturbing of emaciated bodies, people with sunken eyes and hollowed faces. Like many other governments and non-government organizations around the world that have understood and declared the Holodomor a genocide, we in this Legislature have this opportunity to declare Holodomor Memorial Day on the fourth Saturday in November each year in Ontario.

I hope we do that here. I want to thank all our guests for all their work on this very important issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I'm pleased to rise as well in support of the bill. Everyone who has spoken in the House—when you hear what occurred, there is such an extraordinary and profound sadness that comes over you to think that such inhumanity would occur. Of course, we never want this to happen ever again in any community. This isn't an issue that belongs just to Ukraine or Ukrainians. It belongs to each and every one of us. We have a responsibility to ensure that it doesn't occur.

By passage of this bill, what we've done is say to the Ukrainian community that finally, "We believe you. We believe you, we believe this happened, and we are going to stand with you to make a difference." That's what this passage really means. We can make a difference on that particular day every year by reaching out and respecting the past for its legitimacy—it occurred—but most importantly, reaching out to the future through those children to teach them what we should never have done, as mankind, in the first place, so that they never, ever again accept what would happen, deny what would happen, or even encourage what might happen.

With the legitimacy of this bill, the people of Ontario are saying that we no longer, around the world, will accept this type of initiative that happened in the past or in the future. And to all Ukrainians—I'm of Ukrainian descent as well—we say that we'll stand up. We have the courage and the conviction, and we'll stand up and we'll stand beside you to make a difference in the future. That's what will happen every year on that very special day. That's where we can make a difference. So it's not just a day; it's the beginning of the future where we can reach out, where we can teach, where we can make a difference and ensure that this never, ever happens again. So I thank you.

You know, we have made history here today, with everyone in the House agreeing and supporting this bill. The sadness is that it took a little bit of time to do it, unfortunately, but the opportunity there was that we also had the chance to learn and to understand, so it had its benefits as well. I would just like to say thank you to each and every one of you because today we have made a difference.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): We thank all of those who took part in this very important debate. The time provided for private members' public business has expired—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I think they have two minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Oh, I'm sorry. I beg your pardon. Mr. Levac, as the mover of the bill, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Dave Levac: Let me begin by thanking all of the members who spoke so eloquently and thanking them for their deep concern on an issue that cannot go away: the members from London–Fanshawe, Etobicoke–Lake-shore, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Mississauga East–Cooksville, Etobicoke Centre, Cambridge, and especially my friends from Newmarket–Aurora and Parkdale–High Park.

I offer you a quote, and I ask you to look this one up because it's an extremely important quote, germane to this issue but also to world events. Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish-Polish scholar who was the father of the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide, coined the term "genocide" and applied it to the destruction of the Ukrainian nation as follows: "This was not simply a case of mass murder. It was a case of genocide, of destruction, not of individuals only, but of a culture and a nation." All too often we are bombarded with reminders of the evil of humanity. I think many here would agree that while these events infuriate us, terrify us and make us weep, often we lack the knowledge to impart a successful course of action to prevent their continuation. Every great achievement of mankind has come with the expansion of knowledge and enlightenment. This expansion has all but eradicated, to a degree, slavery, encouraged the spread of democracy and connected millions across continents. The spread of knowledge will also one day stop examples of genocide like the one that occurred in Ukraine from 1932 to 1933, up to 10 million people. Perhaps the best way to acquire this knowledge is through commemoration. So through education and remembrance, Ontario can continue to be a beacon of hope, acceptance and freedom. Today we have an opportunity to further that cause.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me, the wonderful people who are here with us today, the 1.5 million Ukrainian community people from Canada and all Ukrainians around the world in supporting this bill and affirming our solidarity in opposition to tyranny and persecution for ourselves and our children and our children's children, that this cause can never be rested. For that reason, I ask for your support. Thank you. Diakuyu.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Thank you. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT
(PUPILS WITH DIABETES), 2009
LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION
(ÉLÈVES DIABÉTIQUES)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): We will deal first with ballot item number 73, private member's Bill 137, standing in the name of Mr. Martiniuk.

Mr. Martiniuk has moved second reading of Bill 137. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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. We'll defer this motion until deferred votes.

MUNICIPALITIES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): We'll now deal with private member's notice of motion number 78, standing in the name of Mr. Sterling.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

Will all those in favour of the motion please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

Thank you. We'll defer this.

HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL
DAY ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR
LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF
DE L'HOLODOMOR

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): We'll now deal with ballot item number 75, private member's Bill 147, standing in the names of Mr. Levac, Ms. DiNovo and Mr. Klees. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Mr. Levac, a recommendation on a committee?

Mr. Dave Levac: Yes. I wish the bill to be sent to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Agreed? Agreed.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT
(PUPILS WITH DIABETES), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION
(ÉLÈVES DIABÉTIQUES)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): We will deal first with ballot item number 73, in the name of Mr. Martiniuk. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1601 to 1606.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Mr. Martiniuk has moved second reading of Bill 137. Will all those in favour of the motion please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Chudleigh, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Martiniuk, Gerry
Craitor, Kim	Jeffrey, Linda	Sterling, Norman W.
DiNovo, Cheri	Klees, Frank	Witmer, Elizabeth
Elliott, Christine	Leal, Jeff	
Hardeman, Ernie	Marchese, Rosario	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Will all those opposed to the motion please rise.

Ayes

Balkissoon, Bas	Elliott, Christine	Martiniuk, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hardeman, Ernie	Sterling, Norman W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Witmer, Elizabeth
Craitor, Kim	Klees, Frank	
DiNovo, Cheri	Marchese, Rosario	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Will all those opposed to the motion please rise.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Dickson, Joe	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arthurs, Wayne	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Rinaldi, Lou
Balkissoon, Bas	Fonseca, Peter	Sandals, Liz
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Sergio, Mario
Best, Margaret	Kular, Kuldip	Takhar, Harinder S.
Broten, Laurel C.	Mangat, Amrit	Van Bommel, Maria
Cansfield, Donna H.	Moridi, Reza	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Colle, Mike	Pendergast, Leeanna	Zimmer, David
Dhillon, Vic	Phillips, Gerry	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 13; the nays are 26.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): We'll open the doors for 30 seconds.

MUNICIPALITIES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Mr. Sterling has moved private member's notice of motion number 78. Will all those in favour of the motion please rise.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arthurs, Wayne	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Broten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Moridi, Reza	Van Bommel, Maria
Dickson, Joe	Pendergast, Leeanna	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Phillips, Gerry	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 13; the nays are 27.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): All matters relating to private members' public business now being completed, I do call orders of the day.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, March 9, at 10:30 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1611.

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 (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Bob Delaney
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat
Phil McNeely, Yasir Naqvi
John O'Toole
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jean-Marc Lalonde
Sophia Aggelonitis, Ted Arnott
Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett
Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue
Charles Sousa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Michael A. Brown, France Gélinas
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod
Julia Munro, David Ramsay
Lou Rinaldi, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal
Dave Levac, Reza Moridi
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Laura Albanese, Ernie Hardeman
Andrea Horwath, Phil McNeely
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
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Gerry Martiniuk, Paul Miller
Bill Murdoch, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Laurel C. Broten, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qadri
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
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